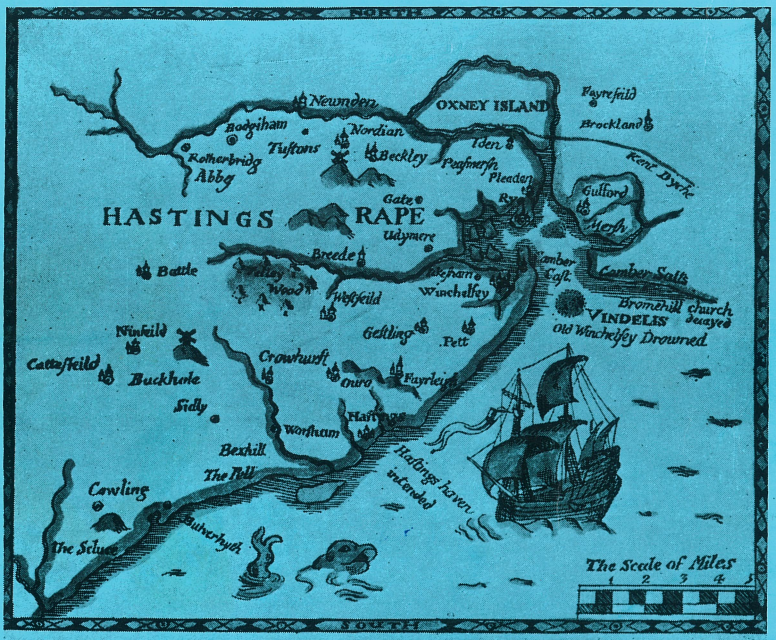
# BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY




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

# Newsletter

**APRIL, 1985** **No. 3**

## FOREWORD

Our third Newsletter is very much the mixture as before, except that this time we have provided notes on all the lectures, of which all save one I have attempted to summarise myself. This has not been an easy task, and there is much interesting material that I have omitted, since its inclusion would have increased printing costs unacceptably. Moreover I have not consulted speakers' notes, so poorish acoustics, hardness of hearing or failure to comprehend may have led to inaccuracies. If so, the errors are mine and not those of the lecturers!

I am grateful to those who have reported on our well supported summer outings.

The Spring Party in the Church Hall proved a popular innovation and so, too, has the provision of coffee after our meetings. Sadly we were not able to hold our Commemoration Party in the Abbot's Hall in 1984 but we hope to be able to return there this coming October.

Finally I must pay tribute to Lorna Sanders. After her very successful two years as Chairman she leaves office with the satisfaction of knowing that her term has seen a welcome increase in membership. It has been a pleasure to serve under her Chairmanship, a view which I know would be echoed by my fellow Committee members.

K.M. Reader,
Chairman.

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Affiliated to the Sussex Archaeological Society,
the Sussex Archaeological Trust, and the
South-Eastern Federation of Museums and Art Galleries.

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# NORMANS IN THE SOUTH

## The Commemoration Lecture: The President of the Society, Professor R. Allen Brown, D.Phil., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S. 14th October, 1983

Our President recounted the colourful story of the Normans who, coming to Italy as mercenary adventurers, made themselves masters of Southern Italy and Sicily.

The 11th and first half of the 12th centuries provided the most impressive and romantic episodes of the Norman period; the creation of the Duchy of Normandy itself, the conquest of England, the progressive domination of Southern Italy, and the First Crusade with Bohemund, son of Robert Guiscard, becoming Prince of Antioch.

Superb cavalrymen, by force of arms and marriage into the local aristocracy, they achieved, first lordships, and then supremacy. There was no one decisive battle like Senlac, but piecemeal expansion, private enterprise and initiative without central direction. It is a tale of chivalry and bloodshed, cruelty alongside genuine piety, with the pilgrim shrine of Mont St. Angelo the likely setting for the introduction, and the great Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino figuring prominently in its later chapters. And the love of Roger, the Great Count of Sicily, for Judith of Grantmesnil is the very stuff of medieval romance.

Lombard Principalities at odds with one another, rebellions against the Eastern Roman Emperior at Constantinople, Greek versus Lombard, Latin Christianity against Greek Orthodox, Christianity against Islam (Sicily had been ruled by a Moslem emirate since the 9th century), the constant strife and shifting alliances gave the Normans their opportunity. Norman pilgrims homeward bound through Italy may well have seen the pickings that might come their way by selling their swords to the highest bidder, and subsequent adventurers, despite a heavy defeat at Cannae in 1017 when they intervened on the losing side in a rising against the Byzantines, so increased their military reputation that by 1030 their leader, Rainulf, had become Prince of Aversa and the Normans had thus acquired their first Italian lordship. His successors were to become Princes of Capua. In 1035 the first of the Hauteville brothers arrived, and Melfi was theirs by 1041. Robert Guiscard, the most successful of the brothers, acquired Apulia and Calabria. The Pope, alarmed at their growing power, their proximity to Benevento (a papal fief) and their despoiling of church lands, made an alliance with Constantinople against them, but before the Byzantines could link up with the papal army the latter was decisively defeated by the Normans at Civitate (1053). The Byzantines withdrew and Pope Leo IX, virtually a prisoner, gave formal recognition to the Norman fiefs. Similar recognition was later to be given by the German Holy Roman Emperor. Expansion continued. Amalfi was theirs by 1073, Salerno in 1086. Reggio had already fallen in 1066, Bari in 1071, and

thus both the Lombard and Byzantine presence in the south was at an end.

It was then the turn of Moslem Sicily. Robert Guiscard's younger brother, Roger, undertook what he and his followers could claim to be a holy war against the infidel. It did not prove an easy conquest. Messina eventually fell in 1061, but it was not until 1066 that effective Saracen resistence was at an end, and indeed Palermo held out until 1072. Thus Roger became Great Count of Sicily, and his son, also Roger, was to rule over all the Norman possessions in South Italy as Duke of Apulia and King of Sicily, and this Kingdom of the Two Sicilies as it came to be known, lasted until the 19th century. And the Normans, turned devout papal champions after Civitate, rescued Gregory VII from the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, the Pope dying soon afterwards in Norman Salerno.

One of the characteristics of "Normanitas" is undoubtedly the perception and successful exploitation of opportunities. The export of overcrowded chivalry from Normandy was not large numerically, but heavy cavalry and the lance, military excellence and ability, ruthlessness and cruelty coexisting with genuine religious fervour carried the day. The Normans were few, but like the Battle of Britain pilots they were an élite few. In Sicily they achieved a tolerant and enlightened fusion of Greek, Latin and Arab, and art and learning flourished. They contributed greatly to the Hildebrandine reforms in the Church and they spearheaded the crusading movement. They produced great buildings, and no more splendid monuments exist than those that have survived earthquake or replacement by baroque confections. The Normans were the most eclectic of people, and this perhaps is the very essence of "Normanitas"; they were never more Norman than when building non-Norman buildings!

## RURAL CHURCHES OF ROMNEY MARSH

### Mr. Barry Funnell 28th October, 1983

Mr. Barry Funnell is an enthusiastic student of the History of Sussex and Kent, and well known for the high standard of his lectures on a wide variety of subjects. That this lecture was a model of exposition illustrated by excellent slides, was, therefore, no surprise.

What is now Romney Marsh, with its rich, green sheep-grazing areas and arable fields was, in early times, a vast bay of the sea. Mr. Funnell gave an outline of the various stages in the transformation from sea to land, both by the forces of nature and by human action, culminating in the construction of the great sea wall which now protects some 84,000 acres from the sea.

Then followed an illustrated and descriptive 'tour' of some 14 churches scattered over the Marsh; many built on man-made mounds because of the nature of the ground, and several which cannot easily be reached by transport. These churches are

mostly small, and few are now used for regular services. The Romney Marsh Rural Churches Trust does splendid work in helping to preserve them, and receives considerable support and help from, among others, the Farmers' Union.

The churches, most of which were built in the 12th and 13th centuries, contain interesting artifacts, ornamental text boards being a characteristic feature of many. Other noteworthy objects are the bizarre carvings on the font in St. Clement at Old Romney, the great tithe scales at St. Augustine, Brookland, and at St. George Ivychurch the portable sedan-like shelter known as a Hudd, which protected the parson from the rain during a grave side service, and a Russian Orthodox reredos and Holman Hunt window in St. Mary in the Marsh where E. Nesbit of "Railway Children" fame lies buried. And the author of the Ingoldsby legends, the Rev. Thomas Barham, was at one time the Rector of St. Dunstan, Snargate, a church which contains a wall painting of a Tudor Great Ship of around 1500.

Ruins at Eastbridge, Midley, Broomhill and Orgarswick mark the sites of churches which have not survived the ravages of time.

It is difficult to understand, and one can only speculate, why so many churches were built on the Marsh, especially when one considers that the present population of the area, including New Romney and Lydd which together account for some 9,000, is only of the order of 12,000.

Jack Sanders.

## THE ROMANS IN SUSSEX

### Mr. Michael Taylor 11th November, 1983

Mr. Taylor gave what he stressed could be no more than an introductory talk on the Romans in the area now known as Sussex; there was much more that could be said in depth and detail than could be covered in a short space of time. He then sketched the circumstances that led to the Claudian invasion (the subjugation of the Atrebates, friendly to Rome, by the Catuvellauni from north of the Thames who were hostile), and the role of Cogidubnus. As a client king he ruled over a portion of Southern Britain (what is now Sussex, Berkshire, and parts of Hampshire and Surrey) receiving Roman citizenship and privileges from the Romans, and almost certainly the occupant of the Fishbourne palace. But why the difference between "civilized" West Sussex with its villas and town life, and East Sussex which lacks comparable urban or domestic settlement? Only speculation is possible at present, but the answer many well lie in the division of the kingdom of Cogidubnus after his death. The western part became the territory of the Regni with their civic centre at Chichester, and of the Atrebati with their capital at Silchester. What is now East Sussex may well have been an Imperial estate, given the military and economic importance of its iron workings at that time, and the proximity of the Classis Britannica as witnessed by that fleet's stamps on the profusion of tiles on the site of the military style bath house at Beauport Park.

After referring to the Saxon shore forts and the eventual Roman withdrawal, Mr. Taylor concluded that his main point must be that as yet we knew very little about the Roman occupation of East Sussex, that current information raised more questions than answers, and that much work remained to be done.

## HISTORY OF OAST HOUSES

### Mrs. Gwen Jones 9th December, 1983

After an account of the introduction of hops into this country and their use in brewing, Mrs. Gwen Jones illustrated by means of a large collection of slides of considerable local interest, the development of oast houses from late medieval times to the present. What emerged provided confirmation of her point that there was no such thing as a typical oast house. Early ones had been simple, unpartitioned lathe and plaster constructions, with kiln and chimney centrally placed. By the end of the 17th century the chimney was at one end, and in the course of time oast houses were partitioned, the use of brick diminished the earlier fire risk, and many were constructed with two or even three kilns. The roundel, now such a characteristic feature, does not appear before the 19th century, which is why many old farm buildings which were formerly oast houses may not be recognised as such.

Hops were certainly grown in the Battle area. 5% of Battle acreage was under hops, 6% in Guestling, with a higher percentage north of the Brede. Old tithe records show the clergy getting 10/- to 16/- an acre, depending on yield.

The removal of import duty on hops and competition from abroad led to the virtual disappearance of hop growing in this part of the country, where quite apart from this new factor the soil was less suitable for hop growing than that of Kent with the result that there had been considerable annual variations in crop yields and some failures.

Mrs. Jones concluded with slides showing the use now made of electricity and modern technology in oast houses and in hop picking. The industry was thus far less labour intensive than formerly. And in modern oast houses the furnaces and kilns are back inside the building as they were in the 16th century.

## HISTORY OF TUDOR RYE

### Dr. G. Mayhew 13th January, 1984

Dr. Mayhew began by stressing and exemplifying the unique nature of the volume and detail of Rye's records, a factor which had prompted his research into the history of the town.

Rye in the 16th century was the wealthiest town in Sussex. Its prosperity was bound up with the cloth trade with the Netherlands, the export of wool, timber and iron, the import of wine and spices, profits from privateering and prisoners of war, shipbuilding, lodgings for travellers, and all those trades and services essential in a major port which was also

the main point of exit for military expeditions to the continent. The influx of industrious French Huguenots swelled the town's population and no doubt contributed to the town's prosperity.

The records tell much about the social composition of the town and who was living where. Rye was an exciting place to live in, but for many life was hard and wages were low. A daily wage for a casual labourer was no more than 10d in summer and 8d in winter. Alongside those with possessions valued at £500 to £1,000 for probate was the widow who left only her pots and pans. Rye attracted surplus population from surrounding parishes, younger sons who came in from the farms, made their pile and became gentry - those who survived the outbreaks of plague. The town was a little commonwealth, with its own customs and law courts, and exempt from county jurisdiction. The Mayor was both Head of the Corporation and the representative of the Crown. If a royal decree was disliked it was ignored, and Government turned a blind eye because of the importance of the town to the nation's defence and especially its contribution to the fleet. Rye harboured Dutch rebels and French Protestants even when the government sought to preserve good relations with Spain and France. It was an early centre of Protestantism, influenced by its relations with Antwerp from whence were smuggled Tyndale Bibles.

Life in the town had its lighter side. Rye was on the minstrel circuit, and there were the King's Players, those of the Lord Warden and the Earl of Leicester, the Easter Resurrection Play with its holiday atmosphere, bear baiting, and before the Reformation the May Day revels with Mayde and Monsterand barrels of beer. Even the humblest took part in these junketings. Inevitably the port had its share of petty criminals, card sharpers, "lewd women", and "sturdy beggars" to be whipped through the town.

The 1580's saw the beginning of decline. War, whether with France or Spain, and especially the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain, disrupted traditional trade. Huguenots returned to France with the accession of Henry IV, Elizabeth discouraged privateering, and war involved crippling expenditure for the town. The harbour silted up, and with the discovery of the New World trade shifted from the Channel to the western ports, and the American trade called for larger vessels than Rye harbour could accommodate. Population declined from 3-3½ thousand to just under 2,000 and Rye remained something of a backwater during the centuries that followed, largely untouched by time, and with its medieval street plan surviving still.

FILM EVENING 27th January, 1984

Two films were shown, and these proved a popular innovation in the annual programme.

Imperial City The greatest artistic enterprise of the British Empire was the building of New Delhi, and the film showed the creation of the city from its conception to its completion.

This story of the conflict between Art and Politics, about architecture as an instrument of the Raj, and the attempts to reconcile Imperial rule with Indian nationalism, followed the architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in their search for an appropriate style.

Fame and Fashion This told the remarkable story of the Pauline de Bush collection of costumes bequeathed to the National Trust and now housed at Kollerton House in Devon. Original costumes from the mid 18th century to the 1920's were displayed in contemporary settings. From two people dressed in the clothes of the time of Nelson and Lady Hamilton on board H.M.S. Victory we were transported to 18th century Bath and to the Hampshire of Jane Austen and then to Epsom to a Derby scene of the 1860's.

Our thanks to Mr. Denny for arranging this interesting programme.

## THE ROBERTSON MEMORIAL LECTURE: RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT BATTLE ABBEY

### Dr. John Hare 10th February, 1984

Recent excavations had slightly modified the chronological framework of the Abbey. The Abbey site, Dr. Hare reminded us, was one which the monks had sought to avoid, but they had been overruled by the Conqueror. The first structure was unpretentious, but nothing remains of the more humble Norman buildings save two rows of stones and a little of the west end of the Norman church. The 13th century saw the wholesale transformation of the monastic buildings, the rebuilding of the Abbot's house and the dormitory range, the building of the Chapter House etc.. The Abbot, now playing a major role in the efficient administration of the vast Abbey estates, had acquired the resources for this impressive building programme. In the 14th and 15th centuries there was no further work on this scale, though 1388 saw the building of the Great Gatehouse, and the Hall replaced by a more imposing edifice (now the Hall of the Girls' School). In the 15th century the bays of the cloister were rebuilt. With the Dissolution the Abbot's house became the residence of Sir Anthony Browne, and rubble from buildings wholly or partially demolished, was used to fill in and to some extent level the awkward site.

The Department of the Environment had begun a three year programme of excavations of which the recent one would be the basis for future work. The team had concentrated on the Chapter House and reredorter and the surrounding area. Sir Harold Brakspear's plan had proved remarkably accurate. The apse of the Norman Church had been uncovered and the apsidal Chapter House. The foundations of the south transept proved to be later than the rest of the church and there had been some rebuilding around 1200. Small pieces of window glass were found and some graves, but nothing in the way of grave finds. Remains of marble capitals were discovered, on

stylistic grounds from around 1160, and these would have been part of the pre-13th century cloisters built by Walter de Lucy and not known before the excavation. A room with a fireplace leading to the reredorter was found - the reredorter being of the same date as the dormitory block and built on its base, the site having been levelled for the purpose. There was no evidence of an earlier building on the reredorter site. An early 15th century drainage system was revealed, rainwater drains, some 14th century tiles, window glass similar to that found on the Chapter House site, parchment pricks, the remains of an ivory tau cross, alembics, and bones of animals and birds. But what had been the centre of monastic life had clearly become Sir Anthony Browne's backyard.

The quantity of material found indicated the major importance of the 13th century building programme and its enormous cost. The excavations had shown, too, how the buildings had coped effectively with a basically unsuitable site. The Abbey would still be a monument of national importance even if it were not the site of Senlac in 1066.

## THE ABBEY OF ROBERTSBRIDGE

### Dr. Peter Brandon 29th February, 1984

In a welcome return visit Dr. Brandon gave an account of the Cistercian Abbey of Robertsbridge, comparing it with the great Benedictine Abbey of Battle. The 12th century produced one of the great revitalising phases in the history of the Church. From the foundation of Citeaux in 1098 the Cistercian order spread throughout Europe with remarkable rapidity. The Benedictines had become lax, involved in worldly affairs, the abbots advisers of monarchs, statesmen preoccupied with national and local issues. The Cistercians followed a much stricter interpretation of the rule of St. Benedict.

The Cistercians were great agriculturalists, cattle raisers and exploiters of waste land. They differed from the Benedictines in that they made use of lay brothers to do the manual work. With the Benedictines labour was undertaken by villeins and serfs, and Battle records show evidence of labour disputes which the creation of a lay brotherhood avoided. Battle Abbey was richly endowed, with estates all over England and Wales, and here there is evidence of intensive farming and high productivity. Medieval agriculture was not as uniform as is often maintained, and Battle monks varied the technology to suit the terrain. Battle farmed some of the richest land in the kingdom, better indeed than the estates of the Bishop of Winchester himself. Robertsbridge was a much smaller abbey and its lands much less fertile. The monks there may have underestimated the problems of farming on heavy clay, for the medieval agricultural textbook, the treatise of Walter of Henley, was less applicable to land of this nature. In economic terms, much of it was marginal, though the abbey did develop profitable livestock rearing under the pull of the London meat market. There was woodland at Worth near Brightling, some

arable at Sutton near Seaford, and at Waldron where air photographs show evidence of fields enclosed by woodland, typical of the work of Cistercians. They farmed land at Udimore, Sedlescombe, Lamberhurst, and at Broomhill on the Marsh where the monks built a chapel. Battle and Robertsbridge both had lands on Halland Marsh and there was collaboration between them in defending the coast against erosion. But Robertsbridge lost its land on the Marsh with the changed coastline resulting from the late 13th century inundation, and with the silting up of the Rother it lost the advantage of river transport to and from Salehurst.

After 100 years the Cistercian movement itself lost momentum. By the 14th century the order was no longer interpreting the Rule as strictly. In its early days the documents of Robertsbridge Abbey were in beautiful handwriting and with magnificent seals, but by the 15th century the handwriting is mechanical and careless. The community slipped into obscurity. From a house of 7 monks and 40 to 50 lay brothers it had by 1536 declined to a total of 8 or 9 in all. But if the Abbey of Robertsbridge was nowhere near as important as Battle Abbey it did, none-the-less, play a small but significant part in the development of Sussex.

## TREASURES OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

### Miss P. Horner 9th March, 1984

Miss Horner, the Regional Information Officer of the Trust, outlined the origins of the organisation in 1895 when people like Octavia Hill and Canon Rawnsley, showing an awareness of, and practical consideration for the living conditions of the "working classes" founded the N.T. with the aim of making areas of the countryside available for their leisure. The N.T. has since become the second largest landowner in the country and the largest conservation agency. But it has come to be in possession of many old and historic houses, and it is with those that most people probably associate the N.T.

The first property, as distinct from land, acquired by the Trust (for £350!) was the 14th century Clergy House at Alfriston, with its floor of chalk and sour milk, one of the few remaining medieval clergy houses in the country. Since then the Trust has acquired many properties, and one of the features of its work is local involvement in the running of them. Many are still lived in by their original owners, so that they are far from being museums, and one will not be surprised to see Wellies in the Hall!

Miss Horner then showed slides illustrating the varied nature of the Trust's acquisitions:-

Knole of the Sackville family, with its deer park, Great Hall and Gallery and many treasures. Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk, one of the last moated houses to be built, and possessing tapestry woven by Mary, Queen of Scots.
Castles - Corfe in Dorset, and, nearer home, Bodiam, one of

the last fighting castles but which never fired a shot in anger for the French never came there. Castle Drogo in Devon, the work of Sir Edward Lutyens, which may properly be termed a "Home and Colonial" anachronism.
Gardens - Sheffield Park and Sissinghurst, Emmets in Kent, and Toys Hill once owned by Octavia Hill herself.
Villages - Chiddingstone in Kent, Laycock in Wiltshire.
Industrial archaeology - the mill at Batemans in Burwash, Winchester city mill and a tin mine near Penzance.
Homes of famous people - Kipling's at Batemans, Ellen Terry's at Smallhythe, and Cragside House and Gardens created by the first Lord Armstrong, pioneer of hydraulics and philanthropist, a mansion of high Victorian splendour and the first to be lit by water power.
Finally the countryside, access to which was the motive for the Trust's foundation:- Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire, rich in wildlife, much of the Lake District National Park with 4,000 acres left to it by Beatrix Potter; and the coastline, Dunstanburgh Castle and Lindisfarne, Sandwich Bay with its migratory birds, Crowlink at Friston, Birling Gap, the Seven Sisters, and Great Farthingloe near Dover.

One of the encouraging features of the Trust's work is the large number of young people from all over the world who, for a pittance, help with the "mucky" jobs like removing unwanted shrubs, making steps up the steep cliff at Ravenscar etc..

Currently the Trust is appealing for money to restore and maintain the early 14th century Ightham Mote given to it by its former American owner.

## SUMMER OUTINGS 1984

### Whitbread Hop Farm 15th May

The first visit of the summer season was to the Whitbread Hop Farm at Beltring. Unfortunately the long dry spell came to an end that day and we had a dull damp day for our visit. We were, however, fully booked and enjoyed an excellent tour d'horizon at this extensive farm spanning 1100 acres.

We had a guided walk with our charming courier Anne (and baby!) through the Hop Gardens to the Oasts. Anne explained some of the techniques of hop growing, and showed us one of the few "hoppers" extant, where the hop-pickers stayed in the picking season. We also saw some of the shire horses who come to Beltring every year to refresh themselves in the Kentish air and enjoy the countryside, well away from their duties in London where, when not working, they are normally stabled.

We saw the picking machines which replaced the thousands of hop pickers who used to visit Kent during harvesting. We then visited a working oast, and saw the techniques of heating and drying the hops. In the Museum we saw a tableau of life as it was in the early days when families came down to pick hops; also an agricultural display, Cooper's shop, brewery laboratory, bottle collection etc..

After tea some of us saw the Brunger ladder working, housed in the Rural Museum. This Museum has many exhibits of interest to those who remember such things as scrubbing boards and milk deliveries (not in bottles!).

The Hop Farm is still in the early stages as a point of interest for visitors, and the craft shop, picnic areas, fishing and nature trail should be mentioned as possibilities for future visits by individuals.

Architecturally, the Oasts themselves are of interest. They were "purpose" built and, in the eye of the beholder, create a most attractive and interesting dimension to the overall perspective of the Farm.

Our visit concluded with a drive back to Battle, seeing at least some blossom on the route through Brenchley, Horsmonden and Goudhurst.

Jane Bridge.

Christ's Hospital, Horsham 6th June

Our second visit took us to the "Religious, Royal and Ancient Foundation of Christ's Hospital", which in 1902 moved to Horsham from its original home in the City of London. One of three hospitals founded by King Edward VI in 1552 for the large numbers of sick and destitute cast on the streets after the dissolution of the monasteries, it was established for the care and education of poor boys and girls in the old Greyfriars religious house, controlled by a committee set up by City fathers and aided by private donations of money and land.

A high reputation for scholarship was soon acquired and maintained despite financial difficulties and consequences of damage suffered in the Great Fire. Old Boys have been eminent in many fields, among them Samuel Pepys, also a Governor, who was instrumental in persuading Charles II in 1683 to endow the Royal Mathematical School for the training of naval officers within the main school. A vast canvas by Antonio Verrio, depicting the founding, hangs in the Dining Hall.

In general the classical tradition was giving way to a broader type of education early in the 19th century, but for Christ's Hospital it was only after the establishment of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 and call for a new scheme of administration that the London buildings were deemed too restrictive and the transfer to the country came about. Twelve hundred acres of land were purchased at Horsham for some 1100 boys, the girls having moved to Hertford, and in 1897 work began on the main quadrangle, an impressive set of buildings in brick and Bath stone which occupies 110 acres and is one of the largest in the country. Ranged round the four sides are the cloisters and the Chapel with panels by Sir Frank Brangwyn; the main assembly hall known as Big School, containing a fine 19th century organ; the Old Science School; and the Dining Hall, on either side of which the sixteen boarding houses, named after famous Old Boys, are laid out in a crescent. In the

centre stands a fountain surmounted by a lead statue of Edward VI. Also of interest is the Library, housing 10,000 volumes and displaying "Foundation" paintings. Few features from the old school have been embodied but the Chapel and Old Science School are designed much in the manner of the London buildings.

Christ's Hospital has a strong musical tradition, boasting three bands; the main Band of 75 instrumentalists plays the school into lunch each day. In 1974 a new complex was opened to meet expanding cultural interests; of an award winning design, it includes music school accommodation, octagonal concert room and "Shakespearean" theatre, and serves also as a public Arts Centre offering a high quality professional programme. As well as extensive playing fields, the estate contains the School Farm, and Christ's Hospital has its own post office.

The school is still administered from London offices and has strong connections with the City; the Lord Mayor attends speech days in state. The distinctive uniform is substantially unaltered since Tudor times, still consisting of the "long coat of Blue warm cloth" worn now over breeches and with a yellow lining replacing the original petticoat. Conditions of entry have, however, changed over the years, and the basic requirement remains for parents to be "in need of assistance", fees are paid according to means. Boys normally enter at the age of eleven and stay for about seven years. In 1985 Christ's Hospital will again become co-educational with the arrival of the 200 girls from the Hertford school, closing for reasons of economy.

Members were shown round by senior boys known as Verrio Guides, whose descriptions of life at the school and obvious enthusiasm for it added greatly to the enjoyment of the visit.

The History of Christ's Hospital was the subject of a lecture given to the Society by Mr. A.E. Allison in February 1977, and reported in Transactions No. 26.

Maureen Millar.

## Sutton Place 10th July

This fine English manor house was built between 1521 and 1526 by Sir Richard Weston, a favourite courtier of Henry VIII. It is among the earliest of those manor houses built without regard to defence and is one of the harbingers of the Renaissance in this country.

Fifty members of the Society travelled there on a beautiful July day and, in two parties, were given an exhaustive tour of the house and grounds. More conservative members were taken aback by the daring aims of the Heritage Trust, viz., to educate and stimulate the imaginations of those who come there.

The house itself retains its Tudor style, and history is woven into its bricks. Henry VIII was a frequent visitor and it is

possible that he met Anne Boleyn there. George V and Queen Mary, Edward VIII and Mrs. Simpson, Curzon, Balfour, Baldwin, and many other political and influential figures have been entertained there.

Once inside a shock awaits the visitor. J. Paul Getty lowered the ceilings and substituted ceilings of fibre glass, and put in plywood panelling. Lord Northcliffe brought in the Brussels tapestries. One of the bedrooms contains a collection of Art Nouveau material by Liberty's of London.

The house has been restored by Sir Hugh Casson and part of the art collection of Mr. Stanley Seeger can be found there. It includes works by Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh, Bacon and Hockney. The inclusion of African and pre-Colombian art comes as a surprise, but, as our guide pointed out, we all collect old and new in our homes, so why not in Sutton Place? Among the collection is a marvellously detailed painting by John Glover of "The Bull", an Astronomical Eighteenth Century Clock with a 24-hour dial, two Korean chairs, and a Francis Bacon triptych, very violent, is in the Great Hall. There, too, are the original stained glass windows, some fifteenth and some sixteenth century. The Renaissance exhibition contains armour from Hever Castle worn by Henry II of France in 1540, and a picture of the Earl of Surrey. There is also a nineteenth century window displaying the Coat of Arms of all those who have lived at Sutton.

The beautiful gardens were designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe. The Paradise garden conveys an air of mystery with its curving paths. The Swimming Pool garden is made for conversation, and here there is a surrealistic floating raft inspired by the painter Miro, with stepping stones back to land. There are also Greek urns in the Surrealistic garden bought by Mr. Seeger from the sale at Mentmore. There is sculpture by Henry Moore, and aiming at giving us an idea of infinity, a wall carved out of Carrara marble by Ben Nicholson.

The ½ mile lake has been moulded to take the Henry Moore sculpture and is designed like a fish. It is all on a very big scale and is an allegory of creation and of life.

Startled we may have been. But we all came home with much to think and talk about in our memories of Sutton Place.

Jane Bridge.

## Standen 16th August

It is always a pleasure to visit Standen, and on such a day as we were vouchsafed it was a real joy.

The house is full of light and although it was necessary in some rooms to exclude the sun, nevertheless all rooms were bright and the furnishings lovely to look at.

The house is Victorian and was given to the National Trust by Helen Beale, the daughter of the original owner.

It was designed by Phillip Webb, a friend of William Morris, and there are many Morris designs in the textiles and wallpapers used, as well as pieces of furniture. It is surprisingly plain to look at from the outside, no elaborate details or over-decoration, but just simple Georgian style windows. A bay window has been added at a later date, which seems to spoil the symmetry of the original front.

Inside all is charming, and as we pass from the hall into the Billiard Room we are aware of much green; green shaded lamps over the table and curtains of a similar colour in a Morris design, and at one end is an alcove with a raised floor, and a settee on which presumably one could sit and observe the play from an elevated position. Opposite the window is a bookcase and some beautiful pieces of pottery, and an archway in the corner from which hangs a Moorish Mosque lamp. We pass through into a lobby where is a large and much used rocking-horse, and so into the conservatory, a lovely place of large windows and climbing plants. A plumbago was in full bloom, and covered the wall from top to bottom on one side of the doorway. Other lovely plants were in bloom, and at one end a date palm bearing dates.

From here we entered the drawing room where there is furniture and a lovely carpet from the Morris Workshop. The sunflower wallpaper had been renewed in its original colour. There are delightful lampshades here. The dining room is a lovely quiet room with subdued green panelling and blue and white porcelain. Reproduction Queen Anne chairs have seats embroidered by members of the Beale family.

The morning room corridor is hung with yet another Morris paper, much of it original. The morning room itself is a lovely room with wall hangings of daffodil chintz recreated as the original. Delightful hanging lampshades in a Victorian design, of bluish tinted glass.

There is furniture by Webb and some from the Morris firm, some nice pieces of pottery and on the walls some charming Japanese woodcuts.

The stairs are of oak, with a carpet supplied by the Morris firm and half way up one can stop to admire the pictures and pottery, and so to the first floor.

The bedrooms on show have Victorian furniture, brass bedsteads and Morris papers and curtains, but all light and dainty in appearance. All the lovely things were carefully shielded from the blazing sun by holland blinds. This is a house which has been lived in and loved, but do not look for antique furniture for you will surely be disappointed. However the real joy of the place must be in its unique situation and beautiful terraced gardens, with fine views across the Medway Valley and Wier Wood reservior towards Ashdown Forest, where one may wander at will or just sit quietly and meditate.

Tea was then served at Duddleswell Tearooms in the Forest and, by general consent, this was a most welcome conclusion to the

afternoon and in a most attractive setting.

Mrs. H.M. Shaw.

Godinton Park, Ashford 12th September

Once again we were blessed with good weather on setting off for the last of our summer visits.

Godinton stands in its own magnificent park, studded with many great trees, and as the beautiful house comes into view one loses sight of the fact that it is so near to Ashford.

The Stuart house has been occupied by Kentish squires for 500 years and one is conscious of the fact that it is a home that has been lovingly cared for all that time.

We were welcomed by Mr. Alan Wyndham Green, the present owner, who spared no effort in making everything available for our inspection.

The house has been occupied by the Toke family for 400 years, from about 1485, and John Toke, who had served Henry VII, inherited what is now the core of the house, viz. the fine hall and solar range, the roof structure of which is still intact.

In 1896 the house passed out of the ownership of the Toke family and was bought by Mr. George Ashley Dodd, with most of its original contents. In 1919 the property was bought by the Hon. Mrs. Bruce Ward, daughter of the first Lord Doverdale and, except for some portraits and pieces of furniture, many of the original contents were dispersed and replaced with furnishings of more appropriate quality. Mr. Wyndham Green is Mrs. Bruce Ward's grandson.

The Dining Room is notable for the handsome Chippendale chairs, also the Rockingham dinner service. There are portraits in this room of Mr. Wyndham Green's mother, and also of his great grandparents, Lord and Lady Doverdale.

The Great Hall, basically a fifteenth century chamber, has been magnificently preserved and its original tie-beam in chestnut remains in situ. The fire would have been in the centre of the Hall originally, but the fireplace has now been moved to the wall, and the original chimney piece is carved of Bethersden marble. There is some fine wood carving around the fireplace and the south door of the Hall is flanked by richly carved arcaded screens.

It is thought that the room still known as "the Priest's Room" was originally the chapel of the house and the beautifully carved French Confessional Box is still there.

The Gallery above was probably at one time the upper part of the chapel, as the chapel roof remains unchanged. It is furnished with a mixture of French and English furniture and contains some beautiful Sevres china.

The Great Chamber, or Drawing Room, contains unique panelling which dates from the days of Nicholas Toke, the Royalist

Captain who owned and ran the estate from 1616 until 1680. The chimney piece is carved in low relief in Bethersden marble and bears the Toke arms. The surrounding carving is fascinating, but most outstanding are the friezes on the West and North sides of the room which represent musketry and pike drill. Each figure depicts a movement in the drill, and those performed by the pikemen are still used on ceremonial occasions in the City by the Honorable Artillery Company. There is also a marvellous collection of furniture, china and paintings in this room.

The magnificent staircase was lavishly carved in chestnut by an anonymous local craftsman and bears the date 1628.

The First Library contains some fine carving in Bethersden marble. The Second Library is less ornate but contains a fine collection of Worcester china from the Dr. Wall period (1760-80).

Mr. Wyndham Green's grandmother displayed her beautiful collection of chinoiserie in the Garden Hall which gives access to the White Drawing Room. This room, in contrast to the rest of the house, is light and elegant and contains some beautiful English water colours and pastels.

We left the house via the formal gardens contained within a yew hedge thought to be one of the largest in the country.

After tea at the Swan Hotel in Charing we returned to Battle. The general consensus was that "this was one of the most beautiful houses we had ever visited".

Jane Bridge.

## THE MUSEUM TRUST

A short note about the Museum of the Historical Society may not be amiss in view of the number of new members in the Society.

The Museum resembles a Magpie's Nest with three or four special features. The 'nest' element is a motley collection of objects and records varying greatly in quality and interest, but all, we hope, illustrating some aspect of life in our town and district over many centuries.

Our main 'feature' relates to the Battle of Senlac. We have an admirable diorama of the engagement. We also have two representations of the Bayeux Tapestry. These are some 28 feet of a facsimile tapestry, and a copy of Stothard's engraving (1817) of the whole work. Then we have a group of 'finds' from two nearby Romano-British sites (Footlands and Bodiam). Finally we have exhibits illustrating two major local industries, iron founding and gunpowder manufacture.

The Museum is closed from late autumn until Easter, but can be opened on request for special visits, e.g. for School parties (contact our Hon. Sec., Mrs. M. Langley, Battle 3899).

The Museum is very dependant on voluntary helpers. During the

winter interested persons are more than welcome at 'working parties' held in the Museum each Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Here jobs can be planned and discussed, and ideas put forward. For example, paint-work needs to be freshened, exhibits need to be re-arranged and new ones put on display, and archives still need to be sorted and catalogued (a major task, this).

Over the past year nearly 10,000 persons visited us, including 25 school parties. This was about 2,000 up on the previous year. The new fire-proof ceiling and the outstanding quality of the new exhibit labels have greatly improved our overall appearance. Recent acquisitions include a 1760 trade token ('John Medhurst ... Battell'), part of a particularly fine Neolithic axe-head, a group of World War II relics and a pair of leaded window-lights from an early 17th century cottage.

Our Library has been well used; it will be open before each evening meeting of the Society, and also on Friday mornings. All our books, some of which are of great interest, have been catalogued and indexed by our honorary librarian Dr. K. Brown, and Mrs. L. Allen.

R.H.P. Clark,
Hon. Curator.

## OBITUARY

We record with regret the death on 27th November, 1984 of Mr. William Palmer, aged 85. Mr. Palmer and his wife were active and enthusiastic members of the Society which they joined in 1962. Mr. Palmer became a member of the Museum Committee in 1967, its Vice-Chairman in 1970, and Chairman from 1973 to 1976. Mr. Palmer's distinguished academic record and subsequent career as a Headmaster were concealed behind a modest, indeed self-effacing manner, but behind this also lay great human warmth and a quiet sense of humour. A man of firm Christian faith, shining integrity and genuine humility, devoted to his family of children and grandchildren, he will be remembered with great respect and much affection by those who were privileged to know him well. His wife Dorothy, who was at one time Vice-Chairman and subsequently Vice-President of the Society died in 1978.

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