BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Newsletter

DECEMBER 1989 No.8

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM TRUST

Affiliated to the Historical Association, the Sussex Archaeological Society, The Sussex Archaeological Trust, Sussex Record Society, Federation of Sussex Local History Societies

and

South Eastern Federation of Sussex Museum and Art Galleries

Officers and Committees 1989-1990

THE SOCIETY

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

President

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

Vice-Presidents

Professor Eleanor Searle, Ph.D.
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Mr.E.L.Goldsworthy	Rev. D.J.Thompson

Co-opted Committee Member, Mr. J.Hill

THE MUSEUM TRUST

(registered as a Charity on 29 August 1967

Museum, Library and Excavations Committee

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Hon.Secretary:	Mrs. D.R.Knight
Hon.Treasurer:	Mr. R.S.Duffill

Committee

Dr. R.H.P.Clark	Hon.Curator	Mr. S.Bennett Hon.Deputy Curator
Mrs. G.Young	Hon.Librarian	Miss M.Millar
Mrs. C.Gilbart	Hon.Archivist	Mr. R.Mears (co-opted)

Public Relations Adviser, Mr. A.Green

Newsletter Editor Rev. D.J.Thompson

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Members will have read from the insertion in our last Newsletter of the death in February of Professor Allen Brown who had been President of our Society since 1982. A full appreciation appears in this newsletter.

I know that you will now be pleased to hear that Professor H.R. Loyn has kindly consented to become our new President, and we are honoured to have such a mediaeval historical scholar at our head. We hope it will not be long before we have the pleasure of seeing him and his wife in Battle.

The Society has continued to flourish, with membership being maintained at about the current level of 380. A series of nine lectures held through the winter were well balanced between national and local history subjects. For this we have to thank our programme organiser Don. Nicol. Lectures have been consistently well supported, and paying visitors have increased over the past year.

The Commemoration Service was held in the parish church on Sunday 15 October, attended by officers and members of the Society and local Councillors headed by Mayor Mrs. Gay Gaynor. Lessons were read by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. John Springford arranged for the choir to sing the antiphon Firmetur, and also R.Vaughan Williams' anthem 'Let us now praise famous men'. The preacher was our Vice-President the Rt. Rev. Bishop Richard Darby, recently retired from being Bishop of Sherwood. Members of the Society enjoyed a glass of wine with the Bishop in the Church Hall afterwards.

A very successful Commemoration Party was held on 20 October in the delightful setting of the The Abbott's Hall, by kind permission of Mr. David Teall. More than a hundred members were there, and Robert Mears had arranged some excellent refreshments.

The Annual General Meeting on 24 November brought about 80 members to the Memorial Hall on a very bad night. After the business, they were rewarded by seeing some specially good transparencies of the summer outings and of the visit of Professor Eleanor Searle, excellently presented by Bernard Gillman-Davis.

During the summer we had a programme of very popular outings. For this we have to thank Ernest Goldsworthy and his meticulous planning. The season commenced with a three day tour in April to Salisbury, Bath, Wells and Glastonbury, and was much enjoyed by all. We were specially lucky to have Prebendary Vere Hodge and his wife, popular past residents of Battle, to guide and entertain us around Glastonbury. Following our visit to Normandy in 1988 we had hoped to go to Rouen in 1990, but it has not been possible to complete arrangements so we have set our sights on 1991. Meantime in April 1990 we plan to undertake a four day excursion to Durham and Hadrian's Wall.

We have made progress in other activities. Mrs. Sheila Bishop has done some excellent work during the year with the Oral History Project. The Oral History Register shows that of the 14 histories recorded nine have been done by Mrs. Bishop. Now after three years she feels that it is time to step down, and we are grateful to her for what she has achieved. It is hoped that in the near future it will be possible, when secure circumstances allow, for the tapes/transcriptions to be placed in the Museum to form the nucleus of an Oral History section for the benefit of the people of Battle. It is also proposed to record suitable events of the present time as they occur. Would any member who has any tapes of interest please get in touch with the Hon. Secretary.

Steady progress has also been made by Ida Nicol in recording changes in the High Street properties. This enables the Battle Walk pamphlet to be updated regularly, and 185 were sold this season by the Tourist Office, 25 by the Battle Bookshop, and 10 by our Society Museum.

At the request of the Tourist Office the Society has recently compiled a "Brief History of Battle" (in English and French) mainly for sending to enquirers from overseas who specifically seek information on the town. I am indebted to Don. Nicol for the work he has put into this. This year I am pleased to report that we have articles on the adjoining parishes of Sedlescombe and Westfield in this Newsletter.

During May our Society hosted a visit by members of the Maidstone Historical Society. We have to thank Don Nicol for arranging a very interesting day for them, visiting our Museum, and showing a slide show on Battle High Street.

The Society was fortunate that Vice-President Professor Eleanor Searle paid us a visit from California in September. I had much pleasure in introducing members of the Committee to her. In November she told me that she had received an award for her book 'Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 840-1066' as the best book on British Studies for 1988, at the meeting in Chicago of the North American Conference on British Studies. I understand that Professor Searle wil be presenting a paper at the Battle Conference in July 1990.

In line with past practice it gave the Society great pleasure on 3 March to present to Battle Abbey School, as an annual award, a book 'The identity of France' by Fernaud Brandel. The book was presented by our visiting lecturer Dr. P.R. Roberts of Kent University to the senior history student of the school, Miss Emma Potts.

So what do we have to offer for 1990? As you are aware the preponderance of our lectures take place in the first three months of the year, January to March, and I think that by any standards you can look forward to an interesting programme. The following month we have the excursion to Durham and Hadrian's Wall as a curtain-raiser to our usual very interesting programme of summer outings. At the end of the year, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Society we are planning a lecture and exhibition evening in co-operation with local firms. This is scheduled for the first week in December.

During the course of the year we also hope to start on a new project, that is to discover Mediaeval Drover Routes under the guidance of Dr. P.R. Brandon who feels that Battle is an excellent centre in which to base operations in the East part of the county. We therefore plan to do this with the assistance of the Hastings Archaeological Group and the Battle Ramblers. Many of you will recall Dr. Brandon talking to us in 1984/86 on the Estates of Robertsbridge Abbey and the Estates of Battle Abbey and will therefore know his infectious enthusiasm for any projects connected with this area.

At the end of last year it came to the Committee's notice that some very valuable carved stone artifacts had been removed from the reredorter and the Abbey gatehouse by English Heritage to their archaeological stores at Dover. This is very worrying for the people of Battle who consider

that a special relationship exists between the town of Battle and the Abbey. English Heritage have now assured us that they removed the stones to Dover for safe keeping and that the best of them will be returned to Battle and properly displayed as part of an exhibition planned for the Gatehouse. Your committee intend to keep the matter under review through their representation on the Battle Abbey Advisory Committee which meets twice a year in March and September.

Your committee is also represented in an advisory capacity on the Almonry Committee. Good progress is being made on the Model of Battle Town which will be the main exhibit. It will be situated on the ground floor which will help elderly and disabled visitors.

Your Chairman laid a wreath at the Parish War Memorial on the Occasion of Remembrance Day.

Turning to Committee matters, we welcome Mrs. Patricia Speedy who replaced Dr. Roger Clark whose term of office has come to an end. I would like to thank him for the valuable services he has given to the Committee over the past nine years. To ensure continual co-operation between the Society and the Museum we have co-opted Mr. John Hill to the main committee, and conversely Mr. Robert Mears represents the main committee on the Museum committee. I believe this system will serve us well in the future.

We are grateful to Mr. Creek for continuing to serve as Hon. Auditor, and we welcome his re-election as Vice-President.

This review would obviously not be complete without mentioning that since the last A.G.M., as you will see, your Committee has adopted a logo for the Society. Out of a number of designs considered, the one chosen was suggested by our Vice-President Keith Reader. It can be described as an Anglo-Scandinavian axe surmounted by a Norman lance (with some artistic licence) with 1066 at the base and the Crown of England at the top. I must thank Eric Augele for much patient artistic work until the final design was arrived at. I hope members will approve of it.

Finally I would like to thank all members of the Society for their support during the year, and wish you all a very happy 1990 as we look forward to another successful decade.

Alan Denny.

MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

These notes were written after the recent AGM, but are inevitably similar to my report to that meeting. However, as a number of members of the Society were unable to be present I feel that some of the points then made are worth repeating.

The first is that the number of adult visitors to the museum in the 1989 season was down by 200 on the previous year, but the receipts were up by £263 (total £2,980 - a record). Bearing in mind the long dry summer and the discouraging effect of the paving stone and scaffolding work immediately outside the museum entrance for much of the season, these figures are most satisfactory. This situation is the result of a team effort in which all those involved (see below) have played their part of the full.

Perhaps because it is only seen to be operating for six months of the year (April - September), Museum affairs in the past appear to have received less prominence than they deserve. The fact is, of course, that a great deal goes on behind the scenes throughout the year in the administration of the library and accounts, and then, during the winter months, in preparing the museum for the ensuing season. For this reason the Museum committee were pleased to be invited to 'bat' first at the AGM, and then to be able to announce their intention to hold an open-day (on a date to be announced) to which all members of the Historical Society will be invited, and their comments, criticisms, questions and suggestions, encouraged.

The committee seem always to be appealing for help in one form or another. But obviously it is unrealistic to expect the same group to carry on indefinitely. In any case, we need new heads with new ideas and a fresh approach, and so I would be pleased if any member who can help would tick and return the questionnaire on the next page.

John Hill (Chairman)

THE TEAM

COMMITTEE J.Hill(Chairman),R.Duffill(Hon.Treasurer) Dr.R.Clark(Curator),S.Bennett(Asst.Curator), Mrs.D.Knight(Hon.Sec.),Mrs.G.Young(Librarian) Mrs.C.Gilbart(Archivist),Miss M.Millar,R.Mears (Co-opted).

PUBLIC RELATIONS ADVISER A.Green

ACCOUNTS daily recordings - F. Duffill

CUSTODIANS F. Moppett (Organiser), Mrs. G. Bolton, P. Corbet, Mrs. A. Curry, L. Ford, W. Hall, M. Wonson, A. Swann, Misses M. McCrorie, H. Moore, Messrs. W. Beard, A. Murduck, S. Ockenden, J. Saunders, M. Wright, C. Frankland and Mr. & Mrs. K. Stubberfield.

CUT OFF HERE

QUESTIONNAIRE

I would be prepared to help the Museum in the following capacity:-

(Please put a tick in the appropriate box).

☐ Minute Secretary. A knowledge of shorthand would be very useful.

☐ Custodian. No in-depth historical knowledge required, but mainly a willingness to make visitors feel welcome.

☐ Committee member. Interest in, not necessarily knowledge of, local history desirable.

☐ Calligrapher. Someone able to prepare attractively written display cards

☐ Cleaner. One hour from 10 a.m., twice a week, would be marvellous.

NAME.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER.....

Please post to John Hill, 7 Glengorse, Battle or hand to any member of the Museum Committee.

THANK YOU

THE IRON INDUSTRY IN THE WEALD

Mr. Jeremy Hodgkinson — 6 January 1989

The wealden Iron Industry was in existence for 2,000 years. It began during the Iron Age five to six hundred years after the introduction of iron into Europe, and two hundred years after its introduction into the British Isles. Many Celtic sites have been discovered, where hollow bowl shaped areas form the surround to the furnace. These bowl furnaces were primitive, and slag could not be removed during smelting.

The Romans took over the Celtic sites, and constructed small furnaces with stone built flues or chimneys, all known as 'bloomeries'. Charcoal and iron ore were fed into the chimney over the furnace, and smelting took place below. These bloomeries required a higher grade of iron ore than that used in blast furnaces later. A sample area in East Sussex of 182 square kilometers from Eridge in the north to Heathfield and Hailsham showed a total number of 246 sites where smelting took place. It appeared that 70% of these sites were Roman. In the third century iron production petered out in the Weald, and from the third century the main area for the industry was the Forest of Dean. However, Beauport Park was the largest iron site in the Weald producing 100,000 tons over 150 years in small furnaces hand blown. There were no Roman towns in the Weald and it is possible that the Romans had designated the whole of the Weald as an industrial site.

Researches have shown that in the late 14th century there was a large site in Groombridge, and some sites near East Grinstead. Wadhurst clay was the main source of iron in the Weald, and the ore ran in seams. There appeared to be more documentary information of sites in the mediaeval period. A sample of the work done can be seen in the iron reinforcing bands across the Staplehurst Church door. During the mediaeval period many iron sites were filled in to allow the area to be used for agriculture.

In the 16th and 17th centuries bellows made of leather were introduced to create a higher temperature in the furnace. The bellows were usually about 15 feet long, and operated by water wheels revolving in a shaft. After the Wars of the Roses Henry VII built a strong army and required iron for it. Various artifacts were produced in moulds of sand. Patterns were recessed or pressed into the sand, and the

molten iron poured into the hollows to cast the finished item. Cast iron was a brittle substance when finished. If the metal were to be subjected to some leverage, the carbon content had to be reduced. A length of cast iron usually about six feet in length by twelve inches wide was called a 'sow', and this could be heated and hammered to take the carbon out.

In 1543 the first complete cannon was built by a gentleman named Hogge, who later became Queen Elizabeth's gun founder and ran four furnaces. Henry VIII had guns made for wars on the Continent. Fullers at Heathfield and Burwash were gun makers for three generations in the Weald. In the 18th century there were other gun makers including Harrison and Company. The Seven years War involved Britain in battles overseas requiring iron; and the East India Company purchased large numbers of guns.

However, charcoal became very costly. A quantity of 1½ tons of charcoal was required to make 1 ton of iron, and this necessitated 7,000 acres of woodland to keep it going. Cast iron needed ten times as much carbon as wrought iron. Eventually the introduction of coke and steam pressure led to the demise of the industry. That the Wealden industry kept going as long as it did was due partly to the Navy's need of armaments, and partly to the sites being near both o London and to the coast. In the 17th century the Weald was the largest production area in the United Kingdom. But the Industry eventually moved to the Midlands and Wales where other industries requiring iron developed. In 1813 the site at Ashburnham closed, and the iron industry in the Weald finished in the 19th century. The gun founder named Hogge built his house on the proceeds of the industry, and he fixed a cast iron figure of a hog dated 1581 to the side of his house, and this became the symbol of the Wealden iron industry.

Eric Augele

GYPSUM AT MOUNTFIELD

Mr. W. A. S. Wesson — 20 January 1989

The speaker began by stating that gypsum was a very old mineral dating back to the dinosaur age, that was to say, some 110 to 180 million years ago. In this country it was

found in Nottinghamshire, Cumbria and, of course, Sussex. It is what is known as an evaporite mineral, like salt, and was formed when inland seas and lakes dried up, evaporated, and left a salty deposit now known as Gypsum or to give it its chemical name, calcium sulphate dihydrate. During the millions of years that followed when the British Isles were being formed, large earth movements occurred and the rocks faulted which displaced the gypsum explaining why is can be quarried in some places and mined in others. If gypsum is ground to a powder and then heated it will lose three quarters of its combined water. If the powder is subsequently mixed with water the slurry formed will set rock hard.

This heating process is very much part of the operation at Mountfield after which the material is known as Hemi Hydrate Plaster, or as is more commonly known, Plaster of Paris. It derived this name from the fact that at one time most of this powder was mined at Montmartre.

Six thousand years ago the Egyptians made mortar from gypsum. Fifteen hundred years later it was used to line the walls of the pyramids on which the artists painted their magnificent frescoes.

The ancient civilisations used it to make pots. The Romans used it whilst in Britain and bodies have been found in York preserved in gypsum.

It was first found at Mountield in Counsellors Wood by a team led by Mr. Henry Willett, a geologist from Brighton. it is believed that they were looking for coal but found gypsum. A year later, in 1873, another team bored a hole but at 1,900 feet the drill broke and the drilling was abandoned.

In 1875 the Sub-Wealden Gypsum Company was formed to sink a mine. Progress was slow until 1890 when a Mr. Joel Kemp, a chemist from Croydon, joined the company. Things then progressed rapidly and profits began to be realised. A proper factory was built. Over the next thirty or so years various amalgamations took place with other companies until, under a Mr. Hugh Ferguson British Plaster Board was formed.

During the 1950's the quality of the rock deteriorated and a new mine was sunk at Brightling 7 miles away.

The mines are approximately 560/600 feet deep. They are approached down a long slope known as an adit. The method of mining is known as the Pillar and Stall method whereby 25% of the rock is left to form supporting pillars, which avoids surface subsidence. The working face is drilled and the rock blasted out by carefully controlled explosion. Mechanical shovels remove the broken rock and take it to underground crushers from whence it is conveyed to the surface by belt conveyors. In the Mill it is again crushed and ground to a fine powder and then heated to drive off the water.

750,000 tonnes are mined each year of which 150,000 tonnes are used by the cement manufacturers and the same quantity is sold as plaster. The balance is used in the manufacture of Plaster Board, 22 million sq. metres, and in agriculture as a soil dressing.

A short commercial film was shown detailing the mining methods and the various manufacturing processes.

Bernard Gillman-Davis

THE GREAT MUGHALS

Dr. Heather Elgood — 3 February 1989

The title 'Mughal' is a derivation of the word 'Mogol', which stood for barbarian. Despite this, the title today is synonymous with a man of great wealth and power. The first claimant for the title "Padshah" was a prince from a small valley in the region of Afghanistan, "Ferghana".

The prince was called Babur. He came to the throne on his father's death in 1494 at the age of 11. His genealogy as a warrior could scarcely be matched - on his mother's side he was descended from Chingiz, and on his father's from the great conqueror Timurlane, who had devastated Persia in the late fourteenth century, subsequently founding a great empire.

Babur found himself one among many petty Timurid princes laying claim to tracts of land to the North East of Persia. In 1526 after several years of settled court life in Kabul, for which he gained a high reputation, he was invited to come to India to challenge the central rule of the current Muslim Sultan. In 1528 Babur was victorious and set up camp in Agra, from which he had nominal rule over North India

until his death in 1530. His oldest son tried to extend his authority in India for 10 years, to be finally ousted for another fifteen years by an Afghan, Sher Shan.

During this time, Humayun sought assistance from Tahnesp of Persia and was able to recapture his father's old capital Kabul. In 1555 Humayun was able to re-establish his rule in North India and, returning to Delhi, fell to his death down his own library steps in the following year.

His oldest son, Akbar, became emperor at 13 years of age in 1556. His character was more dynamic and original than his father's, it is to him that we owe so much of the binding of India into a united and prosperous empire, with the people of India giving allegiance to an Indian, not a Muslim monarch.

Akbar ruled until 1605, when his son Jahengir took over this grand and rich empire. Jahengir ruled from 1605 - 1628, was more involved with sensuous pleasures, and delights of an aesthetic nature than even his father. An examination of the manuscripts of Akbar and Jahengir reveal the appearance of the court and the gradual absorption of a Western aesthetic.

In 1628, Shah Jahen, Jahengir's son ruled until he was, in turn, imprisoned by his own son Aurangzeb.

Shah Jahen was responsible for designing and constructing the Taj Mahal, a tribute and mausoleum for his wife. Aurangzeb was the last Mughal to whom the title 'great' is appropriate. He ruled until 1707.

The court following his death became more corrupt and frivolous. Finally the emperors were so weak and ineffectual that Bahedur Shah II was finally exiled to Burma in 1859 and Queen Victoria was declared Grand Empress of India. The Mughals were finally eclipsed.

We are fortunate in having not only careful daily records of their histories and courtlife, but accurate paintings of this time to give flavour and colour to this tale.

G.A.Bishop

WHY LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS.
A MEDIAEVALIST'S VIEW.
THE ROBERTSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

Dr. Janet Nelson — 17 February 1989

The title, said Dr. Nelson, had been chosen in honour of the late Miss J. Robertson, and, sad to relate, also represented an appropriate memorial to the Society's President, Professor Allen Brown, who had died but a few days before, on February 1st. Both were devoted to Sussex local history, Professor Brown additionally to his own county of Suffolk. Dr. Nelson outlined the theme of her lecture: the vital nature of local history studies when connected effectively to the wider pattern of history.

The theme was developed through a sequence of historical instances, illustrated by maps distributed to the audience. The first referred to the burhs of Alfred, the strategic positioning of which had lately been criticised by some historians. Examined, however, in detail in student theses based on local knowledge, it had been demonstrated that, for example, Wallingford, Burpham, Chichester and Wareham each essentially contributed to the blocking of traditional Viking paths into the heart of Alfred's kingdom, Wessex. The siting of royal estates in relation to the king's power was then reviewed. As late as the Civil War, poor communications hindered any swift progress of large forces or of resources to support them. For such forces, twentyfive miles a day on horseback, and ten on foot, was reckoned a good average. Moreover the interest and affections of society were conceived on a very local basis. The king was therefore wise to possess chains of estates through which to progress assured of loyalty and supplies.

It was to be observed that Edward the Confessor's estates, associated with both burhs and market centres, followed this pattern. It might also be noted that Harold, hastening from Stamford Bridge, could make for the Sussex coast where he possessed a concentration of manors. Was William's destruction of Crowhurst, a personal fief of Harold (is the burning house with its fleeing occupants of the Bayeux Tapestry Crowhurst manor?) a deliberate act of revenge, or to provoke the Saxons into precipitate engagement? Turning to the local loyalties which Thomas a Becket would command in the south-east around Canterbury, it is significant that Henry II as a measure of his distrust of the Archbishop

recovered royal control of the castles of Rochester, Eynesford, Tonbridge, Hythe and Pagham. Dr. Nelson then turned to Redon in eastern Brittany where contemporary documents record the highly unusual incident of peasants journeying a hundred miles to lay a complaint before the King; their usual orbit lying within a few miles of their villages. Speaking of the Kings of France, it was clear that they had taken action similar to that in England to protect the royal estates around Paris with fortified bridgehead castles along the Seine and the Loire.

The final study of a locality's contribution to national history was taken by Dr. Nelson from the Peasants Revolt of 1381. There were two centres of uprising, one in Essex, one in north Kent. Within a few days rebellion had spread to the extent of two peasant armies of some six thousand from Maidstone and Chelmsford converging on Blackheath and Mile End, denouncing the Poll Tax, burning records, murdering Archbishop Sudbury, and shaking the King and his advisers to the core. The event demonstrated how a local area might be penetrated, subverted, and co-ordinated by a master-mind. The conclusions to be drawn could be summed up in Professor Allen Brown's words. Students of history should divest themselves of judgements conceived in the light of their own contemporary standards and values. The motivating forces of elementary passions roused by religion or war, for example, could not be underestimated, nor those of personal relationships. While local and isolated movement frequently ran into the sand, there were occasions when it could rock a nation, indeed Christendom.

John Springford

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, AND QUEEN ELIZABETH

DR.R.P. Roberts — 3 March 1989

A romantic view, began Dr. Roberts, of Mary as a bewitching princess, the victim of Tudor Protestant persecution, is hard to sustain in the light of the historical evidence. Conversely, that evidence demonstrates the irresolution of Elizabeth in dealing with the dynamite of a situation which persisted through the nineteen years of Mary's semi-captivity in England from 1568 to 1587; an irresolution which sprang from political awareness, their kinship, and Elizabeth's feeling that their royal blood set them both sovereigns, in a way, apart from their subjects.

Mary's tangled marital life and political ambitions set the scene. Her first husband, Francis II of France, died in 1561. Her second, Lord Henry Darnley, popular both in Scotland and at the English court, had a hand in the murder of Mary's secretary, Rizzio, and was in turn murdered by the Earl of Bothwell in 1567. Mary married Bothwell. The following year her Scottish protestant nobles rose against her, she was defeated in battle and forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son James; and she sought refuge in England. There, initially inconclusively tried, and increasingly under restraint as suspicion against her mounted, she spent her years hostile to the Regency in Scotland, and plotting in England with her Catholic sympathisers at home and abroad the overthrow of Elizabeth, the assumption of the crown, and the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith.

The "Casket Letters" alleged Mary's complicity in the murder of Darnley. Genuine or forgeries? Dr. Roberts outlined the most recent historical judgement, that though the letters had been "gilded", they did genuinely reveal guilty foreknowledge. Elizabeth hesitated. It was not until Mary's intrigues with the Spanish ambassador, and the Duke of Norfolk's activities in the Ridolfi Plot had sent him to the block in 1572, that the letters were made public and Mary's captivity more rigorously imposed. She was moved from one secure house to another, two years being her longest stay at any one place. Supported by the papal excommunication of Elizabeth, Mary's intrigues continued. Her direct approach to the Privy Council earned a sharp rebuke for that body from Elizabeth. Meanwhile Walsingham's agents were active. Torture or the threat of it was one expedient. Mary's complicity in the Throckmorton Plot of 1583 was revealed. Still Elizabeth hoped for a solution. The unbalanced Dr. Parry plotted an attempt on her life. The last straw was the Babington Plot and Mary was brought to trial.

Ironically it would appear doubtful that the "Babington Letter" whose evidence resulted in her trial and sentence, Mary had a personal hand in. Elizabeth prevaricated to the end, would not meet Parliament, only signing the death warrant when no one had taken up the option of discreetly disposing of "that queen", an omission for which the gaoler was censured, and punishing her secretary (albeit lightly) for dispatching the warrant without her authority. Public opinion and that of her advisers had prevailed. The English Catholics remained loyal. James, after all, the heir to the

English throne, accepted Elizabeth's olive branch of "this lamentable accident". Mary was executed at Fotheringhay Castle on February 8th 1587. She and Elizabeth had never met.

John Springford

SUSSEX SHIPWRECKS

Mr. Nicholas Thornton — 10 March 1989

The Sussex coast has been the scene of many shipwrecks, since the prevailing wind tends to drive vessels on to the shore, and in the 85 miles between Chichester and Rye there are only three ports in which a vessel in distress can seek shelter, i.e. Littlehampton, Shoreham and Newhaven. Of these only Newhaven can be classified as a deep-water port. Furthermore, this coast is on the route to and from the Straits of Dover which have long been one of the busiest areas of shipping in the world.

Mr. Thornton has recently published a book giving details of 21 notable shipwrecks in the area, and for his talk to the Society considered two of these, our most notable "local" wreck that of the "Amsterdam" in 1749, and the running aground of the paddle steamer "Queen" off Selsey Bill in 1908.

The "Amsterdam" was an armed merchant ship of the Dutch East India Company, one of a fleet making a regular journey to the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies. It was loaded with manufactured goods and also carried 28 cases of silver bullion. The ship sailed from Holland on 15th November, 1748 and by mid-January had proceeded only as far as Pevensey Bay; most of the previous eight weeks having been spent in contending with or sheltering from bad weather. Since it was only 150 feet in length and was carrying 203 crew, 125 soldiers and five passengers it is not surprising that conditions below decks with all hatches and gunports closed had become most unhealthy and many of the crew were weakened by illness. The Captain, Willem Klump was aiming to shelter from the gale under the cliffs of Beachy Head, when the ship, descending in the trough of an exceptionally large wave struck its stern on the bottom and lost its rudder. With some difficulty the "Amsterdam" was anchored a few miles off Bexhill, with the intention of making for

Portsmouth, the nearest harbour deep enough for her, when the gale moderated.

After several days waiting in stormy weather the ship was leaking so badly that Klump decided to beach her and with the assistance of local fishermen managed to do so at high tide some 50 yards from the shore at Bulverhythe. Prior to this, having in mind the enquiry which would result, he had arranged for a full account of all that had happened to be drawn up and witnessed by all officers.

The news of a wreck with a valuable cargo spread rapidly and over a thousand people arrived on the beach the following day in search of loot. However, prompt and energetic action by the Mayor of Hastings, William Thorpe, limited the damage and even succeeded in recovering some articles which were taken. At his request considerable numbers of soldiers arrived the next day to assist in keeping order. The treasure chests containing £33,600 in bullion and coins were transferred to Hastings Custom House. One chest was missing and subsequently found empty at the high tide mark, but of the 50 five pound silver ingots in it 36 were recovered when salvage money was offered for their return.

The ship still contained a large sum of money as well as much valuable merchandise, and feeling that it was not safe to leave her Klump visited the Company's agent in London to arrange for salvage. This proved extremely difficult. Although the ship had suffered little further damage, large amounts of rain and sea water had got in, and it was steadily sinking into the sand and mud. The timbers of the upper deck were swollen with water and no way was found of opening the hatches. By mid-March the Company decided to call off the unsuccessful salvage efforts and Willem Klump returned to Holland. The subsequent enquiry exonerated him from all blame for the disaster.

The remains of the "Amsterdam" still protrude from the beach at low spring tides, and various artefacts recovered from the ship are now in the Hastings Museum. Some of the sick crew members died after being brought ashore and are buried at St. Mary's, Bulverhythe and St. Andrew's, Hastings. The Dutch have plans to raise the wreck and transport it to Holland.

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The incident of the paddle steamer "Queen" in 1908 is remarkable in that what was a potential tragedy passed off without any loss of life. On 31st August the steamer was making a day return trip from Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight to Brighton with 130 passengers. On the return journey in the late afternoon the weather deteriorated badly, and the Captain, decided to make use of the narrow inshore passage near Selsey Bill rather than expose the ship to the open sea. At 7.00 p.m. the ship ran aground, but was able to get off with the rising tide about an hour later. She was then blown back by the wind and after rounding again managed to anchor close inshore.

At 11.00 p.m. the Selsey lifeboat was launched in response to a distress rocket and with some difficulty managed to take on board 30 women passengers. The Coxswain did not wish to risk beaching the lifeboat in the rough weather and therefore dropped anchor and transferred the ladies to a few small boats which brought them ashore cold and wet through the surf. The lifeboat returned to the "Queen" at 2.00 a.m. on 1st September but by this time the storm had eased and the rising tide had refloated the ship. The Captain did not therefore wish to risk disembarking more passengers in darkness and asked the lifeboat to stand by ashore.

A few hours later the storm blew up again and in response to a further distress rocket the lifeboat returned. The Captain called for the remaining ladies but when 27 of these had been embarked a large wave threw the lifeboat against the ship, damaging its bow and breaking the rope between ship and lifeboat. After two hours of futile attempts to rig a new rope the lifeboat returned to the shore with its 27 passengers, reaching Littlehampton harbour about noon. The rescued passengers were very cold, wet and distressed but after getting warm and dry recovered rapidly, several catching the 2.00 p.m. train back to Portsmouth!

Meanwhile inspection of the damage showed that the lifeboat had lost her keel and could not possibly return to the "Queen". Other ships were however at hand. The cruiser H.M.S."Theseus" approached the "Queen", but even at high tide it was clear that she could not get close enough. Later another vessel "Magnet" approached but again could not get sufficiently close. In mid-afternoon the tug "Hector" owned by the same company as the "Queen" arrived at 4.30 p.m. and aided by the rising tide, was able to connect a tow rope. The tug towed the "Queen" all the way to Southampton, where

all the remaining passengers disembarked unharmed. No doubt they told the story of their day trip to Brighton for many years afterwards.

Donald L. Nicol

WARHORSES OF THE NORMANS

Commemoration Lecture on 6 October 1989 given by Professor R.H.C Davis, Professor Emeritus of Medieval History, University of Birmingham

The theme of the lecture was to demonstrate the development of the horse and its mounted fighting man in western Europe, with particular reference to the Normans. The indigenous horse would apear to have had the characteristics of the Shetland pony. By the eleventh century, Normandy under Duke Robert and his son William had become an elite state based on a mounted fighting force whose success in battles (and their booty) attracted adherents from all over Europe. To the cachet of this service could be added the chance of joining a knightly class with its reward of a place in the landed feudal hierarchy.

The Bayeux Tapestry with its over one hundred and fifty illustrations of horses during the invasion of 1066 indicates both the individuality of the animals (in colour, style of mane, movement, even quirks of character) and the way in which they were managed - installed in the ships and led off with care, lined up for battle for which, from the battle scenes, they were trained. One knight finds himself on his horse's neck with the vehemence of his attack, another horse pitches on its head, Harold himself is cut down by a sword blow, the horse bracing itself for the stroke. The saddles are sufficiently pommelled to afford a firm seat for mounted fighting. Wace particularly records that the Conqueror's black horse is from Spain. All are stallions.

The Tapestry horse creates an impression of size and dominance, though closer observation of the rider's feet not so far from the ground implies a relatively small, if agile, animal. With, as the middle ages went on, the development of the prestigious cult of the mounted knight, and with the increase in the weight of armour not to say the armour for the horse itself, animals were bred larger and heavier; and,

as the Olivier film 'Henry V' showed practically during its making, increasingly immobile; until the tide turned in the 15th century and mobility again became paramount. This paradox was reflected in Charles the First of England's predisposition to be painted on an immense animal for effect; while in practice his passion was for collection and breeding the Arab horse.

Such a type of horse, in contrast to the Shetland pony, had its origin in the steppes of Asia, Bactria. The Chinese in early times, took and bred it. It also spread westwards through the Persians, the Greeks, and notably the Arabs whose armies rode it along the North African shore and into Spain. The Arab horse with its sparse desert grazing, was small and light. The Arabs rode mares and kept few stallions for breeding, and such control maintained good breeding stock. Their methods were copied and cultivated in Western Europe, notably by Charlemagne. Strict rules for the control of his stables and breeding practices were imposed, the export not only of arms but of horses also, particularly to the Vikings, was forbidden; and even when ransom arose, as the story of the knight with his mother in enemy hands shows, payment with horses was proscribed.

It had been observed that while interbreeding of stock raised no particular problems, the introduction of new blood had advantages. The Normans found that their breeds on the chalky limestone of their land, flourished; but that size increased with alternate feeding in wet pastureland. The lecturer demonstrated this with chronological illustrations from Arab and Spanish manuscripts of the 10th century, seals of the time of the Conquest, and later medieval seals from Scotland.

Curiously, it was the Frankish abbots who developed the art of horse-breeding, with their ample land, and power to impose the discipline of a stud. Animals could take the place of currency in transactions; and with the attraction of the horse for the Viking it is no surprise that Frankish monasteries became a frequent object of attack. With the settlement of Normandy in the eleventh century the conditions for controlled breeding were once more restored. By contrast the Viking and Danish incursions into England, notably in the time of Ethelred II, created a desperately insecure situation in the countryside. The result is to be seen in 1066 at Hastings - the Norman mounted on vigorous and trained animals, the Saxons on foot. So was set the

pattern for a horse-mounted Europe which was to last until the trench warfare of the Great War.

A number of interesting points arose from the following question period: (1) that with the feeding problems involved, the number of horse in the invasion of 1066 was probably limited to a few hundred, (2) that the iron shoeing of horses was the practice by the time of Charlemagne (the Romans shod with leather), (3) horses were given individual names since classical times, (4) that in contrast to Norman practice, Saxon fighting forces were based on the fleets and organised by ship units, a commander being known as 'the steersman'

John Springford

WILLIAM COBBETT AND RURAL ENGLAND

Dr. Alun Howkins: Sub-Dean, School of Cultural and Community Studies, University of Sussex. 3 November 1989

If there is one subject which is of common interest to all our members it is undoubtedly Rural England. To this extent our lecturer was talking to a captive audience and he did not disappoint us.

He commenced by saying that as he had started his working life as a farm labourer, he had much in common with Cobbett. He first sketched Cobbett's background to allow us to better understand this dynamic man. Cobbett was born in 1762, the son of a small farmer from Farnham, Surrey. He was self educated and could read and write by the time he was eleven. It is said that throughout his lifetime he wrote more words than any other English writer. The small farming world was too small to contain him and he left home and enlisted in the Army. He served in Nova Scotia from 1784 to 1791 and rose to Sgt. Major, a considerable feat in those days, no doubt assisted by his literate and assertive nature. On discharge he set about denouncing the condition of the soldiers pay and corruption in the Army. With little chance of a fair hearing in England he withdrew to France, and then as the clouds of war began to gather he went to the United States where he stayed until 1800. Within six months he had begun a career as a writer and politician choosing as his pen name 'Peter Porcupine' under which he defended the English system and bitterly attacked French republicanism.

In 1800 he returned to England and by 1802 was publishing "Cobbett's Political Register" which he wrote almost entirely by himself. It first appeared as an influential radical Tory paper.

He found that the rural wealth that he had left in this country in the 1780's had changed. By 1803 there were 1 million paupers in this country. It was about this time that he decided to devote his life to the English country worker.

In 1805 he purchased a farm in Hampshire which he kept for 12 years. During this period he became dissatisfied with the money-making society coupled with political corruption. In 1809 he protested against the flogging of English militiamen by the German Legion Cavalry and was sentenced to pay a fine of £1000 and 2 years in Newgate jail.

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 conditions in England had changed, especially in the countryside where wages were below subsistence level. Cobbett became the natural leader of a national movement for parliamentary reform. In his publications, 'Porcupine' and 'Political Register', Cobbett had warned the country that revolts would occur, and the riots of 1815 justified his warnings. By 1816 the 'Register' was designed to appeal to journeymen and labourers. In 1817 repressive government measures forced him to flee once again to the United States. He found it had changed into a paradise since he had left there 17 years ago. When he returned to England in 1819 he held up the American example to his English audiences just as he had held up the English example to his American audiences during the 1790's.

Nevertheless one of the reasons why Cobbett was able to appreciate the English countryside is that he had travelled extensively - not such a common thing for the ordinary man in those days. His writings are often the richer for the comparisons he is able to draw.

Because Cobbett wanted to discover for himself the situation through the country, and appeal to others for help, he began to travel around England. He started his first journey from London in 1821 and completed his last, 11 years later, when he became MP for Oldham. The England which he had known as a boy was beginning to look and feel different. In the course of his travels Cobbett visited Battle at least twice.

Firstly for a meeting on 3 January 1822. It was held "in a large room of the principal inn". It was attended by about 300 persons principally landlords and farmers who were concerned about the Corn Bill. Lord Ashburnham was called to the Chair. The object was to agree a petition to parliament praying for relief. Cobbett gave a long speech in which he concluded that he thought it unlikely that relief would be granted. He had to leave in such a hurry that he bemoaned the fact that he had "no time to go even to see Battle Abbey, the seat of the Webster Family, now occupied by a man of the name of Alexander."

In 1825 Cobbett wrote "Events are working together to make the country worth living in, which, for the great body of the people, is at present hardly the case."

He again visited Battle in 1830 on the occasion of the last labourers revolt. This started as a peasant protest which spread from Kent. They bore no arms and shed no blood but activity against property was more forceful e.g. burning of buildings. On 16 October 1830 Cobbett addressed a meeting in Battle. He condemned the violence but welcomed the gains in wages which resulted.

A fuller account of Cobbett and the Last Labourers' revolt is given in Transactions for 1953/54.

Cobbett died in 1835 truly earning the epitaph "The Labourers Friend".

Alan Denny

BATTLE ABBEY BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISSOLUTION

Mr. Guy Beresford: Consultant Archaeologist
English Heritage — 1 December 1989

The importance of the gatehouse is established early in our history; the Laws of Alfred mention the fortification of burghs and their gatehouses, while the Rule of St. Benet establishes that a Benedictine Abbey should be contained within a precinct with a gatehouse.

At Battle Abbey, the early Norman gatehouse demolished in the fourteenth century was very similar in size and flanking ranges to the present gatehouse. It was always special, as

it was the entrance to William I's personal Abbey. Its function was to make the Abbey private, to stop people wandering in, and as a symbol of the lordship of the Abbot of Battle and the Church. As a fortification it is symbolic. Its main function was to mark the division between the secular and the religious.

When, in February 1095, the Abbey Church was dedicated, its altar was the centre of a circular estate, three miles in diameter. The Abbey itself was a Royal Peculiar. This title meant that the earliest Abbots had a little diocese, or small 'rape' within the larger Rape of Hastings. They paid no taxes, had the right of pardon, and were allowed a weekly Sunday market. Battle Fair took place in July and at St. Martin's in the winter. Abbots were granted an allowance when summoned to court, and another allowance of beasts when passing through the King's Forest. All this gave rise to continual quarrels with the Bishop of Chichester and tampering with the all important Battle Abbey charters.

The Abbots were given certain rights of freedom from episcopal jurisiction, and by the twelfth century, seven abbots, including the Abbot of Battle, were free from episcopal control. This privileged status was due directly to William I.

During the mid-twelfth century, the Holy See tightened up on this situation, when Bishop Hilary demanded that the Abbots of Battle should fulfil their diocesan obligations, and the Abbot was excommunicated. As the dispute continued, in 1157 the King found in favour of the Abbots of Battle; in 1173 the Abbots applied for confirmation of these exemptions; and in 1211 the Abbey paid the King over a thousand marks for the right to choose their own Abbot. Subsequently this was confirmed by Rome and in 1335, the Abbots, the Holy See and Chichester agreed on certain visitations. Battle Abbey was now a Free House, exempt from episcopal interference.

There is evidence of early timber trenches, rubble walling, early Norman walls without foundations, herringbone walling in the Saxon Sussex tradition, and a gatekeeper's lodge, belonging to the Norman gatehouse of this early period.

The late fourteenth century gatehouse we see to-day, is built of squared ashlar and stone from the quarry behind the Chequers Inn. It includes: storage and servants' quarters,

two large garderobes, a school, the almonry, and the Treasurer's Office. The gate tower had four turrets, the south-west turret had a stairway and roof, while the other three had intermediate floors with mural staircases.

Fortifications included a portcullis and murder holes to protect the entrance to the room above the gate. This room, occupied by the steward, had a fine fireplace and large windows, unsuitable for fortification, but indicating its importance.

From the mid-fourteenth century, the Abbey employed lay stewards, who occupied a suite of rooms in the gatehouse.

At the Dissolution, the new owner Sir Anthony Browne demolished the Abbey church and the chapter house, and then adapted the Abbot's Lodging. A new wing was built in the unfulfilled hope of housing the Princess Elizabeth in 1537. The almoner's rooms in the gatehouse were also demolished and replaced by a new court house.

During the period, Battle was a centre of Catholicism and the Abbey remained in the Montague's hands until, in 1715, it was purchased by Sir Thomas Webster. The gatehouse then became a bakehouse and malthouse and in the mid-eighteenth century part of it was adapted as a cottage. In 1857, the Duke of Cleveland added a library.

In 1901, the Webster family bought the Abbey back, and in 1976, it became the property of the Ministry of the Environment.

Patricia Speedy

A further example of the Oral History being recorded on tapes for preservation in our Museum.

Reminiscences of Mr. Wilfred Barden, Ashburnham, E. Sussex.

My mother and father lived at the Forge when I was born, but when I was 4½ years of age, we moved up to the Furnace. The first big event at the Furnace was commencing school. I had a very kind teacher, Miss Spooner, but unfortunately I sat next to a rather spiteful boy. We had slates and slate pencils in those days instead of books and pens, and our short slate pencils were held in metal tubes. The ends of these were rather sharp, and the spiteful boy would sometimes jab it down on my fingers. The first lesson I can remember, teacher chalked very thickly a number, say 6 or 8, and we had to keep going over this with our slate pencils until all the chalk was covered. Teacher said we would then know what it was.

As I grew older I wandered about the Furnace and grew to love it as I always shall. You see, my home was there and be it ever so humble there is no place like home, and mine was a very happy one. In my opinion, it was a Christian home. Religion was not drummed into us, but an example was set by the life our parents lived. We were taught not to take things that didn't belong to us, not to tell lies, and not to be mouthy to grown-ups, and that, I think, is a good start in life.

As children we learned quite a lot of what we could and couldn't eat from the hedge-rows. We used to eat pig nuts which we dug up with a trowel, cuckoo sorrel which grows along most grass verges, wood sorrel which grows on moist and shady banks, the berries of the hawthorn which we called hog hazels, and bread and cheese which are the young shoots of the hawthorn. We used to peel the shoots of briars and eat them. They are quite sweet, also beech nuts and medlars. We were very careful eating these as we really believed that if we swallowed a pip, a tree would grow inside us. We used to eat the bright red berries of yew trees. Many people think these are poisonous, but they aren't. They are very sweet and rather sticky. In the spring when the birch trees have been cut down, the sap oozes out of the stubb. We used to suck this. It's sweet and tastes like baby's gripewater. But just a word of warning. Don't eat anything unless you are sure it is safe to do so. I once ate what I thought was a pig nut. I don't know what it was, but it burnt my throat and frightened me, and I was more careful after that.

I once found the nest of Britain's smallest bird, the golden crested wren, also a nightingale's nest. I am sorry to say, we used to take a lot of thrushes and blackbirds eggs as all the farmers regarded them as pests in those days. My mother used to cook them for us and they were quite good on bread and butter. Sometimes she would make a custard with them.

During the fruit season all wasps nests that were found were marked with a piece of white paper stuck on a stick. My father melted rock sulphur in a pan over the stove then put a 2" strip of cloth and rolled it up to make a torch. On a Saturday evening the neighbours would meet armed with torches, a pair of bellows, hurricane lamp and a box of matches and go to destroy the nests. When the nest was reached they stood well back and got the torch well alight, then up to the nest and put the blazing torch on to the watchman. A wasp was always on guard so you had to get him, or he would get you. Then several puffs with the bellows, then quiet, then one man with his ear to the ground would listen to find out which way the nest lay. After a whiff of sulphur fumes, the wasps were really singing. Then, with the direction located, they kept pumping in that direction until all was quiet. The wasps were dead then, and the nests dug out and the maggots destroyed or taken home in a bucket for the hens.

Nearly every Saturday in the shooting season, the Earl would have a shooting party, and us boys were taken before the shooting started to stand at intervals round the woods to keep the pheasants in, and woe betide us if we left our position. At lunch time we were brought a third of a loaf, a large piece of cheese and two layers of beef and a mug of cocoa which was nearly cold. We were given a shilling a day for this and it helped to buy our clothes or boots.

The walk to school was through Hog-sty Wood, across Furnace Field, up across Barn Meadow, through Court Lodge Farm, then through the Platt and Lodge Lane then across Ponts Green Field to the main road. This was a lovely walk in nice weather, but very muddy in the winter. We wore hob-nailed boots and leather spats, and I dread to think what our school-room floor was like on a wet day. There were no school meals in those days, and it was too far to go home to dinner, so we took sandwiches, a bun and a bottle of cold tea. We had no water laid on at school, so two boys fetched a bucket from a well down Brown Bread Street.

I was 13 years of age when I left school, then nose to the grindstone. My first job was brushing out small wood making kiln faggots with it, so the men could follow cutting the larger wood making house faggots, lordings* and cord wood. I was paid 3/-d. for a hundred kiln faggots, and I made about 25 in a day so that was 9d. per day. Then I got a job at the Earl's gardens under a kindly Head Gardener, Mr. Grigg. I was the bothy boy. The bothy was where the men lived who looked after the greenhouses. I locked up at night and unlocked to let the men in in the morning. I had to make their tea and prepare and cook their vegetables and keep the place clean. Any spare time I helped in the gardens. I got a shilling for that. I doubt if the Pay Board would pass it today under phase 3. When I was 14 the two bothy men left and I and another lad of 16 lived in the bothy. We used to go home on alternate evenings for an hour or two to get our dinners. The bothy was very poorly furnished, bare brick floors, wooden chairs and a table.

The lawns were mowed by a horse-drawn mower and leather shoes were strapped to their hooves to prevent damage to the lawns. The grass verges were cut by scythes, and the men who did this could do almost as good as a mower.

The neighbours often used to have a little talk about the week's happenings on a Sunday morning. They relied on the butcher, baker, grocer etc. for the news, and I can remember them saying how wonderful it was when Crippen, the wife murderer, was arrested by a message sent over the ocean without any wires. "I wonder what they will do next", said one. "Oh, you will be able to see things happening miles away", said another. "Don't talk silly, that is impossible", said a third.

Mrs. Gates kept the village shop and post office and also a small farm. She was liked by everyone, but I'm afraid the shop would get no marks for hygiene these days. Sugar in a sack would stand the wrong side of the counter, often with a cat asleep on it, and sometimes the cat sitting on a large cheese on the counter. She used to wear a man's cap with a hole in the top and her hair sticking through. I remember the sweets that I like that she used to sell, aniseed balls 20 a penny, aniseed buttons 12 a penny, aniseed monsters 8 a penny.

*Faggots Bundles of wood about 5' long and 2' in circumference.

Cord Wood	Pile of wood cut for burning 8' x 4' and 4' thick.
Lordings	Branches and tops taken off wood being cut for poles.

Sheila Bishop.

BATTLE STREET INDEX

The work described in the last Newsletter has been continued. Changes in the use or ownership of all shops in the Battle Conservation Area have been recorded in the card index, and where there has been appreciable change to the exterior of any building new photographs have been taken. As before the street index has found an application in the annual updating of the Society's leaflet of a walk around Battle. This leaflet continues to be in steady demand at the Tourist Information Office, and the need for the printing of more copies in October gave the opportunity for a second updating in 1989.

For record purposes it is convenient to have all photographs as 4in. x 6in. prints, but in addition some 75 transparencies were taken earlier in the year. These were used to illustrate a brief talk given to Maidstone Historical Society who visited the Abbey, St. Mary's Church, and the town on 13th May 1989.

The task of tracing earlier use and occupancy of buildings from street directories has proceeded more slowly now that the material available in Battle library has been exhausted. In this library extracts from a number of street directories of Battle, published at varying intervals between 1862 and 1938, are available as photocopies. To study later periods, when only Kelly's Directory was published, it is necessary to visit the Reference Library at Hastings. Data for the years 1940, 1948, 1953 and 1956 have now been transfered to the card index, and it is intended to continue this line of approach as far as it will go, i.e. until the early 1970's when street directories were superseded by the "Yellow Pages" of the telephone directory. The staff of Hastings Library have been most helpful in this work.

Donald Nicol.

SEDLESCOMBE AND ITS INHABITANTS
by MRS. BERYL LUCEY
author of "Twenty centuries in Sedlescombe"

One of the fascinating results of having written a book about local history is the people with whom it has put me in contact, for people is what history is all about. It is they whom "digs", in the long run concern; they who make even apparently dull bits of broken pottery exciting, as the imagination plays over the hands that made the pots of which they are part, the hands that used them, and the hands that broke them; and so with more obviously interesting finds.

The people who appear unannounced on my doorstep in person or in correspondence are mostly ancestor-hunters from all over Britian and from further-flung parts of the globe, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.A. It is astonishing how many, even from the last three, describe how they have come across my book, and knowing of their own family connections with the village, have opened the book, and discovered delightedly their family name in the index. So came the Starrs, the many Eldridges and the Byners amongst others.

Quite the most interesting of these ancestor-hunters arrived in the village from Sydney not long ago looking for a particular grave in the churchyard, and stopping at the garage for petrol, enquired if there were any literature about the village. Directed to the Post Office they bought my book and were then directed to the author's house three doors away!

The lady's family name was Dennet, which they had immediately discovered in the index. Will Dennet, she knew, had been christened in 1776 in Whatlington Church where his parents, John and Elizabeth had been married four years earlier. One of six sons, he evidently "went to the bad", for twenty two years later he was arrested for "highway robbery and burglary of the house of Samuel Selmes in Sedlescombe". They showed me a photo-copy of the original document of the Court of Sessions held at Lewes Assizes in 1797 which stated that William Dennet, labourer of the Parish of Sedlescombe, was condemned "to be hanged by the neck until he be dead". they followed this with a photo-copy of another document, this time from the Court of Common Pleas where his appeal was heard and allowed. (One wonders so much on what it rested). "Let him be transported beyond

the seas for 14 years" was the final sentence: and so he arrived in Australia.

Having served his time, he was freed and married another convict, for an ex-convict was, as can well be imagined, beyond the pale for respectable citizens. Respectable citizens, however, is what the family which these two reared eventually became. There are still Selmes in Sedlescombe, and the great grandfather of the present one was also called Samuel. Is it not a pleasant fact that when sufficient time has passed, what was a painfully shameful skeleton in the cupboard becomes a proud romantic story?

But the Dennets in Sedlescombe must have been greatly grieved and shamed by their black sheep, for they were a hard-working family producing generations of blacksmiths who worked at two of the three forges in the village and lived beside them in Forge Cottages and in the Old Gun Cottage. When an old shed in Long Lane, beside the latter house, was pulled down fifteen years ago, literally hundreds of horse-shoes of all sizes were unearthed. Three members of the family, James, John and Thomas, all blacksmiths and tenants of the same two cottages, were present at Cobbett's famous meeting in Battle in 1830, but the five Dennet graves still to be seen in the churchyard are all that remains here of that once large family, the last of who described himself as a coal merchant.

But the descendants of their black sheep, very prosperous now and well known in Sydney, return frequently to his native village and visit me when they come on regular business visits to London. They are clearly fascinated by this traditional English village with its green and its picturesque timber-framed houses; and their imaginations boggle with delight at visiting a house built all but 600 years ago which is still a very solid family home.

Once again, however, a house for all the beauty of its oaken beams, crownposts and inglenooks, is more than that. I could sometimes wish to be a novelist to write the story of its life; the lives of all the families who have lived, loved and reproduced, worked and talked and kissed and squabbled, grown vegetables and flowers in the garden acre, and cooked and suffered and died in it over the long centuries. Overlooking the village green, what could it not tell of the life of the village itself, which is of course again the sum of the people who lived here?

Is not this the cause of the pleasure and joy which people receive from their heirlooms, which their forbears used, touched or wore; the piece of furniture or jewellery, picture or dress? So, on this subject, I can squeeze in a digression which, though historical, has nothing really to do with Sedlescombe village, but which I think may interest.

About 40 years ago, not very long after I came to live here, I received a parcel unexpectedly from an usually ungenerous stepmother. Inside much tissue paper, and a note saying "This, I was told, was a court suit of Nelson's when a child. Perhaps it will come in for theatricals and fancy dress parties. If I send it to the museum I shall be pestered with questions"! Inside the tissue was a most lovely coat and breeches of oyster and azure coloured satin far too beautiful to be messed up in family games. So it lay in its tissue safely in my airing cupboard until at last, greatly daring, (for while the discoveries of other people prove genuine, so often it seems that ones own do not) I took it one day to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Coming upon the note first and then gazing at the satin beauty, the expert lady held up her hands in horror "You didn't..." I reassured her, and she reassured me that it certainly was the genuine article, in very good condition. I had always discounted the idea that it was his court dress worn as a boy, for what on earth would the little son of a clergyman be doing at court? Moreover there was on the breast of the coat a ribbon which was clearly a decoration, too sparkling I felt to be of British origin. The sight of it sent my lady calling for assistance, and various people were sent hither and thither to search among books of medals, fruitlessly.

So I was sent to the National Maritime Museum where the suit was gazed at with acquisitive eyes which then turned to me. "You won't sell it to the Arabs?" I firmly assured them I had no intention of parting with it. So they comforted themselves by taking some most artisitic photographs of it, but still could not identify the decoration.

I personally think that, with its sequin glitter, it is of either Spanish, Italian or Sicilian orign; for Nelson was feted in these countries after his victories, and was, indeed, created Duke of Bronte of the Kingdom of Sicily. The family crest shows a "diamond plume of triumph" given to him by the Grand Senor Sultan Salim III of the Porte, i.e. Turkey.

It is a strange and exciting experience to be fingering something Nelson wore on lustrous occasions, perhaps in one of Europe's courts rather than in England, brightening even that candle-lit scene with the vivid personality contained in that small body.

Is any member of this Historical Society an authority on foreign medals and decorations?

Beryl Lucey.

WESTFIELD

Some historical notes by Mr. D.C. Board

Westfield Parish, three miles east of Battle, is bounded to the north by the River Brede and to the east by a tributary stream, the Doleham Ditch.

There has been a settlement of some kind in the area since pre-Roman times. Traces of a Roman road have been found near the church, and a bath house associated with an iron-smelting works has been excavated on the western boundary. This has been filled in for protection pending further investigation. The operation of the works was in the charge of the Romano-British fleet. The crude iron was hauled to Sedlescombe or Brede to what was then a tidal arm of the sea. Thence it was shipped to Gaul for refining. The bath house was probably some compensation to the Roman officers for being stationed in what was for them a primitive and isolated posting.

Until the turn of the last century Westfield was a port in that there were wharves at Brede bridge. Coal was brought up by barge from Rye for the pumping station. It was loaded from the barges on to a steam tramway for carriage to the works. This practice ceased when railway sidings were built at Doleham. The coal was then hauled through the narrow lanes by steam wagon. Until the 1940's there stood on the south bank the the remains of a warehouse. Presumably bulk goods were brought up from Rye by barge. The horse trough from this warehouse is now in the garden at Little Knights.

In Saxon times Westwelle as it was then known was part of the Baldslow Hundred. Hundreds were sub-divisions of the Shires for fiscal and policing purposes. They varied in size, but 22 square miles would be a representative area.

Before the Norman Conquest the holder of the manor was one Wenestan. After that event it became part of the possessions of the Count of Eu. Crowham Manor was held by Hugh de Peplesham in return for supplying one ship for the transport of the Count and Countess.

Church Farm was an original manor and was moated. Other manors were Lankhurst, Doleham and Detcham. The last named was probably incorporated into Crowham and was not heard of after 1674. By the 14th century the village had acquired a version of its modern name, Westfelde.

As with most old Sussex villages there is a number of ancient houses which started as Wealden buildings, timber-framed and filled with wattle and daub, and thatched. They have been considerably altered over the centuries, but retain their distincitive character. The two oldest ones are Crowham Cottage and Pattletons, dating from the 14th century. The former was unfortunately severely damaged by fire a few years ago. Other notable examples are Bluemans, Sprays Bridge, Southings, Benskins, Downoak, Haret Green, Buckhurst, and some cottages at Westfield Moor.

In the 16th century Westfield had a flourishing iron industry, traces of which survive in the names Forge Stream and Forge Wood. Smelting in those days required huge quantities of timber for charcoal, and depredations of the ironmasters had far reaching conseqences. In 1576 the Mayor and Jurats of Hastings wrote to their counterparts at Rye complaining that the forges would destroy their supply of timber, and asking their advice. The Mayor of Rye replied advising them to

"frame a letter to the whole (Cinq) ports and their members declaring that except ye have their ayde ye shall not be able to resist it, and put them in mind that not only yow but Ry, Winchilsy, Lidd, Hyde, Dover, Sandwich, the whole Isle of Thanet and divers other places along the seacost shall feel the smart thereof, not only for want of fuel but especially for tymber, as well as for building of ships, botes and other vessels as also for building of houses, tymber and piles for water works, which now is had and hereafter will not if this work takes place. And so beyond you as far as Brightelmstone is likewise served from these parts".

Westfield's crown is its ancient church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and standing in a large and pleasant churchyard at the south end of the village. There is Saxon work in the heavily buttressed tower. It is likely that the Saxon nave was of timber. This article does not have the scope to do justice to this venerable and handsome building, but remains of Norman windows, two hagioscopes, a Jacobean pulpit and a Restoration sounding board, and a Tudor south door are but a few of its special features. *

In 1100, Wening, lord of Westfield Manor, granted the church to the Abbey of Battle. The gift included the usual accessory of a pit for the ordeal by water. In 1251, Richard, Bishop of Chichester, allowed the Abbey to appropriate the tithes of Westfield, the monks paying the Vicar 100 shillings annually, plus one pilch or furred garment, and decent clerical coats. In 1291 the church was valued at £5.6.8d and the vicarage £6.13.4d. In the subsequent 300 years the church passed to and from the Crown and the local nobility. In the beginning of the 17th century it was conveyed to the Bishops of Chichester, who hold it still.

D.C. Board

*An illustrated historical guide to Westfield Church - "A Thousand Years of Praise and Prayer" - can be seen in our Museum (Ed.)

1989 SUMMER OUTINGS

SALISBURY, BATH, WELLS AND GLASTONBURY, APRIL 1989.

The afternoon before we were due to leave there was a snow storm and many hearts must have sank! However, although we left Battle under a dark cloud and it did rain around Heathfield, by the time we stopped at Midhurst for coffee the skies were clearing, and that is how it stayed until our return.

The first stop was Salisbury Cathedral. It is one of only two English Cathedrals of which the whole interior structure was built to the design of one man. Built in the English Gothic Style of oolitic Jurassic Portland Limestone from the Chilmark Quarries some 10 miles distant, with pillars of Purbeck Marble, the interior presents a breathtaking

symmetry. We had excellent guides to point out the more important aspects of the Cathedral although James Wyatt's 'restoration' of 1789/92 came in for a good deal of criticism including his rearrangement of the tombs in two straight lines on the plinths of the nave.

After lunch two intrepid members (ladies) climbed into the roof space of the Cathedral, but most members toured Salisbury's new museum located in the King's House, a Grade 1 listed building originally the Salisbury residence of the Abbots of Sherborne. The many interesting exhibits included a display illustrating how and when Stonehenge was built; an archaeological collection tracing Man's activities from the Old Stone Age to the Saxon period; and a reconstruction of a doctor's surgery and waiting room in the 1940s. En route to Bath we paid a brief visit to Stonehenge.

The following day was spent in Bath commencing with a two hour tour by coach. The tour took in all the well known Georgian Crescents including The Royal Crescent (Mrs. M. Emeleus' great Grandfather once owned the lease of No. 26), Queen Square and Great Pulteney Street. We were taken to see the new University building which the guide said (thankfully) was not visible from the town, but the highlight was our visit to Prior Park, built for business man Ralph Allen as a 'showhouse' to demonstrate the beauty of the local sandstone that he was mining nearby. The view from the terrace of Bath laid out below was breathtaking.

Once the tour was ended members were free to explore the delights of Bath although our paths often crossed at the Abbey, the Roman Baths and the Pump Room. It was a beautiful spring day and some members took a boat ride down the somewhat murky Avon.

On paper the itinerary for the last day appeared reasonable but in reality proved most tiring. Our first stop was at the Tribunal in Glastonbury where justice was administered by the Abbot until the dissolution of the monasteries. The building contained the courtroom with its ante chamber, and a lodging for the justices. Later a kitchen was added and the building converted to a private house. It is well preserved with decorative detail from three centuries.

Prebendary Vere Hodge and his wife joined us at the Tribunal and took us on a tour of the Abbey ruins which proved to be another delightful and informative experience. They also joined us for lunch and enjoyed renewing friendships formed in Battle soon after the war when he was a curate at St. Mary's.

Then on to the Bishop's Palace where, outside of normal opening hours, we were privileged to be taken on a guided tour by Mr. Derek Randell. Mr. Randell had been Chief Administrator of the Palace for just three months when we visited but had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history, fabric and furnishings.

Our last call was Wells Cathedral. By now the strain must have been showing because we were constantly being invited to sit down! We much enjoyed the sculptures on the capitals; a cobbler mending shoes, an old lady taking a thorn out of her foot, a man with tooth ache, and a series telling the story of an old man stealing fruit, but he is caught by the farmer and attacked with a pitchfork. Cartoons in stone circa 1190! And too we were all most impressed by the famous scissor arches built by William Joy in 1338 so as to transmit some of the weight of the enlarged tower from the west (where it was too heavy) to the east where the foundations could take it. Since the scheme was completed there has been no further movement of the tower. We also studied the famous mechanical clock made in 1390 (the second oldest - we had seen the oldest during our tour of Salisbury Cathedral.) The three dials show the hour and position of the sun, minutes, date of the lunar month and the phase of the moon. At every quarter hour a little man drums with his heels and two rows of horsemen rotate over the dials in opposite directions and fight, the same horseman being knocked off his horse every time.

The weary group turned for refreshment to the Cathedral restaurant and then boarded the coach for the long journey home.

MARY ROSE AND OVERLORD EMBROIDERY, PORTSMOUTH, JUNE 1989

It is a long journey to Portsmouth and as it was a warm day the break for refreshments at Fishbourne Palace was most welcome.

On arrival at Portsmouth the group broke into several parties - some visiting the exhibition first, whilst others made for the dry dock housing the hull of the Mary Rose. To conserve the hull timbers the dock is covered with a double skin insulated roof which helps maintain a temperature of -5 degrees Celsuis and the hull is sprayed for a minimum of 20 hours in every 24 with chilled fresh water. With a maintained 95% humidity the atmosphere is somewhat oppressive but this is soon forgotten as spectators view the remains of a once proud ship, built in Portsmouth in 1509/11, and which sank in July 1545 watched by Henry VIII and families of the crew. We were told of trials to evaluate methods of conserving the hull timbers and eventually drying the hull; also the estimated 20 year programme of work to replace some 800 timbers in situ- the deck planks, beams, half beams, partitions and compartment planks, campanionways etc. which will restore the Mary Rose to the condition in which she was found underwater. Many of the artefacts found on the sea bed during the excavation of the Mary Rose are featured in the exhibition including personal items belonging to crew members such as a backgammon set, musical instruments, quill pens and inkwells, book covers, sewing kits and pewter plates. A barber surgeon was on board and items of medical equipment including medicines were found. Some of the earliest cast bronze guns plus more than 3,500 arrows and 138 long bows were recovered from the Mary Rose. Altogether a fascinating glimpse of naval life in the 16th century.

As the Royal Naval Dockyard contains many other interesting exhibitions including HMS Warrior, HMS Victory and the Royal Naval Museum a number of our group elected to stay on site whilst a party of 31 visited the Overlord Embroidery. Commissioned by Lord Dulverton in 1968 from the Royal School of needlework the completed embroidery is 34 panels long and measures 272 feet, the largest work of its kind in the world, and it tells the complete story of the D Day operation. Over 50 different materials were used, including khaki uniform cloth, gold braid (for the King's uniform), and a paratrooper's beret. The Embroidery is the centre piece of the D-Day Museum which brings back to life familiar sights from wartime Britain and places the events of the D-Day landings within the context of the history of World War II.

The party met again for a welcome tea in the Victory Buffet before leaving for home after a most interesting day.

ST. MARY'S, BRAMBER, WEST SUSSEX. JULY 1898

St. Mary's is said to be one of the most ancient and distinguished houses of its kind in Britain. The foundations go back to the 12th century when land at Bramber was granted to the Knights Templar. The present 15th century structure is the east wing of a former four sided monastic inn designed by William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester and founder of Magdalene College, Oxford. Where the western side and central courtyard had been, a new wing, including a music room, was added in 1896. But from the end of the 1914/18 war the house generally fell into disrepair and in 1946 demolition was proposed. We have to thank Dorothy Ellis who saved it from destruction and started the restoration programme now being continued by the present owner, Peter Thorogood, and his Curator, Roger Linton.

Our party broke into three manageable groups of 15 or so and our guides quickly communicated to us their enthusiasm and love for the house and its historical associations. We were shown fine panelled rooms; rare 16th century stamped, painted and gilded Spanish wall leather in the inner hall (some recently cleaned); what is thought to be the only surviving example in the UK of a mediaeval unglazed 'shutting window', consisting of sections bound and hinged with iron work; the unique 'Painted Room', which commemorates the visit of Elizabeth I (she really did sleep there!), - a room decorated with a series of trompe l'oeil arcaded 'passageways' with tiny landscapes viewed through arches; fine furniture and pictures; strapwork panels in doors reputed to come from one of the Armada Galleons; and much else. It was a most absorbing afternoon and consequently we were late for tea which was taken in the elegant music room to the accompaniment of music from the 1930's played on the piano by Peter Thorogood. Altogether a most satisfying outing.

POLESDEN LACEY, SURREY. AUGUST 1989

The day we visited Polesden Lacey was hot and somewhat sultry and we were glad to have the advantage of a comfortable G registration coach as we took a less than direct route to Polesden Lacy through the Sussex/Surrey countryside. Polesden Lacey was bequeathed to the National Trust by the Hon. Mrs. Ronald Greville whose name will be familiar to readers of the lives and times of King Edward VII and King George V. The present house, designed by Thomas

Cubitt, dates from 1824, and is a two storey building surrounding an open central courtyard. A number of rooms on the ground floor are open to the public - Dining Room, Library, Study, Tea Room, Billiard and Smoking Rooms - all containing fine furniture, paintings and porcelain but the room that attracts most comment is undoubtedly the Drawing Room. The walls glitter with highly burnished gilt wood panelling transferred from an Italian palace. After the 1960 fire we are told it took 18 months and over 2 thousand books of 24ct gold leaf to regild it. To add to the dazzle the room contains a very large ormolu and cut glass chandelier. It is a room that takes one's breath away on first entering and one wonders if Mrs. Greville and her guests were ever able to relax when using it. The spacious gardens brought back a sense of realism and most members of the party were glad when the time came to quench our thirsts and enjoy the cream tea set out for us in the restored stables.

DOVER CASTLE, SEPTEMBER 1989

Yet another change of coach! This time a double decker coach, used mainly for travel on the continent, pulled in at Abbey Green to looks of disbelief from the Organiser and the Group. It was a most comfortable drive via Rye although we had some difficulty deciding where to park the coach when we arrived at Dover Castle. Guided tours of the Castle are not generally available but, trading on our status as an Historical Society and from Battle no less, English Heritage were persuaded to provide guides for our party, perhaps because it was William the Conqueror who built the first castle at Dover within the existing Anglo-Saxon burgh and former Iron Age fort.

Our tour took in the great tower Keep constructed for Henry II in the 1180s to be the military strong point of the castle and to contain much of the principal residential accommodation. Internally the Keep is divided into a basement and two main residential storeys. The accommodation on the first and second floors form two self-contained residential suites but the second and upper storey, intended perhaps for the King or other important visitors, is the grander of the two with direct access to an elaborate chapel (known as Becket Chapel). We were told how Henry II commanded that a candle should be kept burning in the chapel in memory of his Archbishop and, sure enough, there was the flame. The illusion of continuity was destroyed however in

that Henry VIII was said to have banned the practise which was reintroduced only some 40 years ago.

We were invited to peer into the well shaft which descends sheer through the whole structure of the keep and down far below into the natural chalk of the site, a superb engineering feat. We also looked down garderobes (latrines) whilst being told the finer points of hygiene in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Throughout the centuries changes to the castle have been introduced to keep pace with new methods of warfare, the justification being strategic importance of the castle to the defence of the Realm. The most conspicuous change to the keep itself were the brick vaults or bomb proof arches, which would also take the weight of heavy guns, constructed in the late 1790s, over the main apartments on the top floor. Many walls of the keep are scored with the graffiti of 18th century French prisoners of war. The castle played a key role in both World Wars and was garrisoned until 1958. Following the organised tour of the keep members were free to explore the outer towers and curtain walls; the rare Roman lighthouse; Saxon church; an exhibition that traces the history of the Queen's Regiment; a model of the Battle of Waterloo; and Queen Elizabeth's Pocket Pistol. I doubt very much however that our members saw more than a fraction of these exhibits or found the time to explore the medieval underground works in the brief time at our disposal before rejoining the coach for the journey home, broken at Tenterden for a sumptuous tea.

E.L. & J.E. Goldsworthy

OBITUARIES

Professor R.Allen Brown, M.A., D.Litt., F.S.A., F.R.Hist S. Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

By the death of Professor Allen Brown on 1st February 1989, just a fortnight after he had been presented with a volume of essays* by eminent scholars as a tribute to mark his retirement from the Chair of Medieval at King's College, London, the world of medieval historical scholarship has lost one of its outstanding members, and the Battle and District Historial Society an outstanding President.

The Society has always been fortunate in its Presidents, from the time of its inauguration in 1950 with George Macaulay Trevelyan as the first holder of that office; and never more fortunate than when Professor Allen Brown accepted the Society's invitation in 1982. There is no definition in the Society's Constitution of the President's role, but if any conclude that the President is no more than a name on the twice yearly programme, conferring a little prestige, they would be very much mistaken. This was certainly not true of Professor Allen Brown's Presidency.

Yet he often expressed regret that his many commitments made it impossible for him to involve himself in the affairs of the Society as closely as he would have wished, and we know from outside sources of the high regard he had for it. But he very much underestimated the help he gave us.

This Society can make no claim to great academic distinction, and in accordance with our Constitution the emphasis of our lectures is very properly on local history. But for the October Commemoration lecture it is appropriate that the subject should have a substantial academic content dealt with at some depth. And to sustain a varied programme it is sometimes desirable to look away from the local scene and beyond an English defeat on our home ground by the Norman French. It is here that the role of our President has been all important in suggesting speakers, and anyone who looks throught the volumes of our Transactions and subsequent Newsletters will find there most of the outstanding medievalists of the last forty years.

But Professor Allen Brown did more than suggest lecturers and give advice on the queries about Senlac and Norman ancestry that inevitably come our way. He came down and addressed the Society himself. We recall his lecture on "The Normans in the South" and another on "1066 and All That" in Domesday anniversary year. Above all we recall his infectious enthusiasm for his subject. Some of the students at King's who attended his lectures must well have come away feeling that they had been in the presence of the Conqueror himself! It was this enthusiasm, albeit sometimes provocative, for "normanitas" that he conveyed to us in full measure. More than that, he may have made us receptive to critical appraisal of ideas about the past. So not only did he give us a new perspective on the Conquest, but perhaps when we were given a view on Richard III different from the

one absorbed in our schooldays or from Shakespeare, we were not wholly unprepared.

War Service in the Middle East, patrolling the desert with the 1st King's Dragoon Guards in the shadow of the great Crusader castles, was a formative influence in shaping his career as a medieval historian. But he was as much at home astride a horse as he had been in an armoured car, and we recall our President as very much a cavalry man, in hauberk and helmet, on his destrier, riding over the nearby battlefield. And we have been told how despite his illness he put up a splendid mounted performance during the 1987 event in Normandy to mark to 900th anniversary of the death of the Conqueror.

To print a list of Professor Brown's published works and articles in learned journals would run into several pages, but perhaps mention should be made of two major enterprises he inaugurated in the last decade; the work on the Suffolk Charters, and the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies that brought together at Pyke House scholars from Western Europe and the United States. But our late President carried his academic distinction with a light touch, and there was nothing about him of Hilaire Belloc's "Remote and Ineffectual Don". On Monday evenings he would meet his postgraduate students to discuss the progress of their work in the Marquess of Anglesey in Bow Street. In short he was very good company.

At our Commemoration Party in the Great Hall of the Abbey in October 1988 he clearly enjoyed recalling his earlier visits to the Abbey and the memories they evoked. So we can remember him with gratitude, but surely not with sadness for the contribution he made to our Society, having in our mind's eye A.B. with his hound at his feet and his hand round a glass, delivering his last speech to us.

In John Gillingham's "Life and Times of Richard I" there is a photograph of William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke. Alongside it are the words "The acknowledged expert on knightly affairs". That, too, is how the Society will no doubt remember Professor Brown, and as I suspect he would wish to be remembered. And as a very convivial expert.

*("Studies in Mediaeval History presented to R.Allen Brown" is in the Museum Library. John Gillingham's essay on William

I's record as a soldier and commander may upset some preconceived notions. It is also amusing.)

Keith Reader

JOSEPH CHARLESWORTH HIRST 1884-1989

The Society's oldest member died last September at the age of 105 in Saxonwood. He had lived there for the last 17 years of his life.

During the first World War he served with the R.A.M.C. Subsequently the active years of his long life were given to Christian causes, the Alliance of Honour, the Harrow auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the British-Israel World Federation of which his late wife was founder secretary.

His lively mind and keen sense of humour (still evident in hospital with a broken leg at the age of over 100), his optimism and strong faith in God will be remembered by all who knew him.

The funeral service in St. Mary's, Battle was conducted by the Dean, while the former Dean the Rev. Rex Bird travelled from Essex to read the lesson.