1066

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

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

DECEMBER 1994 No. 13

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 1994-1995

THE SOCIETY

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

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FROM THE VICE CHAIRMAN

In the penultimate paragraph of Dr. Nicol's report last year he referred to the problems that several societies were suffering from in respect of finding officers who were prepared to offer their services for a few hours a year in order to maintain a thriving society. He stated that as far as we were concerned, we were all right but only just!

I wish I could write that this situation has improved - it has not. Personally, I have several other commitments which I cannot avoid nor do I wish to, so it is quite possible that unless one or two members are prepared to help, rather than just to sit back and enjoy the enthusiasm of others, there could be a situation when the society would be unable to continue. This is not an idle threat - some of the present committee members who are prepared to continue for one more year are well over seventy - some are nearer eighty - and if ever there was a need for new blood, it is now. Please think seriously about this and if you are prepared to help contact our secretary Margaret McCrorie.

Having got that off my chest, I can say that the past season was again very successful, though some members complained bitterly about the acoustics in the Memorial Hall. The Committee was well aware of this problem and during the close season a completely new system was installed using the modern phenomenon of a radio-microphone, and the improvement is unbelievable. If you have a friend who has ceased to attend meetings because of this problem please spread the good news so that they may once again enjoy the lectures.

On yet another tale of woe I have to report that two of the scheduled outings during the summer had to be cancelled through lack of support. The Committee has therefore decided to reduce the number in 1995 though at present arrangements are proceeding for the long weekend after Easter.

Last but by no means least our annual Commemoration Service, which we are privileged to hold in the Parish Church, in 1994 also commemorated the 900th anniversary of the Dedication of the Abbey Church of St. Martin. The Lord Lieutentant of East Sussex, the Mayor of Battle and representatives of the local community and of English Heritage participated in this very special event.

Bernard Gillman-Davis

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM TRUST

I am pleased to report yet another successful year, not only in terms of visitors, but also in the totally efficient manner in which everybody concerned with the running of the Museum has co-operated to the full.

The responsibility of Chairman was divided over the year, Derek Akers taking the chair for the first half of the year and myself for the second half. This arrangement worked very well as Derek saw ways of achieving improvements in a number of areas; in particular he concentrated his time (and Pat's invaluable labour) on improving the library/office, and he plans to make further progress there. The library contains a wealth of interesting books, and research assistance is provided by the Librarian, Mrs. Gladys Young, all freely available to Society members!

During the year, many improvements have been introduced in the Museum thanks to Mrs. Julie Ede-Borrett, our new Curator, and her team of volunteers - some not even members of the Society! Our thanks are also due to Mr. Richard Swann, son of Mrs. Audrey Swann, our Schools' Representative, for his many artistic efforts on our behalf. Audrey, with Richard's artistic help, also produced a marvellous Schools' Pack which she and Mr. John Saunders use to stimulate the minds of schoolchildren during their educational visits to the Museum.

In the main, evidence of the efforts of the aforementioned committee members is visible, whereas

that of our Secretary Mrs. Joyce Cresswell, Treasurer Mr. Peter Sutton, and Archivist Mr. Reg Marshall is not; nevertheless, their contribution to the success of the Museum is invaluable and greatly appreciated. Also, of course, our thanks are due to Mr. Bob Mears, Society Representative on our committee, and to our team of volunteer Custodians whose daily attendances at the Museum provide the income so necessary to the financing of any improvements we aim to achieve. If any reader of these notes is interested in joining the team, please contact the Secretary by telephoning 772288.

During the year the Rother District Council issued its "Strategy for Museums Service - 1994/1998". Although in theory this document was well intentioned, it caused righteous indignation on the part of the Committee, for reasons given at the AGM. Councillor Jill Theis, the RDC Director of Recreation and Tourism, has promised to raise our objections at the next Council meeting.

John Hill

CUSTODIANS:Mrs. A. Armitage, Mr.& Mrs.J.Barnes, Mrs.G.Bolton, Mr.H.Charman, Mr.& Mrs.J.Downes, Mrs.J.Ede-Borrett, Mrs.L.Ford, Mrs.J.Hammett, Mr.R.Marshall, Mrs.J.McMurray, Miss H.Moore, Mr.J.Saunders.
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SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE:Mr.R.J.Mears

LECTURES

AN EDWARDIAN VIEW OF SUSSEX

Mr. David Tate — 4 February 1994

David Tate began by saying that this lecture on Edwardian Sussex would be based on E.V. Lucas's excellent book entitled *Highways and Byways in Sussex* first published in 1903, and would cover the towns and villages from Chichester to Rye.

Many of the places mentioned are much the same today as they were in Edwardian times, except that by the end of 1936 Sussex was well served by railways and people travelled by train which enabled them to enjoy the coast and countryside more than was hitherto possible.

Starting in the Roman town of Chichester where the old market cross stands close by the Dolphin Hotel, dominating the centre of the town, the four main streets run north, south, east and west, East Street becoming Stane Street, the Roman road to London. The Cathedral dates from the 11th century and contains many specimens of English architecture but the spire is comparatively new, having been built in the 19th century to replace the original one which fell down.

Leaving Chichester via East Street (or Stane Street) one comes to Halnaker and then to Boxgrove Priory dating from the reign of Henry I when it was founded for Benedictine monks. Little is left of it now; its downfall came with the reign of Henry VIII but Boxgrove Church is of considerable interest to antiquarians and architects.

On now through North Stoke just south of Amberley, with the beeches of Chanctonbury Ring in the distance, to Steyning where the church was founded in the 8th century by St. Cuthman, an early Christian who is buried in the church which he founded. The late Louis Jennings, an American who was fascinated by the area and its placid air, said "There is plenty of time for everything here". In Saxon times Steyning had a harbour also known as St. Cuthman's Port and accessible to the sea along the River Adur.

To the south-east of Steyning lies the village of Bramber with the ruins of its castle which had been demolished for its stone and which had never played any part in history. Away in the fields to the south lie two churches, those of Coombes and Boltolphs, neither with an attendant village.

Goring, Lancing and Sompting are all villages worthy of mention. Sompting has a church eight hundred years old with an unusual spire, while Lancing is notable for its public school and, standing high above the river, its imposing chapel.

Down the road to the south on the coast lies Shoreham, old and new. Old Shoreham has an unusual wooden bridge over the river and its place in history is memorable for supplying twenty-six ships to the navy in the time of Edward III. Earlier King John had landed there and also Charles II sailed from the port in the *Enterprise*. Unfortunately the sea encroached on the harbour and it was no longer viable as a large port. Hence New Shoreham sprang up but it is now secondary to Newhaven further to the east.

Going now towards Devil's Dyke, nearer to Brighton, mention must be made of the village of Hangleton where stands a fine Tudor mansion formerly the home of the Bellingham family and now a farmhouse. To the north of Devil's Dyke lies Poynings and its fine church, in many ways similar to that of Alfriston further to the east.

North of Brighton lies the village of Ditchling where there is a manor house said to have been the home of Anne of Cleves, as was another picturesque house in Southover, Lewes. As well as having a castle, Lewes is the home of the East Sussex Record Office which contains many objects of antiquarian interest; it is the museum of Sussex.

On now along the Downs towards Eastbourne and Beachy Head, passing through Alfriston. Here the church of Alfriston is known as the Cathedral of the Downs and the Clergy House close by was the first property owned by the National Trust. However, Alfriston was known above all else as a centre for smuggling, having a direct connection with the coast along the River Cuckmere to Cuckmere Haven where the contraband was landed.

Inland lies Wilmington under the slope of the Downs and overlooked by the Long Man, a crude figure cut

into the turf by the monks of the Benedictine Priory in Wilmington. To the east and high on the Downs near Beachy Head stands Belle Tout lighthouse, the predecessor of the present one built under the cliffs close to Eastbourne.

Travelling eastwards again, past Pevensey where stand the remains of a Roman castle, to the village of Herstmonceux on the edge of Pevensey Levels, with its attractive brick-built castle dating from the 15th century.

Our journey from west to east in Edwardian Sussex takes us on northwards through Battle, the scene of the Battle of Hastings. The Abbey was originally built as a memorial to the battle by William, but was afterwards destroyed by Henry VIII.

From Battle the journey to Rye takes us through Winchelsea, a quiet, aloof settlement of pleasant houses and gardens, prosperous and idle.

Leaving Winchelsea we finally reach the town of Rye standing on a hill close to the marshes and at the extreme east of Sussex. It is a town of contrasts, ancient and modern intermingling. The 12th century Ypres Tower to the south of the town now houses a museum; the monastery of the Augustine Friars in Conduit Street houses the Salvation Army and a Panhard car makes its way precariously through the Landgate. During Edwardian times and today these extremes still prevail.

Gladys Young

EXCAVATIONS AT BATTLE ABBEY

Mr. Reuben Thorpe — 18 February 1994

It was opportune that, in the year which saw the celebration of the nine hundredth anniversary of the consecration of Battle Abbey Church, the Historical Society should receive a report of recent archaeological projects undertaken by English Heritage at Battle Abbey.

These included a thorough examination of the walls of the largely 16th century two-storey courthouse built to the east of the 14th century gatehouse and the excavation of the ground beneath both buildings.

A decision to lower the level of the carriageway beneath the gatehouse provided an opportunity for excavation of this site in 1990 and 1991. The natural subsoil on which the building had been erected in 1339 was reached and at this level a stone bench, affording rest in a sheltered area, was discovered running along the base of a wall forming the archway.

The demolition of a 20th century gymnasium housed within the courthouse enabled an extensive survey of the older building to take place in the summer of 1992. The survey revealed that a double range of monastic buildings preceded the courthouse and confirmed that sections of its eastern wall were all that remained of earlier structures.

A study of the number of structural changes undergone by the east wall in particular reflects the constantly changing demands made of the building by the successive generations living within its walls. The following phases of construction, for example, were identified at first-floor level on the internal face:

Mid-14th century: The two arched windows were filled in and a large central window was inserted between them at a lower level. An arched doorway from the south-east turret was knocked through, also lower down.

Mid-16th century: The central window was blocked and a small square window was inserted into this. The arched doorway was also blocked and a higher square-headed doorway knocked through. At this stage the north and south walls of the courtyard were built.

Excavation of the courthouse floor in 1993 revealed features and objects dating back not only to monastic times but far beyond.

Beneath remains of 20th century cinder paths were found mounds of rubble, probably from the well-documented roof-collapse of the 18th century, as some contained 17th century roof nails. Dug into the mounds were 19th century post-holes which once held temporary wooden roof supports.

Removal of the rubble revealed sections of paved or thin mortar flooring alongside which, imprinted into clay or debris from earlier centuries, were discovered hundreds of stake-holes. These, it is thought, marked the temporary division of ground-floor space in the early courthouse, perhaps the erection of screens for the weekly market which was held every Thursday from the 16th century until the 18th century roof-collapse.

At this level it was possible to confirm that the 16th century walls had been built on walls forming the foundation of an earlier monastic building, but the discovery of foundations composed of stone chippings, some of which had been removed from the Chapter House or Abbey Church, was unexpected.

Two more surprise discoveries from the 16th century were made. The first was of a burial ground containing ten skeletons of domestic pets, including one of a massive hunting dog. A line of copper rivets surrounding one skeleton was all that remained of its coffin. The unearthing of a mediaeval lead pipe, three-quarters of an inch in diameter, constructed in sections from rolled lead sheeting and running the length of the building from north to south, was the second one. This feature's purpose is unknown.

Roof tiles from 14th century and 15th century buildings abandoned after the Dissolution were next unearthed as was evidence of 14th century pier bases which could have supported a vaulted roof, probably of an undercroft. A blackened area of soil and a dark semi-circular stain on the floor of this structure

indicated the presence of a small oven and stoking flue.

Beneath the 14th century floor were two drains, one stone-lined and running from north to south, the second timber-lined and running from west to east. 13th century features exposed consisted of an oven's fire-pit, innumerable stake-holes and larger holes suitable for posts and beams which indicated a timber precursor of the 14th century building.

Prior to the investigation of the courthouse it had been anticipated that excavation would reveal a sequence of archaeological deposits dating from the 12th to 16th centuries, so further, deeper discoveries were unexpected.

Apart from pre-Conquest charboard and charcoal deposits, two fragments of Saxon pottery had been preserved within a ditch marking the boundary of an earlier timber construction. Saxon activity on the Senlac ridge had obviously been taking place before that of King Harold and his troops. Domestic animal activity had also taken place, manifested by the much churned, trampled and stained soil beneath that of Saxon times.

The final discovery proved exciting, as the soil yielded Bronze Age flints and hammer stones to the probing tools of the archaeologists. Contact with earlier ancestors had been made on what was thought to be a largely mediaeval site. The courthouse project once recorded and analysed will enable us to study the material remains of past Battle inhabitants in context and in a continuous line.

Audrey Swann

THE ROMANCE OF MEDIAEVAL TAPESTRY WEAVING

Miss Rosalie Williams — 4 March 1994

A tapestry is by definition a woven pictorial or patterned wall-hanging. In shuttle-woven materials, the vertical (warp) and horizontal (weft) threads

which cross each other at right angles are equally visible, but in tapestry weaving the weft is pressed down hard to conceal the warp threads.

During the Middle Ages, when buildings in northern Europe were cold and draughty, tapestries hung round the walls were an invaluable source of insulation as well as decoration, information and entertainment. By reflecting their owners' achievements or knowledge of learning and culture, these hangings also satisfied many a personal vanity.

Made from woollen yarns which were occasionally interwoven with silk, or gold and silver threads, tapestries were not only warm and reasonably hard wearing but were portable, ready to carry from place to place and line any building from a castle to a tent. One set of hangings could swiftly replace another should the need arise (as it did in 1384 for the Duc de Berri, who, due to host peace talks, rapidly exchanged his celebrated battle scenes for some of a more peaceful nature).

Technically, tapestries fell into two categories: high warp (or *haute lisse*) woven on a vertical loom and low warp (or *basse lisse*) made on a horizontal one. The hangings described in this report were all woven on high warp looms.

Before beginning to weave, the weaver inked outlines of the design on to the warp threads, following the cartoon prepared by the designer. Then, by altering the colours and lengths of weft threads, he produced designs in the fabric line by line until the tapestry was completed. He sat at the back of his work but could see the front reflected in a mirror hung before the loom.

Dyed with vegetable or crushed insect dyes in rainbow hues, the threads' colours, given reasonable care, remained fresh and bright for some time, particularly at the back of the hangings. Yellow, however, was always the first to fade, and resulted in green, for example, turning eventually to blue.

Flanders workshops excelled in producing tapestries of fine design and workmanship. French centres of weaving were also regarded highly, but those of Germany, Holland and England owed much to Flemish expertise. England's chief contribution to tapestry weaving was the production of high quality wool, which she exported to the workshops of the Continent. These in turn exported their products to the rest of Europe until the advent of the portable loom in the 16th century, which resulted in greater mobility of the weaving workforce.

From the 14th century Paris workshops only one set of tapestries, woven by Nicolas Bataille, has survived. Woven for the Château Angers between 1373 and 1380, it featured the full length figure of a man seated at a desk meditating on the visions of the Apocalypse, which are shown in fourteen scenes contained within two bands - one above the other. The alternate blue and red backgrounds to these pictures, arranged like a chequer-board, throw the well-spaced figures into bold relief and remind one of the stained glass windows of the time.

One particularly dramatic scene depicts Satan, in the form of a fiery seven-headed dragon, being expelled from heaven, whilst those on earth watch with alarm or resignation from the safety of a castle's battlements. Above the upper series of pictures a band of blue sky, studded with stars, is occupied by angels playing musical instruments. The earthly border below the lower row of scenes contains a flowered lawn dotted with rabbits.

From the 15th century onwards, tapestry weaving in Europe developed into a high art which formed the basis of a widespread and costly industry. Few could afford such valuable products, so tapestries became solely the treasured possessions of members of royalty, the nobility and the church, providing them with visible evidence of their wealth, power and social standing. Such prestigious objects were highly prized as wartime plunder, and their use as ransom payments, gifts, or bribes must have influenced the course of history on a number of occasions.

Throughout the Middle Ages, tapestries continued to depict biblical stories, but historical, heraldic, legendary, allegorical and moral subjects became increasingly popular, as did scenes of hunting and country pursuits. The flower-strewn verdures of what were called *mille fleurs* tapestries were amongst the most charming of the late mediaeval period and reflect the concerns, life-styles and customs of the time so accurately that it is possible to date them from a study of their detail.

A 15th century set of six tapestries now in the Cluny Museum tells the allegorical story of the Lady and the Unicorn, the unicorn signifying the lady's virginity. In each hanging the lady, wearing rich apparel and gleaming jewellery, stands on ground carpeted with delicate flowers amongst which small animals frisk. She is portrayed removing a gold chain from her neck, feeding a falcon, playing an organ, touching a unicorn's horn, holding a mirror before a unicorn and plaiting a circlet of carnations. These gorgeously designed scenes, depicting the removal of her costly adornment and representing her senses of taste, hearing, touch, sight and smell symbolise the lady's desire to pursue happiness in preference to acquiring material wealth. The scented carnations, symbols of love, confirm her desire.

The finest 15th century Flemish tapestries to be found in England are the Hunting Tapestries belonging to the Duke of Devonshire. Not only are these scenes of great size (37ft by 14ft) but they are filled with incident and fine detail. Groups of people vigorously engaged in various forms of hunting rabbits, bears, wild boar, swans and water fowl jostle for space in a landscape crowded with miniature rivers, lakes and forest interspersed with castles. Participants and onlookers alike are thrown into relief by a background of delicate foliage and a foreground densely carpeted with equally delicate flowers. All human life is here, depicted with accuracy, perception and humour in splendid colour.

As the eye travels across each landscape, details of interest emerge from every busy scene:

- Two dogs attack a boar, rendering it helpless by biting its ears from behind.
- Clouds shedding tears, musical notes, floral patterns, mirror-writing and the written message "*Monte le desire*" embellish the green, blue, scarlet or gold garments of a group that has unleashed its hounds at the boar hunt.
- A girl hurls flint stones towards a bear-cub being dragged from its lair.
- A boy, having snatched a cygnet from its nest, falls into the waters of a moat and struggles to defend himself against the beating wings of an enraged swan.
- A falcon is tempted to return to its handler by a lure fashioned from ducks' wings.
- Two hounds are rewarded for felling a deer by tit-bits of bread soaked in their victim's blood, whilst a nobleman flirts with the miller's daughter under the eyes of her disapproving father.

Comparatively few mediaeval textiles have survived until today because of their fragile and vulnerable nature, but the best preserved tapestries owe their survival to the protective environment provided by a church or a domicile untouched by the effects of revolution, war, or neglect.

Henry VIII of England was said to possess two thousand tapestries, a quantity which barely equalled the collections of his contemporaries, the Burgundy Dukes, Austrian Emperors and Kings of France and Spain. At Hampton Court Palace alone were housed four hundred and thirty-six hangings. Through centuries of indifference and neglect this number was reduced, by 1952, to forty-five.

Audrey Swann

150 YEARS OF RAILWAY STATIONS

Mr. Gordon Buck — 18 March 1994

Mr. Buck explained that since the 1970s this subject of architecture had grown on him and he had toured the country photographing railway stations whether still functioning as such or closed.

His first slide showed Battle station with a cloudless sky. Built in 1852 to match the Abbey, it is the best example of Victorian architecture in the Gothic style. As residents of Battle know, the interior is similar to that of a small church. Many stations were built to complement the same styles of building as the nearby stately homes and to provide amenities for residents of the surrounding estates.

The talk continued with slides of 19th century styles of architecture covering Gothic, Tudor, Jacobean, Cottage Orné, Classical, French Renaissance, Italianate and Domestic Revival. Examples shown included Middlesborough, built in 1877 when Victorian Gothic revival was at its height, and more elaborate than Battle with a true hammerbeam roof in the booking hall; Wateringbury on the Paddock Wood to Maidstone line with its tall chimneys as an outstanding example of a small Tudor style country station when built in about 1855; Fenny Stratford, near Bedford, of 1846, as an example of Cottage Orné style being built of brick with cosmetic timbering and ornamental barge boards; and Wansford, near Peterborough, of 1845, in the Jacobean style incorporating Dutch gables.

Huddersfield of 1847 was built jointly by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway and Canal Company. The Coats of Arms of each company are on the front of each end of the building which is an example of a Palladian Classical station comprising a pedimented Corinthian Portico in the centre with symmetrical small pavilions at each end linked to the centre by colonnades.

The Curzon Street station in Birmingham, of 1838, terminus of the London and Birmingham Railway, with its Greek Revival Ionic frontage, was intended to counterbalance the structure at the London end of this railway at Euston, known as the Doric Arch, demolished when British Rail was trying to promote a modern image with the rebuilding of Euston station.

Isambard Brunel was a railway engineer who designed his own stations instead of engaging an architect. Examples are Bristol Temple Meads of 1840 with a Tudor style frontage, the interior of which is now used for exhibitions; and Culham of 1844 in the Thames valley as his smallest surviving station in the Tudor style.

Brunel also designed stations in timber with an overall roof covering two platforms and the tracks between, one example being Frome of 1850.

Domestic Revival is based on Tudor and the English Vernacular architecture and was a late Victorian invention. An example is Sandling of 1888, once a junction for a branch line to Hythe. Fully timbered with brick nogging and a gabled hip roof, it looks like a Wealden hall house.

Then into the 20th century. We saw Elgin of 1902, now closed, on the Great North of Scotland railway, in the Scottish Baronial style, and rebuilds which include Nottingham (Midland) 1904, Clacton 1929, Margate 1927, Hastings 1931, Chichester 1961, Birmingham International 1976 with escalators to the platforms, Milton Keynes 1982 to cope with that vast modern conurbation, and Knockholt, which Battle-Charing Cross trains pass through, rebuilt in 1984 after a fire and now with a nice pitched roof. In recent years Gatwick has been rebuilt to merge with the airport complex, likewise Stansted in 1991.

Finally, coming closer to home, we saw Eastbourne of 1886 which was provided with everything including a lantern roof; the second of the three Polegate stations, built in 1881 to accommodate trains to Hailsham and Tunbridge Wells and now a restaurant;

Bexhill Central with its lantern roof of 1901, Bexhill West of 1902, Rye of 1861, St. Leonards, Warrior Square, of 1862; then Robertsbridge, Etchingham, Stonegate, Wadhurst and Frant, Tunbridge Wells Central of 1845 and Tunbridge Wells West of 1866 in its Italianate style, now a restaurant complementing the modern Sainsbury complex and car park.

Ted Ryley

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR AND THE DUCHY OF NORMANDY

Professor David Bates, 14 October 1994
Professor of Mediaeval History, University of Glasgow

For one who had spent a lifetime in the study of Battle and the Conquest, said the lecturer, to traverse the battlefield in the evening of the very anniversary was still a moving experience, succeeded by addressing a flourishing society devoted to the advance of historical research. Recent studies of the battle ("Senlac" locally, "Hastings" to the more general world) and its consequences, by David Douglas and Allen Brown for example, had concentrated on its impact on England. There was a story to be told of its impact on Normandy, that duchy contiguous with the realms of the King of France.

Sir Maurice Powicke had described in 1913 King John's defeat at the hands of Philip Augustus, the French king, in 1204, and the loss of Normandy, as "the beginning of the end". It was in fact the latest of a series of insurrections, for instance by the counts of Alençon who sided with Matilda in 1135 and revolted against Henry II in 1173. Alençon stretched across the frontier. The Frankish kingdom could not but be interested in this neighbouring duchy where an instability might be as profitable as tenuous alliances in those days of great family local power. To add to this, William's conquest of 1066 had in a way created Normandy as a heart of a "colonial empire" (a 12th century poet compared Rouen with

Rome) and the French king had no longer to contend with a French-speaking duchy but with a duke who had made himself a king of a potentially powerful island kingdom. Less a vassal than a threat.

William succeeded to the dukedom in 1035 at the age of seven. He was illegitimate and his young life was marked by feuds among his nobles, by murders, and revolts. None the less he was lawfully designated by a father who had died on pilgrimage, and received the approbation of the great lords and of the King of France. A cohesion grew among the lords of the duchy which was to underpin the invasion of 1066.

In 1047 the king and William together put down the Count of Brion at Vale-ès-Dunes. Three years later William wedded Matilda, the daughter of the Count of Flanders, a powerful alliance. In 1051 Henry I of France allied himself with Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, against William. The pressure lasted until their deaths in the 1060s. William was dominant. But the seeds of Norman instability and of French political activity had been sown. Even among the lords in his invading army there were dissensions, for instance between William FitzOsbern and Roger Montgomery, dating back to murderous family feuds of the 1040s, as well as in Alençon and Bellême.

By 1072 England was secure. From that date until his death in 1087 in an attack on the French at Mantes, William spent eighty per cent of his remaining years in Normandy.

There may be some symbolism, despite a failed attempt to learn the English language, in the fact that he never processed north in England; perhaps a reversion, conscious or otherwise, to the old English ways of governance of his predecessors with their hearts in Wessex and London. At all events, Lanfranc held the reins and kept him informed. "Norwich is safe". "The Breton dung will soon be smashed". And William remains in Normandy. "There is a Danish threat". At such times of crisis, William returned. In Normandy, his wife Matilda held control, supported by the episcopacy, as the king's representative if

not actual regent. She settled in 1080, for example, a property dispute of the monks of Marmoutier referred to her by William. But a serious threat lay in the Conqueror's eldest son, Robert Curthose, who in 1066 at the age of 15 had been designated as heir to Normandy. Robert remained there in increasing power (according to a charter "William rules in England, Robert in Normandy, Philip in France") and William of Jumièges ends his chronicle "And now Robert is ruling us and long may he do so in prosperity". Robert deeply resented his father's ever increasing appearances in Normandy after 1072; in 1077-78 he sided with an attack on William by the French king and the Duke of Anjou. Relations remained bitter to the end.

It remains to consider to what extent Normandy itself suffered in the long run as the result of the Conquest. William's status had changed. On his seal the Duke of Normandy is represented as an equestrian knight; on the reverse he is an enthroned King of the English. In a charter with the King of France, both kings' cross-marks lie on the same level. He is Edward the Confessor's successor by right as well as by war. On his death, Robert his eldest son holds Normandy, William Rufus, England. But after Rufus, any claim of Robert to the English throne was dispelled by Henry I's victory over him at Tinchebrai in 1106. Normandy for forty years was peaceful and prosperous. English wealth arrived there both through magnate and abbey possessions. There was fine ecclesiastical building. But there was little progress as charters and taxes show, while the coinage was described as "barbaric". Above all was the ever present threat of revolt within or attack from without, William's preoccupation to the end of his life. A strategic marriage between the daughter of William FitzOsbern and Ralph the Anglo-Breton Earl of East Anglia resulted in a plotted rebellion, put down in England, but leading to a defeat by Ralph and the French in Brittany, and poisoned relations well into the 12th century. William's own daughter was married into Normandy, rather than some grand alliance, to little avail. At his death his garrisons were expelled from the great family castles and the

country descended into family feud and disorder. It is tempting to perceive in the late 11th century the old "colonial" progress of enterprise abroad, stagnation at home.

The lecturer answered four questions in some detail.

1. The political reasons for the apprehension of Harold in France by the Count of Ponthieu and his handing over to William remain obscure. Ponthieu was a vassal of the French king and an ally of William. Professor Bates perceived in it the complicated boundary/frontier questions of the time between France, Normandy and barons' lands interlocked across them.

2. It was true that William's reputation as warrior and ruler attracted individuals from across western Europe to join his invasion - "getting on the bandwaggon". After the Conquest some abandoned estates granted in England, others remained with enthusiasm and, for example, there was much pious donation to English monasteries from very early days. The important point however is that this support was in no way indicative of political alliance with other powers. It was individual and personal.

3. To what extent did the conflicting peoples of 1066 regard the Normans as French? The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle certainly did. It is likely that most Scandinavian elements in the population of Normandy had largely vanished by the mid-11th century. The language was French and, with some distinctions, the Normans conceived of themselves as part of the Frankish people and a Frankish realm.

4. What do we perceive of William's psychology? An interesting sidelight lies in the life of perhaps the greatest of the chroniclers of the time, Orderic Vitalis, born of mixed parentage near Shrewsbury, who took orders and lived until his death in 1141 in southern Normandy - and wrote perceptively of the successes of the Normans and the sufferings of the English. William attempted to learn English but gave up, perhaps bored or unattracted by life in an alien

land, but much more likely because exasperated if not obsessed by the constant internal revolts in and external pressures on his own land of Normandy which his wife held down and where his own son constantly rebelled. The ruthless oppression of the English immediately after 1066 must have had some effect on his conscience through the clergy. To conclude, the Conquest brought to William endless trouble and little enough joy.

John Springford

PAINTERS OF THE HASTINGS AREA FROM THE 18TH CENTURY

Miss Victoria Williams — 4 November 1994

Miss Williams began her talk by saying how lucky we are to have so many famous artists who have worked in this area and accordingly there are many images of this part of the world which are interesting for both historical and social reasons.

The earliest paintings appear in the early 17th century - which is when landscape painting emerged in its own right. The first slide we saw was of the Ypres Tower at Rye - when the geography was somewhat different and the sea came up to the bottom of the cliff. It was drawn in 1633 by Van Dyck, who at that time was employed by the English Court and probably painted for his own pleasure while he was waiting for a boat to Holland. In the late 17th century other Dutch artists worked in the area, employed by local landowners to paint their country seats. The resulting elegant studies with a taste of the Italian were a desire to record. There were various surveys of Sussex done in the late 17th century and local artists were employed to paint the views. These give us a wonderful record of the state of the town at that time.

Watercolours really began to come to the fore at the beginning of the 18th century. First Joseph Farrington and then Thomas Girtin and Turner began to paint pictures of Hastings which have ended up in galleries all over the world. Girtin made a tour of

antiquarian Sussex and Kent with his wealthy patron. His paintings are in monochrome because they were meant for the engravers. Many of the early paintings are of industrial scenes, such as the lime kilns below Hastings Castle. One of Miss Williams' favourite pictures is by Thomas Hearne and is called *Noah's Ark*. It is of a home on the Rope Walk below the Castle which had been made of the hulk of an old galleon kept vertical by large props. It is in the Hastings Museum. Turner had a long connection with the town starting in 1804 and continuing on and off until 1834. Jack Fuller, who lived at Brightling Park, asked Turner to produce four watercolours of his estate, but these were all influenced by the need to satisfy the engravers. However his later pictures were more like the Turner we all know. His *Ship Wreck off Hastings Beach* was painted purely for painting's sake and is full of atmosphere, swirling stormy seas, huge cliffs and wonderful skies. It was Turner capturing the mood of the elements and the forces of nature.

In the early 19th century many artists were using a *Camera Lucida* - an artists' aid - and so there are many topographically accurate views of the area.

In the middle of the century William Holman Hunt arrived in Fairlight. He was a leading member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who wished to revitalise art. They were committed to studying directly from nature. One of his first major pictures was of *Lover's Seat* painted in 1852. He also finished his famous picture *The Light of the World* at Fairlight, while waiting for the weather to improve. Hunt later rented Clive Vale Farm with Edward Lear who used Fairlight Quarry to finish a painting which he had started in Sicily. By 1868 Lear felt the character of the town was changing and he left. However Holman Hunt kept returning and brought his friend Millais down with him. Millais used the town of Winchelsea for the background of his famous picture *The Blind Girl*. It is an unusual painting, drawing attention to the social evil of child vagrancy and the sad plight of the disabled. Rossetti, also a member of the Brotherhood, joined Millais in Clive Vale. When his

mistress Elizabeth Siddal was very ill, he took a house in the High Street and did a set of very sensitive and beautiful drawings of her. They were married in St. Clements Church two years before she died. In 1880 he returned yet again, this time with William Morris and his wife, whom he painted. By the end of the century the influence of the French Impressionists was being felt. Lucien Pissarro, son of Camille, painted a picture of the old town in a wonderful blue haze. More recently Keith Baynes, allied to the Bloomsbury Group, has painted bright colourful pictures from his window in St. Leonards. Another major figure is Edward Burrows, who was associated with the Surrealist movement. His pictures have a disturbing dreamlike quality. There are still academicians working in the area and if you go to the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition you will see work of artists from Hastings. Some may seem difficult to understand but their pictures are based on the work of the painters of the past.

Joanne Lawrence

THE FARMSTEAD

Mr.John Elderton — 2 December 1994

The buildings needed to house the farmer, his family and his animals, as well as to conduct such operations as dairying and threshing, have undergone progressive modifications in line with changes in farming practices and social conditions. In the earliest times people and their animals all lived under the same roof but later one end of the building was devoted to the animals and cut off from the residential part. As the number of animals increased, their accommodation grew larger and a linear structure developed resembling a terrace of houses. Examples of this may be seen today in the Pyrenees and in the foothills of the Himalayas. An exception to the rule was to be found in the troubled and insecure area of the Scottish Borders where defence against raiding was a priority. Here a compact building with animals on the ground floor and their owners above them was favoured. At a later stage,

when it became the custom to bring cattle into a yard for fattening in the winter, the line of buildings was "bent" around the yard.

Farming was, and to a considerable extent remains, hard physical work with much lifting and carrying. Thus every attempt has been made to minimise effort. For example the store for harvested corn was adjacent to the threshing floor which was close to both the grain store and the yard in which the straw would be used by cattle before being returned to the fields as manure. In hilly country the slope of the land was often put to good use. Pigsties were also placed along the side of the yard for easy access to the troughs. The attraction of pigs to the farmer is that they produce roughly 1lb of meat for every 3lbs of feed. Beef cattle need twice as much feed per pound of meat.

Many farmsteads developed slowly and rather erratically over the years as the prosperity of farming varied, and there are many examples both of modified buildings and of buildings of widely differing dates attached to one another. In the 19th century a number of eminent landowners built "ideal" arrangements of farm buildings and while these are notable for the size and elegance of the structures, they follow the same general layout as more modest farms. In some cases such model farms were entirely new structures while in others they were developments of the existing home farm of an estate. At Penshurst Place a farmhouse of 1860 is attached to a barn of 1560.

The quality of farm land is sometimes reflected in the names of fields or of the farms themselves, "Nevergood", "Labour in Vain" and "Charity" being typical examples of poor soils. There are many cases of great changes in soil quality within a short distance, the heavy clay of "Nevergood" being separated by no more than the width of a road from the rich alluvial soil of "Evergood". Appreciation of this was the basis of the mediaeval practice of strip farming whereby a man would cultivate several strips of land in different fields around his village, thus

achieving some equitable sharing of good and poor land.

Aerial photographs which show up the lines of ploughing in former days offer an interesting insight into the changes in farming methods and are particularly relevant to modern criticism of the removal of hedges. Lines of ploughing clearly went right through the line of many present hedges, and reference to old maps often shows far fewer hedges in the late 18th century than in the 1970s. A further point of interest is that the turning circle of modern farm machines is closer to that of a mediaeval six ox plough than to that of a plough drawn by two horses. Thus the pattern of furrows has tended to revert to that of a much earlier period.

The need for sources of power had its effect on both the location and the design of farm buildings. From the time of the Domesday Book farms have grown up near to convenient sites for water mills, and the development of windmills in the 13th and 14th centuries provided another means of supplementing human and animal muscle. A shaft could also be turned by horses or donkeys walking in a circle as may still be seen today in some parts of the world and there is evidence of as many as six horses being harnessed to a capstan. The introduction of the steam traction engine transformed farming practice between the 1870s and the 1930s, but the introduction of machinery did not proceed as quickly as one might have expected for it depended upon local labour costs.

Despite the affection which Mr. Elderton felt for old farm buildings he could not condemn their conversion to residential use. Traditional barns, however picturesque, were of no agricultural use in the context of today's practice and machinery. To urge their retention was as sensible as advocating a vegetarian diet out of sympathy for lambs in the spring. If nobody wanted to eat them there would be no lambs. If nobody wished to convert them into houses there would be no traditional barns and oasts and they would simply be allowed to fall into decay.

Donald Nicol

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1994

VISIT TO WARWICKSHIRE, 22 - 26 APRIL

Not such an early start this year as we were to visit WOBURN ABBEY on the way up. Once again the sun shone, albeit somewhat fitfully, and we arrived in good time in order to refresh ourselves before visiting the Abbey.

Woburn Abbey is the home of the Earls and Dukes of Bedford whose ancestors can be traced back to a Stephen Russell of Dorset, Member of Parliament for Weymouth in 1394. Other Russells followed in his footsteps, the most notable being the Lord Russell who was executed in 1683 but gained for his father the title of Duke of Bedford.

One enters through the Monks' Burial Ground, remembering that the house stands on the site of a Cistercian monastery founded in 1145. The first room, the Book Room, formed part of the family quarters up to the end of the 18th century but now houses part of the collection of natural history books. Passing into the 4th Duke's bedroom one is struck by the four Mortlake tapestries dating from 1661. The two most attractive ones depict The Sacrifice at Lystra and the Death of Ananias based on cartoons which are owned by the Crown and on permanent loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum. The corridor which we next passed through, known as Paternoster Row, houses various family mementoes such as a small wooden box containing children's toys from the time of Queen Anne, medals presented to Lord George William Russell and a scarlet sash punctured by a bullet hole which he was wearing when wounded during the Peninsular Campaign. The Abbey was rebuilt in 1747 with the Grand Staircase, which one now ascends, appearing to have no visible support. Each tread is supported by the one above and below and has been there for over 200 years! Many family portraits hang on the walls with some painted by Van Dyck.

The next room, previously known as the Venetian Room, was renamed the Chinese Room after the Second World

War. The wallpaper is hand-made mid-18th century and looks as good as new. Standing on the floor are ferocious looking cast iron Oriental dogs which used to be placed outside buildings to keep away evil sprits.

Mary, the wife of the 11th Duke, was a highly educated and adventurous lady, skilled in nursing, photography, fishing, shooting, painting and aviation. It was the last interest that was to be the cause of her death. She set off one afternoon in her Gypsy Moth to view the floods in the Fens and never returned though debris from the plane was washed up on the coast. In this, her room, are mementoes of her life.

It would take more space than I am allowed to describe the whole of this magnificent house with its Canaletto paintings and its furniture. Everyone agreed that it was a superb start to our long weekend.

The following day we set off through the countryside for STRATFORD-UPON-AVON where we all visited the "World of Shakespeare". As we stood in the centre of a globe-like auditorium twenty-five life-size tableaux combined with dramatic sound and lighting effects unfolded before our eyes. This was the story of Elizabethan England with its pageantry and plagues, its royal fireworks and its stinking hovels. A really dramatic presentation. The rest of the day members were left to their own devices. A torrential downpour curtailed our plans but the sun came out before we had to return and time was spent admiring the flowerbeds along the riverside and some of us took a trip in one of the river launches to see the town from a different angle.

Sunday saw us at SULGRAVE MANOR, a superb example of a modest manor house and garden in the time of Shakespeare and home to the ancestors of George Washington. First mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 it later belonged to the Priory of St. Andrew, Northampton. It was surrendered to the Crown in 1539 and sold by Henry VIII to Lawrence Washington, who

built the present house. Each room is furnished to suit either the Tudor or the Queen Anne Period. The stone-flagged Tudor Great Hall is strikingly different from the wooden panelled 18th century Parlour. The kitchen, of the same period, was interesting with its range of pots, pans and other curious equipment. Upstairs two 18th century bedrooms were elegantly furnished with embroidered bed hangings and period items such as a spinning wheel, an embroidered waistcoat, shoes and samplers. The third bedroom is the Tudor Great Chamber, a large, high ceilinged, sparsely furnished room - a great contrast to the previous two rooms.

Across the road is the Star Inn where a sandwich lunch had been arranged. At £2 a head it was a bargain!

After our modest repast we retraced our steps to CANONS ASHBY, a National Trust property, home of the Dryden family. Built in the 1550s by John Dryden it was inhabited by the family until after the last war when they moved to Rhodesia. It was then let to tenants who were unable to cope with the decaying structure. In 1980 the house was made over to the National Trust, though the Drydens still retain a flat there.

Monday, a rather dreary day weatherwise, was the day we visited WARWICK CASTLE and KENILWORTH CASTLE.

The first, now run by Madame Tussauds, must be the finest mediaeval castle in England. The first castle on the site was built in 1068 on the orders of William the Conqueror. Four distinct periods in the life of the castle are clearly delineated to guide one round the castle. The Mediaeval Period from 1068 to 1485 covers the Gatehouse, Barbican, Armoury, Dungeon and Torture Chamber and the recently opened "Kingmaker". This is a series of tableaux in the Undercroft opened to the public for the very first time. The tableaux tell the story of Warwick making ready for battle. In the first scenario, Warwick is being dressed by his page. His great war horse dominates the next room, the stable. On to the smithy

where daggers are sharpened, armour polished and horseshoes quenched in a water bucket. Stone steps lead to the munitions stores where a stonemason carves cannon balls. Seamstresses work in the Wardrobe repairing a tent and the lining of a helmet and in the Treasury the Receiver General pays a soldier. Finally, all is ready and Warwick prepares to lead his troops into battle.

The Tudor and Jacobean Period runs from 1485 to 1625. The Ghost Tower, also known as the Watergate Tower, was occupied by Sir Fulke Greville when he obtained the castle from King James 1 in 1604. The castle was in a bad state of repair at this time and he occupied the tower whilst restoration was in progress. The dark panelled study is reputed to be haunted, hence the Ghost Tower, as he was murdered by his manservant.

The third period covers the 17th and 18th centuries and includes the Great Hall and the State Rooms. The Great Hall is the largest room in the castle, 40ft high, 62ft long and 45ft wide. This was the room where virtually everything happened. Severely damaged by fire it now houses a fine collection of armour, a beautiful shield said to have belonged to Bonnie Prince Charlie and a huge 14th century cooking pot used by the soldiery.

The Red Drawing Room is the first of the State Rooms, the name coming from the red lacquered panelling enhanced with gilding. The room contains a beautiful Louis XV bracket clock with a Boulle marquetry case, several fine portraits, a Wedgwood bust, Chippendale furniture and a collection of Ch'ien Lung porcelain.

From here we passed into the Cedar Drawing Room named after the carved panelling installed in 1670. This room bristles with wonderful furniture and crystal chandeliers, marble busts and bronzes and a magnificent plaster ceiling executed by Italian craftsmen about 1680.

Next, the Green Drawing Room, the name once again coming from the panelling. The Queen Anne Bedroom

takes its name from the bed which was used by the Queen at Windsor Castle. With its giltwood suite of furniture it was a gift to the Earl of Warwick from King George III. The Delft tapestries, dated 1604, are among the most valuable of the castle treasures. They illustrate the gardens of a mediaeval palace, possibly those of the Royal Palace at Brussels.

Last, but by no means least, is the Blue Boudoir. The dominant feature of this room is the large portrait of Henry VIII complemented by seven ladies to his left. They all wear the same pearl necklace. Did he pass it on when he tired of their company?

The last period, the Victorian Period from 1837 to 1901, is illustrated by a series of tableaux staged by Tussauds. They tell the story of a Royal Weekend party in 1898. During that summer the Earl and Countess of Warwick held many weekend parties and the one portrayed was the occasion when the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, was present. Famous figures of the times are most realistically sculptured - Clara Butt, Churchill, Dukes of York and Marlborough, a nurse with the Marquess of Blandford, Lord Curzon and Field Marshal Lord Roberts are but some of the superb models depicted.

Warwick Castle has been brought into the present century but with great accuracy and good taste.

Our visit to Kenilworth Castle on the way back to the hotel was brief. By this time it was raining and blowing hard so only a few intrepid members left the coach. The castle is one of the finest and most extensive ruins in England. The Mere which surrounded it is long gone but the Norman Keep, with its walls 20ft thick in places, dominates. Within the encircling walls built by King John are the remains of John of Gaunt's Great Hall and State Apartments and the Earl of Leicester's Stables and Gatehouse. An historical royal occasion was in 1575 when Queen Elizabeth I was entertained lavishly for nineteen days by the Earl of Leicester with music, dancing, fireworks and hunting.

Although we had to return on Tuesday we managed to make a last visit, this time to WIMPOLE HALL in Cambridgeshire. It is a house that has passed through many hands. Originally built by Sir Thomas Chicheley between 1640 and 1670 it passed in 1711 to Edward, Lord Harley, later 2nd Earl of Oxford, who made extensive additions. He formed a great library and among his wide circle of literary and artistic friends were Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift. Harley was extravagant and was forced to sell the estate in 1770 to the Hardwicke family which owned Wimpole for the next 150 years. In 1938 the house, having been long neglected, was bought by Captain George Bambridge and his wife Elsie, the daughter of Rudyard Kipling. What one sees, of and in this house, is mainly due to their efforts. The Main Entrance Hall was remodelled in 1840. The Hardwicke monogram and the greeting *Salve* is incorporated in the colourful encaustic tiled floor. Passing through the Ante Room into the South Drawing Room one sees two items of real merit, the fine carved overmantel and a curious 19th century painting "The Apotheosis of the Royal Family" showing George III ascending to heaven surrounded by his family. Next The Gallery, 662ft. long and originally three rooms in which Lord Harley kept his coins, antiquities and part of his vast collection of manuscripts.

The Book Room is the first of the remarkable rooms created by John Soane, the Neo-Classical architect. He was required to double the size of the room. Bookshelves were inserted which project out into the room. There is a fine gilt mirror and a blackened plaster bust of David Garrick near the entrance to the Library. The Library was built in 1730 to house Harley's huge collection of books on English history but the arrangement of the bookcases and windows has changed many times over the years. There is an ivory bust of Lord Chancellor Somers who left many of his books to his son-in-law, the 1st Earl of Hardwicke.

There were no less than another nine rooms to explore, more than space permits me to describe.

Having had lunch at the Hall we motored straight back to Battle after a most enjoyable five days.

THE DOWNS CHURCHES, 19 MAY

All three of the churches on our itinerary had been visited previously by the Society:

ARLINGTON in 1953, 1971 and 1972 (Transactions Nos.2, 20 and 21)

WILMINGTON in 1954 and 1962 (Transactions Nos. 3 and 11)

BERWICK in 1953, 1963, 1971 and 1980 (Transactions Nos. 2, 12, 20 and 27). Transactions No.12 contains a short account of the history of this church, which like the others has pre-Christian associations, and a comment on the modern wall paintings executed by Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and Quentin Bell.

LULLINGSTONE ROMAN VILLA, 22 SEPTEMBER

A good description of the Roman Villa at the time of the Society's first visit in 1959 is given in Transactions No.8. We returned there in 1963 and 1979 as reported in Transactions Nos.12 and 27; by 1963 the main excavations had been completed and a protective building erected over the site.

Planned visits to Deal and Walmer Castles and to Knole had unfortunately to be cancelled due to lack of support. However, a special outing to Buckingham Palace took place on 25 September and was greatly enjoyed by a full coachload of members.

Bernard Gillman-Davis

ARTICLES

THE CONSECRATION OF BATTLE ABBEY CHURCH IN 1094

Mr. John Springford

Battle's links with the historic events of 1066 are indissoluble. Of less national significance but still of momentous importance to the town and its surrounding countryside was the consecration and dedication to St. Martin of the abbey church on 11th February 1094, the ninth centenary of which was commemorated this year with an ecumenical service in the abbot's hall on the day itself, and a more formal celebration in St. Mary's Church on 16th October at the Battle Historical Society's annual service, in the presence this year of the Lord Lieutenant of the county and of the Mayor and Town Council of Battle.

For the precise details of the original consecration we rely on the Chronicle of Battle Abbey, which in fact gives the date as 11th February 1095. Sad to say, the chronicler was a year out. As Professor Eleanor Searle explains, he mistakenly post-dated William Rufus's coronation by a year; while moreover it is known that the King and Archbishop Anselm were together in Sussex in 1094, and the Chronicle states that both Rufus and Anselm were present in Battle for the occasion.

The Chronicle paints a vivid picture of the day. The building was virtually complete. Rufus had ordered the abbot, Gausbert, to carry out the consecration of the abbey church and had arrived with his barons, the bishops of Winchester, Chichester, Salisbury, Bath, Durham, Coutances and Rochester and "a great multitude of clerks and laymen". They were joined by Anselm who had but a few months before reluctantly accepted the primacy. There was magnificent ceremony, penitents were pardoned, "a banquet was offered to everyone...and the occasion ended most joyfully".

The chronicler not unnaturally was at pains to set down in great detail the bequests and reliefs of Rufus and his father the Conqueror, most particularly the wealth of land which for the following four and a

half centuries was to render the abbey one of the richest in the kingdom and one of the most able in management. But he perhaps took for granted the form of service which would have accompanied the dedication, simply recording that the bishops grandly dedicated the church to the Holy Trinity, the Virgin, and "the blessed Martin, confessor of Christ." St. Martin was the 4th century bishop of Tours who founded the first monastery in Gaul. One recalls Bede's St. Martin's in Canterbury, "built while the Romans were still in the island". But it would be fantasy to think the Normans had this in mind in 1094. When the Conqueror ordered its foundation on the site of the battle, Benedictine monks were brought from the house of St. Martin in Marmoutier to build his new abbey.

So to those charged with looking into the form of service for the purposes of the 1994 commemorations it was to search elsewhere. "The church in the 1st and 2nd centuries", wrote the Bishop of Chichester this month, "was plagued by people with strange teachings. As a result of these controversies the Church came to value more than ever an ordered historic continuity, and to formulate rules about it". The apostolic succession, the authority of bishops, the governance of worship and of property. It is no surprise to find a ruined 5th or 6th century church in Jerash with the same characteristics as a 20th century church in England; nor to learn that the rite of consecration of a church in 11th century Battle differed little from that of its western predecessors of early times and persists to the present.

It was the duty of the bishop to consecrate. And the service was based on the "house of God" in the scriptures - Jacob's pillar, the temple of Solomon, Zacchaeus' welcome of Jesus to his home, and the celebration of the Eucharist. The ceremonial was elaborate and prolonged: overnight preparation of the relics, the solemn entry of the bishop, cleansing processions without and within the church, the anointing of the twelve consecration crosses, the tracing of the Greek and Latin alphabets in the

ashes, finally the consecration of the altar and *missa dedicationis*. In earlier days the laity was excluded until late in the proceedings. It may be imagined that in this small Norman church, few others than the clergy and the monks, and the king and his closest barons, would have been present.

For the ninth centenary commemoration service on the day itself, the four churches of Battle agreed that it should be opened with a brief re-enactment of the scene in 1094. And as we have seen, from the evidence of 11th century pontificals (for example the Claudius mss in the British Library), the form of procedure was clear. But the reproduction of what might have been the texts and music of the time raised question marks. Latin, clearly. And scriptural quotations, familiar to us in English - *Zacchaee descende, attolite portas, pax huic domui, asperges me, erexit Iacob lapidem, veni sancte Spiritus*. But the music itself? Scholarship came to the rescue, and one can do no better than quote from the footnote to the order of service paper:- "The representation is based on Ms 44 in the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a Canterbury pontifical of about 1070. In places unclear (the dedication order in the pontifical does not have neums throughout) recourse has been had to Ms B XI 10 (early 12th century) in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, which appears virtually to correspond with Ms 44 in text and music (so far as can be judged from unstaved neums) and is thought, though not proven, to be also of Canterbury provenance. We are indebted to the Colleges, and especially to the Archivist of the Parker Library and of the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence, Mrs. C.P. Hall." To conclude, the Battle Abbey School Girls Choir sang an anthem composed by their head of music, Jacqueline Spriggs - *Ecce tabernaculum Dei*.

The formal choral service in St. Mary's Church took the form of six readings: Jacob's pillar (a Battle Abbey School pupil), Solomon's temple (a representative of English Heritage), Christ in the temple (the Mayor), the Conversion of 597 according to Bede (a Vice President of Battle Historical

Society), the Battle Abbey Chronicle account of 1094 (the Lord Lieutenant) and St. John's New Jerusalem (the Dean, who also preached). Cantors sang *Zacchaee festinans descende*; the Sunday School responded with their version in English. Hymns stretched from the 7th to the 20th centuries, the choir sang Bairstow's "Blessed City, Heavenly Salem" accompanied by William Davies, BBC organist, whose mentor and friend was Sir George Thalben Ball.

The tenth centenary falls in 2094. Meanwhile 1994 has been recorded for the archives.

THE ROMAN BATH-HOUSE AT BEAUPORT PARK
Mr. John Springford

It was in 1977 that the uncovering of the Roman remains in Beauport Park was made public in the *Hastings Observer*, somewhat to the dismay of archaeologists concerned with protective security. This year, seventeen years later, a recent announcement has revealed proposals to consolidate the excavated area and eventually open it to the public. A brief summary for the information of Battle Historical Society members may therefore perhaps be timely.

The site was apparently known in 1870, but it was not until Dr. Gerald Brodribb's extensive exploration and excavations of the 1960s and 1970s, supported by Hastings archaeologists, that its precise nature came to light - a Roman bath-house of the late 1st or the 2nd century AD with stone walls in places many feet high, together with a considerable number of artefacts - Samian pottery, nails, coins, two thousand *Classis Britannicus* stamped tiles and a trace of wall-painting which failed to stand up to exposure. The Roman iron industry with its bloomery sites and cinder heaps well known in Crowhurst and other adjoining areas is well attested in this part of East Sussex with its ore, timber and streams. Peter Salway in *Roman Britain* (OUP 1981) gives a graphic account of the industry before eventually it moved away to the Forest of Dean. It can hardly be

doubted that Beauport Park was a centre of these mining and smelting operations, the iron probably being got away by sea to Dover (under *Classis Britannicus* control?) via the Brede from Sedlescombe, possibly even by the Combe Haven. The site was the subject of an account by Dr. Brodribb and Dr. Henry Cleere in *Britannia* Vol XIX 1988. It included an illustration of an inscription on stone bearing the name BASS... a bailiff who repaired the bath-house at some time.

Such a Roman site must be of appeal both to scholars and the interested public. As has been pointed out elsewhere, Roman remains in this country are numerous, but consist mainly of fortification or civilian residence. A major industrial site is practically unique. The problems are to uncover the already excavated area, to extend exploration of the contiguous areas, to display the buildings and exhibit the artefacts, and to provide the security a scheduled monument demands. The land of the site has been leased by the owners for fifty years at a nominal rent; and the Beauport Park Archaeological Trust has been set up to secure grant aid and other financial assistance. English Heritage is actively involved, and the project has the warm support of the local authorities of Hastings and Rother. A distinct possibility therefore of Battle housing not only the site of one of the most significant battles in English history but also of a major industry of our imperial Roman overlords, preceding it by some nine centuries. Though it may be some little while before the first tourists are able to present themselves at the gate.

(An account of his excavation of the site in 1970 was given by Dr. Brodribb in a lecture to the Society on 15th March 1991, reported in Newsletter No.10)

HERCULES BRABAZON BRABAZON

Mrs. Pauline Raymond

The name of Hercules Brabazon Brabazon would have been well known to all living in the village of Sedlescombe towards the end of the 19th century. He was the Squire and lived in the "big house" on the Oaklands Estate and many cottagers would have looked to him, as to his father before him, for their employment.

Hercules was born a "Sharpe" in 1822, his parents being Hercules and Anne Mary Sharpe, and was given his mother's maiden name as his second Christian name. His mother's family held estates in Co. Mayo in Ireland and his father's family had lived for generations at Domons, Northiam, before Hercules Sharpe bought Hole Farm on the slopes of the Brede Valley when the young Hercules was a boy. Hole Farm was soon demolished and replaced by Oaklands House which was designed by the famous architect Decimus Burton and this remained the family home for almost a hundred and twenty years.

The young Hercules had an elder brother William and, when an uncle died, he was left the Brabazon estates in Co. Mayo. However, William died tragically young in his twenties and the estates passed to Hercules. One of the stipulations of their uncle's will had been that both boys should assume the name of "Brabazon" as their surname in place of "Sharpe". And so Hercules Brabazon Sharpe changed his name to Hercules Brabazon Brabazon or H.B.B. and became a man of independent means.

Hercules was gentle with a great love of music and art. He was a gifted pianist and even as a boy he loved to draw and study the beauty of colour in nature and to record in water colour scenes from his travels. As with many of the well-to-do of the day, Hercules spent much time travelling away from home and he painted scenes of Athens, Capri, Delhi, Cairo, Algiers, Geneva, Amiens and Venice. At home he continued to paint the scenes around him, for example *A Cottage in Sedlescombe*, *A Stormy Sunset in Sussex*,

View at Oaklands and the roses from the rose garden at Oaklands. As a wealthy man he had no need to paint in order to live and appeared to have no desire to sell his works. Painting was a sheer joy to him. He counted amongst his friends Gertrude Jekyll who provided the decorations in his study at Oaklands, Lord Brassey, writers Henry James of Rye and Rudyard Kipling of Burwash and skilful painter Marianne North from Hastings who shared with him a love of the beauty of nature and travel as well as being very musical. It was not until Hercules was 70 that he was persuaded to hold an Exhibition of his work at the Goupil Galleries after which his work was exhibited at the National Galleries of London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Paris and New York. After his death he was described as "the best water colour painter since Turner".

Back at home, despite much time spent away, he looked after the Oaklands Estate very well for almost fifty years. The Estate continued to expand so that, by the time of his death in 1906, H.B.B. was the owner of most of the houses in The Street, Sedlescombe, as well as the major farms at Hurst and Jacobs. He did not only buy the houses but altered and expanded them, creating work for the men of the Village.

H.B.B.'s death at the age of 84 in 1906 was mourned by all the Village. He had never married and his estate was left to his nephew Harvey Trewythen Brabazon Combe, with his large and carefully-catalogued collection of paintings going to his nephew's wife Amy Florence Combe. Harvey and Amy also played an important part in the life of the Village. Harvey was the first Chairman of the Parish Council and a Churchwarden and Amy's name can be found mentioned in the Sedlescombe Parish Magazine in connection with good deeds such as a "Parochial Tea" in the school-house in 1909 when it is recorded "Parishioners came in their hundreds", and a fête to raise money for the Church Repairing Fund and the Sedlescombe Nursing Association.

In 1910, after receiving daily demands for a place to see the work of Hercules Brabazon Brabazon, Amy Combe

in conjuncion with the Committee of the Hastings Museum (H.B.B. had been its Vice President for 15 years) opened the Brabazon Gallery in one of the family's properties in Sedlescombe Street, "The Tithe Barn". A large gathering including representatives of all the wealthy local families attended the Opening Ceremony and newspaper reports of the day were generous in their praise of Sedlescombe Village, H.B.B. and the new Gallery.

Just three years later the country was at war and Amy Combe was again in the forefront of Village life using the Brabazon Gallery as a workroom where Village women met each week in order to make an assortment of bandages, pyjamas and hot water bottle covers as well as "treasure bags" for the men at the Front. Some of the items made at these weekly meetings were sold at special sales at Oaklands so that others could send them as presents to the soldiers. A photograph shows the women all smartly dressed and not one bare-headed, seated at their sewing machines in the Tithe Barn and with around them on the walls many of H.B.B.'s paintings.

After the war, things were just not the same for the gentry at Oaklands. Financial problems loomed large and in the mid 1920s Amy Combe decided to sell the collection to raise funds. Three huge sales of paintings were held within twenty-seven months and three thousand two hundred of H.B.B.'s watercolours, pastels and pencil sketches were sold. This glut of his work had a disastrous effect on his reputation. Many looked to the price of art as a measure of quality and H.B.B. became worthless for in the Bond Street Galleries prices were as low as £1 per drawing.

The mid-twenties also saw the splitting up of the Oaklands Estate with two large auctions of more than fifty lots. A study of the auction catalogues shows just how extensive the ownership of Village land and property had been in the days of Hercules Brabazon Brabazon. Today, the Pestalozzi Children's Village owns the land surrounding the old house which has returned to a private dwelling after use as an

office. The Tithe Barn, which some people wished to see moved to a site next to the Hastings Museum in 1930, is currently an antique shop but has, under various owners, been used as a tea room and restaurant.

One hundred years later, H.B.B.'s initials can still be seen etched into the fronts of houses in the Village which he altered and extended and these serve as a lasting reminder of a man who was so much part of Sedlescombe village life.

(H.B.B.'s nephew and heir, Harvey T.B. Combe, was elected Chairman of the first Sedlescombe Parish Council in 1894, the year in which parish councils came into being under Gladstone's new Local Government Act. As part of the Parish Council's centenary celebrations in 1994, Mrs. Raymond has written a comprehensive record of its achievements in a booklet titled *A Century of Village Life*)

THE LIBRARY

The Battle and District Historical Society library has been in existence for forty-one years. It was opened on 12th December 1953 with a small collection of books which had been loaned by members of the Society. Two months previously the first actual purchase had been made - Freeman's *Norman Conquest* - an appropriate title with which to start an historical collection.

The fortunes of the library were varied and attendance was disappointing. Opening was daily and a charge of 6d. per book borrowed was made, but by April 1954 the Committee decided to open on Tuesdays and Saturdays only. By July 1954 the library, and the museum, had to look for other accommodation and in October 1954 a move was made to the Toc H room in Old Brewery Yard. At this period a large collection of local books was bequeathed by Mrs. Chown, and this was the inception of the fine historical collection which now exists. After two more moves the library was obliged to close for two years in 1963 due,

again, to lack of premises, but re-opened in July 1965 in the present venue at Langton House.

Administration of the running of the library was first undertaken by Miss Jesanne Robertson, the then secretary of the Museum Trust, followed by two willing enthusiasts both of whom left the district. It was offered to me in 1986. The collection is now classified and catalogued; there is an Author Index, and a Subject Index is being devised.

There are nearly 750 books on the shelves, most of them for loan, together with a collection of journals. These include *The Historian, Sussex History, Sussex Industrial History, The Wealden Iron Group Journal,* past transactions of the Society, Parish Magazines, and a variety of other interesting material. The collection is financed by the Historical Society and added to regularly; the most recent additions include a further volume of *The Anglo-Norman Studies* and an interesting small book by Geoff Hutchinson of English Heritage entitled *Martello Towers: a brief history,* and most recently the *Story of Battle Abbey School* by June Parker, a former Headmistress of the school.

Opening hours during the winter are on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10 until 12 and half an hour before the Friday lectures, but I am always pleased to open it at other times if contacted. During the summer months when the museum is open the library is available during museum hours each day on production of a Society membership card.

Why not come in and see what may interest you?

Gladys Young

OBITUARY

MISS RUTH CHIVERTON

We regret to record the death of Ruth Haslehurst Chiverton, which occurred on 14th January 1995, a few days before her 90th birthday. Since coming to Battle in 1938, Ruth Chiverton had maintained a close interest in many spheres of life in the town, and an active involvement interrupted only by war service. She was one of the very first members to join our Society on its formation in 1950, and was elected an Honorary Member by virtue of her dedicated and valuable service on the Committee without a break from 1951 to 1974.