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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Professor G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M, C.B.E.

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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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EDITORIAL NOTE

During 1961-62, its twelfth year, the Society sustained a double loss through the death of its eminent President, and one who may be justly described as its Father. The tribute paid to their memory will be found in the account of the Annual General Meeting.

In addition to the lectures of local interest reported in this number, Miss B. H. N. Geary, B.A., B.LITT., gave an interesting talk on "English Social History in the Later Middle Ages", and Lieut.-Col. Lemmon, deputising for a lecturer who was unable to come, told the story of the Martello Towers and the Royal Military Canal, which is appearing in the "Rye Museum Association News Letter", and can be seen in the B. & D.H.S. Library.

THE EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE (ESPECIALLY SUSSEX)

It is necessary first to distinguish the various elements which collectively, though in varying degrees, make up any landscape.

1. The Platform. The land itself from Chalk Downland to High Weald, from the Vale of Sussex to Dungeness. These contrasts depend ultimately on the very rocks themselves and the circumstances of their deposition.
2. The Plant Cover. Whether cultivated field or pasture, woodland or heath its distribution depends so largely on the soil. Here, to an extent unknown over the greater part of Britain, these are derived directly from, and take their character from, the underlying rocks, sands, and clays of several types, and chalk.
3. Man's obvious, and not so obvious, effects on what Wordsworth called "the primeval landscape": field or open space, hedge or ditch, isolated farm or hamlet, village or town, railway or road, cattle or sheep, church and castle, pole and pylon; all indicate man's needs at different times.

In the remotest parts of the Scottish Highlands there is no landscape that can be regarded as unaffected in any way by man. Even there, they have been affected either indirectly through grazing, or directly in the interests of grouse shooting and deer stalking. Here in the Weald, botanists are far from sure of the appearance of the original forests.

The oldest of all the rocks of S.E. England are those from which comes the gypsum at Mountfield. How singularly fortunate to be able to tuck away within a fold of the forested countryside the full effects of such mining and manufacture! How different our local landscape must have been when iron-working was in full swing.

The story of the deposition of all the remaining rocks of this neighbourhood is as fascinating an aspect of this evolution of scenery as any. Desert conditions which saw the accumulation of the gypsum in lake-beds, gave way to a great inland sea in which were laid down clays like those at Fairlight; sandrock as at Winchelsea; that ghastly clay, yellow below, which has so many local gardeners enslaved; the sandstones of the cliffs at Hastings; many more sands and clays. Finally, when probably nearly all the British Isles passed beneath the sea, appeared the chalk, hundreds of feet of it. Sussex scenery so clearly demonstrates the relationship between geology, land form and land-use, and it is not necessary to emphasise so much the variety of rocks as the variety of countryside they produce.

The Cretaceous period came to an end with a prolonged series of earth movements in Southern Europe which eventually built the Alps. The effects in Britain were less spectacular, and here in the south-east there rose out of the sea a hippo-back—like an island extending from the Hampshire border into N. France. Immediately, the elements set to work and probably the whole area was reduced to a near-lowland by the action of streams over a long period of time. No doubt the sea played its part as it is doing now at Beachy Head, cutting back the cliffs yard by yard. Imagine attack at many points, proceeding further and further inland, cutting horizontally across chalk, sands and clays alike. Ultimately there was little left but a low island, the eastern end of which was probably in the neighbourhood of Rye. The Rother, Tillingham and Brede are probably remnants of the drainage of that island and if so, are the oldest features of the landscape.

Further fragments of this island to have survived the passage of a long period of geological time are the summits of Crowborough Beacon, Leith Hill, Firle Beacon and many other Downland crests. Not least spectacular are the beach-line deposits on Headley Heath and elsewhere, which clearly demonstrate that the island was subsequently to be raised some 600 feet above sea-level.

The floor of the shallow seas round about were covered with beds of sand and gravel first recognised as marine in

origin near Lenham in Kent, and later at many other hill-top sites at 550—600 feet.

Renewed uplift caused the sea to retreat and the existing rivers to extend their courses across the new land in very much the same fashion as in South Devon. The R. Dart has its source in Dartmoor which was then probably an island, but as the land rose it cut down a deep steep-sided valley. The rocks are so much more resistant than the sands and clays of the S.E., and a great deal more of the sea-bed surface remains. In Sussex, the chalk, relatively soft though it is, is porous. Running water on it is very rare, and it has remained upstanding more effectively. This is the only explanation for the way in which rivers like the Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur and Arun flow towards the Downs and have cut complete gaps through them. The Downs have, in fact grown across the rivers. Some rivers were unable to stay the course, so there are gaps higher up as at Alfriston. We are clearly presented with a mid-air landscape of the past, the present hills standing out because of the removal of the intervening masses.

The upward movement was not continuous. A very long pause corresponds with a height of 200-230 feet above present sea-level, the surface in fact which is so well represented by the flat-topped areas at this end of the county, and even better by those in the neighbourhood of Ashford.

This plain was then of course very little above sea-level; and later uplift carried the platform to its present height whilst rivers have cut down their valleys and destroyed it over wide areas. This surface probably dates back only to the early stages of the glacial period. As the ice-sheets formed, sea-level was lowered and rivers cut deep. When the ice melted sea-level rose again and drowned the deep valleys through the Downs. The last great melting can be traced all over the world and took place within the period of human prehistory. It must have been witnessed by some of our own distant ancestors, who, as a result, were cut off from the continent by the formation of the Channel.

E. R.

SOME EPISODES IN THE HISTORY OF RYE

Rye stands upon a sandstone rock as does her sister ancient town, Winchelsea, twin hills forming the tips of two fingers of the Forest Ridge of East Sussex. As to boundaries, the town is naturally compassed on the west, south and north by the Tillingham Brede and Rother rivers which at their confluence, south of the town, once provided an excellent harbour. An isthmus connected the rock settlement with the hill ridge immediately to the north—the old coastline of pre-marsh days.

The fortunes of Rye are inextricably bound up with the changes which have taken place in the local coastline. Creeks have sited up, bays have disappeared, and at least one major river changed its course, leaving a Cinque Port high and dry. The Rother estuary has altered beyond recognition principally due to the eastward drift carrying beach from promontary to promontory, forming en route lagoons and banks, which, with the silt brought down by the rivers, has formed our marsh lands. Not content with this natural process, agricultural man has continually tried to speed up the matter by inning, or embanking, the salt marsh and so adding to his acres—sometimes sureptitiously and always to the detriment of his sea-faring brothers.

Although not mentioned by name in Domesday survey, Rye is probably the "new borough" in the manor of Rameslie, and her emergence to such status inevitably led to participation in the Cinque Ports confederation. The earliest reference to the Ports as a Confederation is contained in a charter by Henry II (*c.* 1155-1185), almost contemporary with the conferring of a joint charter on Winchelsea and Rye. A hundred years later, 1289, the latter was incorporated as a Royal Borough, the first recorded mayor being one Henry de Rackele. The King continued to appoint his Bailiff—allowing the borough two maces, the Mayor's and the King's Bailiff's.

The Customal of Rye was codified in the mid-fourteenth century. It sets forth, among many interesting usages, the manner of choosing the mayor by custom "used the time of mind which men's minds can not think the contrary". It was advisable for him who was so selected to accept the office, otherwise:

> "And if the new Mayor, so chosen and elected, will not take the charge, but refuse it, all the whole commons together shall go beat down his chief tenement . . ."

Apart from the mayor the Customal mentions only two other borough officials, the Common Clerk (chosen by the mayor and jurats) and the Mayor's Sergeant, who carried the mace.

Rye was made a full member of the Cinque Ports confederation in the first half of the 14th century, and it is interesting to note that at the time of her admission she was described as "Ancient Town". The reason is not known. During this period Rye had two formidable enemies, the sea and the French, the former sweeping away the eastern part of the town in 1340, the latter finally (after four previous attempts) sacking and burning it in 1377. Following these onslaughts, it is not surprising to read that Rye was impoverished for many years, even selling part of her defences, the Ypres Tower, for a private dwelling.

Due to the poverty of the town its Cinque Ports' contribution fell into arrear. In an attempt to remedy this situation Tenterden was brought into the confederation as a Member of Rye. This move achieved little for Rye had much trouble in collecting the contribution, in fact was probably out of pocket over the matter, for there are in existence bills—mainly from the *Mermaid Inn*—for entertaining the "Tenterden Men" in an effort to jolly them into paying up.

In such hard times Henry VII visited Rye, and the corporation expended £2-18-11 on his refreshment. The borough probably was cleaned up for the occasion with the help of regulations instituted in that century, some being distinctly functional as "any person having dung before his house should remove it before the feast of All Saints under penalty of 3/4". Ordinances for the well-being of the town had been in existence for a long time. From the 16th century there are a long series of presentments by the Grand Inquest when it periodically surveyed Rye. Such presentments give invaluable pictures of the state of the town at various times.

One for January 1581/2 provides an example of misdemeanours that were liable to be committed by the inhabitants of Elizabethan Rye:

> "Absentees from Church. Upon suspicion of clipping Her Majesty's coin. For annoying the Channell with sprats. Professing Surgery. A House of Office in the Ditch. Wooden Chimneys (there were 40 presented). Because the Bred did not hold weight. All these for wering hatts on Sondays and holydays".

Rye is sometimes distinguished as "Rye Royal": Queen Elizabeth II came to the town in 1573 and by tradition is said

to have so dubbed it—either before or after she received a purse of one hundred golden angels. The chronicler is silent on this point.

The armament of the port was considerable at this time; there being twenty-five assorted pieces of artillery and thirty-nine arquebuses. In view of the Queen's visit no doubt they would be hurriedly cleaned; probably some would be remounted, a constant need of Rye cannon which periodically collapsed on to the turf of the Gun Garden. In later years, influenced, perhaps, by the strength of Commonwealth England, the corporation transformed the Gun Garden into a bowling green, on which John Evelyn played while awaiting the arrival of his wife from the Low Countries.

The mid-seventeenth century is a particularly interesting period for the Rye local historian, the documentation being excellent. For instance, the record of an assessment of 1660 made under the "Act for the Speedy Provision of Monies for Disbanding and Paying Off the Forces of the Kingdome" lists the inhabitants of Rye, men, women and children (above the age of 16), together with their relationship and occupation—in all 660 souls. Of the occupations, that of wife was the greatest (211); seafaring the second (111) and servant third (72).

Fifty categories are listed, and the numbers engaged in some of them surprising; for example there were five gardeners but only one barber and one barber-surgeon. Cordwainers numbered thirteen, and there were an equal number of gentlemen—and there were but four spinsters. An occupation not listed in this document, perhaps not practiced at the time, is curious: In 1683, "Bridget Bolton, Elizabeth Jacob and Mary Lillbourne, widows . . . were appointed washers of all the fish sold within the . . . town, to be carried and sold in the country . . . "

Occasion for official rejoicing occurred frequently in the eighteenth century when England's fortunes, and to some extent Rye's, were improving. Guns were fired and bills incurred at the *George*, *Mermaid* and *Red Lyon* on every conceivable pretext. All and sundry anniversaries, birthdays of the royal and the noble, declarations, victories, and even the opening of the local tax "boxes" were celebrated by long and deep refreshment.

Politically, the eighteenth century saw the final closing of the doors of the corporation. From 1715 to 1820 all but ten of the mayoralties were held by members of four interrelated

families, the Grebbles, Lambs, Slades and Davises. At one time five members of this group (all members of the corporation) entered into an agreement to work for the benefit of each other. By the reign of George I, freemen were only admitted as the mayor's privilege or by birthright. Local politics affected the larger field and with the nineteenth century Rye was a rotten borough. In 1818 the corporate body numbered 33; 15 qualified to vote, 12 office holders, and 6 non-resident.

It would be a strange coastal town which has no records of smuggling. Rye is not in the least unique in this respect and the town, in addition to the neighbouring marshes, was involved in contraband running for hundreds of years. There was, until last year, at least one ancient inhabitant who could tell of personal participation in such endeavours. John Wesley visited the town in 1773 and recorded that he "liked the place and found the people willing to hear the good word . . . but they will not part with the accursed thing smuggling".

A more legitimate amusement came to Rye with the opening of a theatre about 1800 and we have its printed notices for the next half century. By them we see that interesting programmes were presented for the delectation of the inhabitants such as "The Intrigue, or the Knowing Ones Taken In", "Three Weeks After Marriage or The Odd Trick" and "The Murdered Maid or Trial by Battle". Special programmes were put on "By Desire of the Ladies and Gentlemen of Brookland", and, again " . . . of Winchelsea". The series show the work of three Rye printers. The choice and variety of type and its setting, could now only be done by printers approximating to private press standards.

Gas lighting came in 1846 and by 1862 there were three local newspapers to read—the *Rye Chronicle, Rye Free Press* and *The Rye Telegram*—all printed in the town .In spite of such enlightenment the odd hog was still to be seen running in the streets, a habit of Rye owners for the past five hundred years. Centuries of fines had not stamped it out.

With the nineteenth century we enter what may be legitimately called modern times, a period that conjures up prospects of complexity, and so it is with the history of Rye.

The final battle of the diehards before the victory of the reformers, the growth of public services, the influence of the railway, the volunteer movements, social services and prison reform, the new poor law, new industries and occupations are all intensely interesting subjects for study. Today, with the

new concept and teaching of history, and the scientific gathering and preservation of documents, wide and fascinating subjects for investigation are awaiting local historians.

G. S. B.

THE ASHBURNHAM FAMILY AND ASHBURNHAM CHURCH

In this lecture the Society had the pleasure of hearing, from two of its scions, the story of the illustrious family which has owned the village of Ashburnham, with the shortest of breaks, since 1066.

Mr. J. R. Bickersteth, whose mother was an Ashburnham, dismissed as unlikely the legend that Bertram Ashburnham had been Harold's sheriff in Sussex, and had been executed by William for having defended Dover in 1066. Dover surrendered without a fight. Domesday Book gave the first Norman owner as Robert de Criol, or Criel. One Osbern received Penhurst and Bodiam. He may have been Robert's brother-in-law; but Penhurst did not come into the Ashburnham estate until 1702. By about 1156, de Ashburnham had supplanted de Criel as the family name. In that year Reginald de Ashburnham owned some 1,200 acres of farmland.

Nearly all the direct heirs bore the name of John. One fought at Agincourt. In 1553, a John was M.P. for Sussex. He was deprived of Ashburnham, no doubt as a Catholic, by Elizabeth I; but his son was restored. He, however, took too lightly the financial obligations of his friends; and in 1618 he had to sell the estate to the Relfs. In 1639 the next John recovered it. This was the celebrated Cavalier M.P. for Hastings, the faithful friend who attended Charles I at his execution, and acquired the silk shirt the King then wore. It is still a treasured heirloom. Later, enormous fines were imposed on him for sending money to the exiled Charles II. After the Restoration he rebuilt Ashburnham Church, of which the oldest part is of the 15th century. The chancel is five feet higher than the nave, because of a family vault beneath containing 47 tombs.

The John of 1689 supported William of Orange, and became Baron Ashburnham. In 1730 the third baron was made an earl. The second earl was Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, and Warden of Hyde Park, and the third earl was made a Knight of the Garter by George III. This was the heyday of the family's fortunes. The earls came to own 14,000 acres in

Sussex, as well as estates in Bedfordshire, Suffolk, and South Wales, with a town house in Dover Street. The fourth earl died in 1879, and two of his five sons succeeded him; but all had only daughters. With Lady Catherine Ashburnham the name died out after nine hundred years.

The Rev. J. D. Bickersteth said that when the estate passed to him, the estate duties were heavy. Much had to be sold; and even for his purpose of establishing a theological college for lay folk the mansion was far too big, so half of it had to be pulled down. He was anxious to restore Ashburnham Church, as, with the help of many, he had restored Penhurst Church. In reply to questions about the family he said that members had sometimes married heiresses; but in the main they had built up their estates by wise management over the nine centuries; being much more concerned with Sussex than with the outside world. The Chairman remarked how true that was of Mr. J. R. Bickersteth himself, a great estate manager, an eminent J.P., and a former chairman of the County Council. A collection taken for the Ashburnham Church Restoration Fund totalled £16.

THE LAST LABOURERS' REVOLT

The struggle of the farm labourers for better wages in the autumn of 1830 was caused by their serious plight as the result of the great enclosures of common land towards the end of the 18th century. The poor received no compensation for loss of common rights, while the landlords were bringing in large scale farming. A system for giving poor relief in return for work on farms under overseers was taken advantage of by unscrupulous farmers, which caused the poor rate to rise. In Battle, poor relief rose from £1705 in 1803 to £4,000 in 1821. By 1831 there was an agricultural depression, and every labourer, so it is stated, was out of work for 4 months in every year.

The labourers' revolt started in Kent and Sussex, breaking out in August 1830 at Orpington and Sevenoaks with numerous rick fires. At Harvres, near Canterbury, 400 labourers destroyed threshing machines which could extract 10% more corn than flails. In Sussex, the revolt followed a speech by Cobbett at Battle on October 16th. When he was put on trial the next year, 103 persons who heard it stated that he urged only peaceful petitioning. At Battle on November 3rd and 4th fires occurred at the overseer's home and elsewhere. On November 5th the Rector of Brede negotiated an agreement

between farmers and labourers for 2/3 a day (1/6 extra if more than 2 children) and the 'courteous' removal of Mr. Abel the overseer from the parish. Mr. Abel was pulled in the parish cart to Vinehall by women, followed by a crowd of 500. Afterwards, the farmers gave everyone beer. Ninfield, Burwash, Ticehurst, Heathfield, Warbleton, Mayfield and Ringmer followed this example. The Battle overseer was put in a dung cart; but Sir Godfrey Webster had 20 of the 500 rioters arrested. A feature in Kent and Sussex was the support given to the labourers by other classes, including magistrates like Collingwood at Battle (who was officially censured). It proved impossible to enlist special constables or to rely on the Coast Protection Service. Only one cavalry regiment could be sent to Tunbridge Wells to control East Sussex. The revolt spread through Sussex into Wessex, where it took a more serious and violent turn. Before it was suppressed, 9 men were executed, of which two, executed for arson, came from Sussex, and one of these, named Bushby, from Battle. Transportations to Australia numbered 457; but only 17 came from Sussex. It was due to the good sense of all parties and the humanity of Mr. Justice Taunton at Lewes Assizes that the Sussex share was so small. As a result of the revolt the public conscience was aroused. Viscount Gage was instrumental in founding a Sussex Association for improving the conditions of the labouring classes, and there followed village schools, recreation grounds, sick benefit societies, clothing clubs, village bands and other reforms.

Note:—Additional information on this subject can be seen in *Transactions* for 1953-54. Ed.

SMARDEN

When the 39 members who attended this first meeting of the season boarded the coach at Battle, it seemed likely that the remarkable run of fine weather for this event ever since the formation of the Society would at last be broken. The morning had been cold and disagreeable, and a heavy shower fell on the way to the rendezvous. However, while members were assembling at Smarden church the weather brightened, and later the sun came through, but did not produce much warmth.

Smarden is a quaint backwater and link with the past—a small mid-fifteenth century town set in the heart of the Kentish countryside. A large proportion of the houses are timber-framed and of approximately the same date; and its survival as an almost homogeneous unit may be due to the fact that many of the houses formed part of one estate which was only split up in recent years.

In such an environment it was not surprising to learn from Miss Rathbone, who gave a short teatable talk on Smarden's history, that witchcraft flourished there until quite a late date; and that the village was celebrated for the activities of the "Gentlemen", better known to most people as smugglers. There are, apparently, living inhabitants who claim that their parents remembered witches, and others who are proud to be descended from smugglers, whose trade they regard as strictly honourable. The town was once famous for its manufacture of broadcloth and linen. The house now called the Dragon House was undoubtedly the Linen Hall; for linen was made in it as late as the sixties of last century from flax grown close to the town. A charter for a weekly market was granted by King Edward III; Queen Elizabeth I visited the town in 1573, and in 1576 granted a charter confirming it, a copy of which, with translation, hangs in the church.

The Church of St. Michael the Archangel

Members were given a description of the church by the rector, The Rev. James Watts. It dates from about 1350, and was completed not later than 1371. There are references to an earlier church, which must have been completely demolished. The first known rector was appointed in 1205. The church belongs to the decorated period (1280-1380), except the tower which dates from 1450, the three perpendicular period windows in the east part of the nave, and the rood loft door. The width of the nave is remarkable: 36 feet interior and 42 feet exterior.

There are no supporting columns or arches; so that the lateral pressure on the walls must be immense. The church has been called "The Barn of Kent". There are the remains of an ancient altar slab in the wall below the corbel table on the S.E. side of the nave. This was one of the three "plucked down" in the reign of Edward VI, restored by Queen Mary, and finally removed under Queen Elizabeth. All these removals are entered in the churchwardens' books.

A poor box, first mentioned in 1533, has a plate of Limoges enamel on the lid, and three locks. There is a triple Sedilia, and a Piscina with a marble and an oak shelf. The wafer oven in the chancel is almost unique in the structure of English parish churches. The lowside window presents more than the usual problem, for it is not in the usual position. The recess in the east wall is thought to have been a Perfusorium, as there is a hook in the roof, apparently for hanging up a censer. The wide recessed arch under the east window may have been a Reliquary or a Revestry for Eucharistic vestments. In the N.E. wall is an Easter Sepulcre. There is some ancient glass in the east windows of the nave, and in the "scrap window" in the chancel.

Chessenden

In the absence of Mr. J. C. T. Geddes, the owner, members were shown round by Mrs. Collie. Chessenden is a 15th century timber-framed house, originally built as a hall house with the parlour, abnormally, on the right and the hall on the left, with the 'offices' beyond it. This construction, with much of the old work, is clearly traceable. The main framing is of solid heavy oak with massive corner posts and projecting corbels in the front, which is half timbered. The east and west wings have overhanging stories, and between them is the 16th century addition of a boldly projecting bay, carried up to a fine overhanging gable. The original oak tie beams, braces, quarterings, doors, and floors remain in the upper storey, which is now divided into five bedrooms. In the attics can be seen the king post and roof timbering.

The original name of the house and its early owners do not seem to be known. It once belonged to the parish and was Smarden House. It has passed through several hands during the last 200 years, and was called Chessenden by the Hinds family, after their old house at Rolvenden, and was still in their hands in 1911.

The Dragon House

Probably a 15th century house. It has an oversailing upper storey, and an external beam carved with animal and floral ornaments. It was formerly divided into two houses, one being a shop, and is now restored to one house. The name may refer to the fact that the house possesses dragon beams. Whenever an overhang was carried round two sides of a house, adequate support could only be effected by carrying a diagonal beam over and out at the corners. Short joists were then mortised into this so as to project both ways. Two such beams are visible in the portion which was once a shop. The garden contains a building in which linen was woven, and a wooden wheel, which formed part of the machinery, remains in it. The house is the home of Professor and Mrs. Barraclough. Mrs. Barraclough kindly showed members round; and the Smarden Scrap Book, kept by Miss Rathbone, was on view in the hall.

Hartnup House

A timber-framed house, mainly of the 15th century, with oversailing storey and exposed joists. The central portion, although of the same style, is later, with bold half-timbered gable and five-light bay windows on each floor. The external beam carved with the name MATTHEW HARTNUP 1671 may give the date and owner of that period; but the north wing is much older. The local tradition is that that part was the house of the village apothecary at the time of the Black Death. If so, that would make it early 14th century.

Church Gate Farm (alias Turk Farm, and the Cloth Hall)

This remarkably perfect specimen of a 15th century yeoman's timber residence was the next house visited. Unfortunately only the exterior could be inspected owing to the absence of the owners in America. The house shows the following distinguishing features of the earliest timber houses in the Weald: (1) steep roof; (2) full hip end; (3) projecting bays at each end of the front; (4) equal projection of the first floor by joists at both ends; (5) corner stud posts with solid bracket; (6) dragon beams; (7) Tudor door; (8) glazed window not more than 22 inches deep (shutter windows were bigger); (9) front retreating between end bays; (10) eaves in a line, full length covering Tudor door ;(11) chimney evidently

added; (12) studs and thick joists about as wide as the spaces between them; (13) ground sills on rubble and not on brick.

Part of the north side of the house formed a grange, and the wooden wheel of the corn winch which raised sacks to the granary is still in position under a hood. At the rear of the house, a building which is now the scullery has been dated at 1470.

The Tudor front doorway has recessed spandrels like those at Merton College, Oxford, Fotheringhay Church, and Beckley Oxon; which dates the house about 1450. The door itself is completely original. Inside (had it been possible to see it) a screen passage passes through the house to another door at the rear. Another Tudor doorway on the left of the screen led into the Hall. Over the screen, there is supposed to have been a minstrels' gallery.

The original owner is unknown, but he is thought to have been a clothier, and head of the cloth industry in Smarden.

The Thatched House

Previously known at different times as Thorpe House, Bridge Farm, and Elizabeth Cottage, this was also a 15th century hall house, though much smaller than the other two visited.

Rescued from becoming derelict by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Dobb, its restoration was just being completed. The position of the hall and screen can be traced, and there is a fine king-post in the attic. As at Chessenden, the installation of a central fireplace and chimney, caused a change of front door. Mrs. Dobb, who showed members round, pointed out that the house originally faced the River Beult, and not the road; the former having been the more important means of communication at the time of building. In the garden is a retting pool for soaking flax before weaving.

Near the Thatched House is the Town Bridge, a reminder of Smarden's former importance. The name Smarden was spelt Smeredenne in 1332, *Smere* means butter, and *denne* a woodland pasture, but the name of the River Beult has defied etymologists.

NYMANS GARDENS AND CUCKFIELD

The Nymans gardens, in the care of the National Trust, were visited by 39 members; who, since the day turned out fine and sunny, were able to see them under ideal conditions. From the car park there is a wonderful view eastwards across the Ouse Valley, with Rastrick's famous viaduct showing a line of grey arches in the middle distance. The house, of Jacobean origin, was largely destroyed by fire in 1957, and the present owner, Mrs. Leonard Messel, lives in the one surviving wing. The gardens provided a wonderful display of smooth lawns, rhododendrons, azaleas and other flowering shrubs in full bloom against a background of magnificent old trees.

Tea was taken at Ockenden Manor, a delightful 16th century house, standing in its own pleasant garden towards the south end of Cuckfield; where the Rev. H. F. C. Kempe, Vicar of Cuckfield, joined the party and later conducted members round the parish church of the Holy Trinity.

The parish of Cuckfield was originally much larger, as a new parish of Stapleford was formed from it in 1845, and another large portion was taken from it about 20 years later to form the parish of Haywards Heath. The church, which is notable from the outside for its shingled spire set on a square and rather squat Norman tower, dates from about 1250, when Saint Richard, Bishop of Chichester, constituted a vicarage at Cuckfield and appointed his own chaplain, Walter de Warnecamp, as the first vicar. The earlier aisleless Norman church, the foundations of which lie under the nave, was enlarged, and during the 14th century the church assumed its present plan. During the 15th century the church was re-roofed in one span covering both nave and north and south aisles. The new roof meant the blinding of the existing clerestory windows; but is of such beautiful design and so richly painted that it now forms a very striking feature of the interior. Two of the roof bosses in the chancel bear respectively the Sacred Monogram, and that of the Blessed Virgin; while over the nave are the badges of Nevill, Spenser, Beaufort, and other notable families. There is also a fine series of monuments to members of the various families that held the manor. The armoured figure of Henry Bower, who died in 1588, appears on two brasses.

L.C.G.

SHOREHAM AND BRAMBER

On arrival at Shoreham, the 21 members who attended paid a short visit to Marlipins. This building, belonging to the Sussex Archaeological Society, has aroused much speculation as to its origin, use, and name. The oldest part is coeval with the early Norman work at St. Mary's church, say about 1120. The front wall, built of squares of Caen stone and flintwork, arranged chequerwise, together with the windows has been assigned to the 14th century. On the north side of the first floor is a still stranger wall composed of courses of chalk blocks, between which are courses of alternate blocks of chalk and flintwork. The windows have an ecclesiastical appearance, and one of them seems to have been a "business window", where tolls or tribute was collected. There are at least 6 theories of the building's original use, the most likely, perhaps, being that it was a custom house where the tolls levied by de Braose, Lord of Bramber, chiefly on imported wines, were collected. As a 4½ gallon cask of beer is still called a "pin", it has been suggested by Dallaway that the name means the "House of the casks" or "place of tribute from casks".

Church of St. Mary de Havra

"Shoreham has the distinction of possessing, within the space of one mile, two of the most magnificent churches in the county". The words are those of Dr. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, and the churches those of St. Nicholas, Old Shoreham, and St. Mary de Havra (that is "at the Haven") in New Shoreham.

The Rector of St. Mary de Havra gave members a description of his famous church. It was built between 1075 and 1103 by the Benedictine monks of Sele Priory, Upper Beeding, a cell of the Abbey of Saumur in Anjou. It shows none of the coarse workmanship and heavy features usually seen in a church of that period; and although in style and structure it possessed originally all the characteristics of a priory church, it has, in fact, always been parochial.

It possesses none of the coarse features and heavy workmanship usually seen in a church of the period in which it was built. As seen today, the church is bereft of five of the six bays of the nave, which were still standing in the early 17th century. Their remains can be seen in the churchyard, and show the length of the church to have been no less than 105 feet. The remaining bay of the nave, and the transepts, are of the Norman period 1103—1130. The Quire is Transitional 1185—1200, except for the Triforium, Clerestory, and vaulted roof,

which are early English. The first stage of the tower was part of the Norman church. The north and south arcades of 5 bays each show differences of moulding as if built by two different bands of workmen, though they are of the same date; and the Quire Aisles, extended to the east end, form one of the earliest examples to be seen in any parish church. The Rood Loft was very large, and contained an Altar and Piscina. The basin of the Norman font is hollowed out of a block of Sussex marble, and the remains of the staple holes for securing the cover can be seen. Locking of font covers was ordained in 1236.

St. Mary's, Bramber

About 250 yards west of the present bridge at Bramber lay the old stone bridge of which there is a record in 1230, and which was rebuilt between 1477 and 1479 by William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, and founder of the college there. The river took a different course in those days; and the piers were uncovered in 1849. The central pier was large enough to carry the chapel of St. Mary, where, we know from the inventory of Sele Priory made in 1412, there was an image of the Blessed Virgin which was adorned with 3 silver rings and 6 necklaces. The remains of a wharf have been found just below the west end of the old bridge, and only 25 yards from that stands the old house called St. Mary's. It is surmised that St. Mary's was the lodging of the bridge wardens (probably monks), and that it might well have been also a hospice for travellers.

It is probable that the surviving house is the eastern side of a building like a galleried inn, arranged around a spacious courtyard. One room contains a rare type of painted panelling popular in the 16th and early 17th centuries, which gives the illusion of looking through lunettes at the landscape outside. The rooms today form a museum filled with antiques from many lands; and tea was served to members on the premises.

Bramber Castle

The last place visited was that ancient stronghold which is the nucleus of Bramber. It stands on the edge of a steep bank, partly natural, but pared away to render it still more precipitous. Further defence on that side was unnecessary as there was formerly a morass below. On the other sides the vallum, crowned by a wall, and the immense ditches remain. Its strategical importance is obvious, it dominated the

Brenbre valley (the name Adur is modern) and the former Roman bridge.

It is difficult to believe that the village of Bramber got its name not from the stronghold which must have been its origin, but from some trivial association with brambles or broom thickets, as certain place-namers assert. *Brymmburgh*, 'The Fortress on the Brink', has been suggested, but is hardly satisfactory, as the earliest known form was *Brenbre*. The stronghold is supposed to have been the residence of the Saxon Kings of Sussex; but it is here suggested that they merely occupied the quarters of their British predecessors, and that *Brenbre*, showing a truncated *Brenhin* (Welsh for king), with an adjectival element *bre* (Cornish for hill), discloses a Celtic name which meant *King's (or royal) castle (or palace) on the hill.*

Before the Conquest, the castle was held by King Harold's brother, Earl Gyrth, who was killed at Senlac, and it was afterwards granted to the Norman de Braose, ancestor of the Scottish Bruces. The motte, or keep, now deprived of its 8 feet thick wall, remains in the middle, and there are a few remains of other buildings. There is evidence, according to Dallaway, that the castle fell early into decay when it passed out of the de Braose family. It was finally destroyed by the Roundheads in 1641, to render it useless to the enemy. Ironically, they were obliged to defend the site two years later.

Bramber in the Civil War

The village is one of the comparatively few places in Sussex where actual fighting took place. In December 1643 a Royalist column under Lord Hopton invaded Sussex from Petersfield, as part of the King's plan for a three-pronged attack on London. Arundel Castle was captured on the 9th, and on the 12th a bold and daring atta ck was launched on Bramber Castle. The Parliamentary garrison under Captain Temple repulsed the attack, to the wonder, so it is said, if the whole county. However, the castle and Wiston House must have fallen soon after; for we learn that just after Christmas they were in the hands of the Royalists, when they attempted to force the passage of the Adur. The bridge was successfully defended by Parliamentary Dragoons under Captains Carleton and Everden, supported by Drakes (3 or 4 pounder cannons). Royalist casualties were 8 or 9 killed,

while the Parliamentarians lost 1 killed and 1 taken prisoner. This action effectively halted the Royalist offensive in the neighbourhood.

On October 14th 1651, the last day of his flight which had begun at Worcester on September 3rd, and ended when he climbed up into the barque *Surprise* as she lay dry on the beach near Shoreham, King Charles II accompanied by Lord Wilmot and Colonel Gounter came to Bramber bridge. The popular belief that he rested in 'The King's Room' at St. Mary's while waiting for an opportunity to cross it unobserved is not supported by Colonel Gounter's narrative, in which he relates that as they entered the town they came suddenly on a party of Commonwealth soldiers. Lord Wilmot was for turning back; but he himself said "If we do we are undone. Let us go boldly on, and we shall not be suspected". The King agreed with him, and so it turned out.

C.H.L.

GODINTON AND BROOK

Thirty-three members attended this meeting which was held in fine weather.

Godinton is a large house set in a spacious park and farm lands in Chart parish close to Ashford. A family called Toke occupied the house from 1460 to 1865; but the name suggests that over 400 years before their time, the land belonged to Earl Godwin, father of King Harold II. Nicholas Toke, born about the time of the Spanish Armada, rebuilt the older house in the form in which we see it today. After the death of his fifth wife, he started to walk to London to find a sixth; but he died on the way, being at the time 93 years of age. The gardens were laid out in the 18th century; but improved in the 19th century by Sir Reginald Blomfield, who surrounded them with a massive yew hedge, at least 8 feet square in cross-section, and surmounted by nearly 30 trefoil shaped bosses. The present owner of the property is Mr. Alan Wyndham Green.

The Great Hall, dating from the 15th century, contains a wealth of Jacobean oak pannelling and carving. The walls of the Dining Room are hand-painted to represent walnut wood —an almost unique feature. The Chapel, leading out of the

Great Hall, has been put to secular uses; and the Confessional, in its original position, serves as a coat cupboard. The Drawing Room contains two unique features—a carved frieze depicting the drill movements of the Militia in 1630, and a mantlepiece consisting of a single block of Bethersden marble carved by Hugenot refugees to represent the birds and animals of the countryside in their natural habitats. In the library is to be seen a very fine collection of Dr. Wall Worcester China dated 1760 to 1780. The staircase, dated in two places 1628, is of massive construction in chestnut, and the gallery at the top carries large carved figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity. The many pictures by notable artists include Reynolds' and Rayburns. The tombs and brasses of the Toke family are in Chart Church. Nicholas shares his brass with three of his wives.

At **Brook,** members were able to see what is, in all probability, the most remarkable gallery of medieval wall paintings to be seen in any English church. They were brought to light by Professor Tristam of the South Kensington College of Art. Sixty different subjects can be recognized; and it is thought that there must have been about one hundred originally. The clearest are around the altar: painted about 1250, they depict the Betrayal, the Road to Calvary, the Entombment, the Shepherds of Bethlehem, the Wise Men, Christ in the Temple, and the Agony in the Garden. In the nave, and painted a little later, are scenes from the life of the B.V. Mary, St. Christopher, and many others. The oldest, painted in the 12th century, is to be seen in an oratory situated half way up the tower. It is a rare type of figure of Christ, and formerly formed the reredos to an altar, which could be seen through arches from the church below. The church itself, of early 12th century date, is surmounted by a massive white tower, in the walls of which are 18 Norman windows. The tower and chancel arches are noteworthy; the capitals of the former being delicately moulded. The chancel roof is panelled with carved bosses. There is an anchorite's peephole in the chancel, and a Peter's pence box at the door.

An **Agricultural Museum** has been established in a large wooden building formerly a barn and farm stables, close to the church; where members were able to see many vehicles and implements used on farms in bygone days.

BIGNOR AND PARHAM

The annual whole-day meeting took the 40 members who attended deep into West Sussex.

Bignor Roman Villa

Discovered on July 18th 1811, this is one of the largest Roman Villas in the country, as the whole group of buildings must have covered nearly four and a half acres. The house itself, built round three sides of a rectangle, contained 65 apartments, and there were 10 more in outbuildings. Mr. George Tupper, the owner in 1811, assisted by Mr. John Hawkins of Bignor Park, did nearly all the digging, which took 8 years, and his great-great-grandson, Captain Henry Tupper R.N. still owns the site. The work of excavation was supervised by the famous antiquary Lysons, who devoted to it the whole of volume iii of his magnificent work *Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae.* It is of interest that the fine illustrations to this work were executed by C. A. Stothard, whose illustration of the Bayeux Tapestry adorns our museum. Most of the villa dates from the 2nd century, and it was occupied till well into the 4th century, when it appears to have been abandoned because raids by Picts, Scots, and Saxons, made villa life impossible. There are six or seven fine mosaic pavements, those of Ganymede, and Venus and the gladiators being the most notable.

Parham Park

Parham as well as Bignor may well have been a Roman place, where the Saxons found an orchard of the Roman-introduced *pirus*, or pear tree; as they named it *Pear tree village.* The vowel in the first syllable of both *pirus* and its Saxon equivalent *peru*, unlike that in our word *pear*, was short, and so it is pronounced today in the name Parham.

Parham is of historic significance because it was the only possession in Sussex recorded in Domesday Book as belonging to the Abbey of Westminster. An early 12th century deed states that St. Dunstan bought Parham about 960, and gave it to the previous small monastery at Westminster among other possessions (S.A.C. LXXXVIII. 88); but as this deed is of doubtful validity, and Domesday states that the Abbey held Parham of King Edward, it is perhaps more likely that the Confessor bestowed it. In any case the Abbey built a new house about 1350, which they usually leased.

In 1540 the tenant Robert Palmer bought it; and in 1577 his son built the present mansion, incorporating the old house as its east wing. In 1601 Thomas Bysshop bought it; and for 320 years it remained in his family, which acquired first a baronetcy (from James I), and in 1815, by female descent, the ancient barony of Zouche. In 1920 the Baroness sold the property to the Hon. Clive Pearson, second son of the first Lord Cowdray.

The appearance of the mansion has been changed several times. In the 18th century the Elizabethan south front was transformed to accord with Georgian taste, and stables were built on the north side of the house. Between 1830 and 1840 the north front was much altered, and a new front door made there; the approach to it being made from the east, between the house and stables. In 1870 much of the Georgian innovations were done away with; but others were instituted. Finally, Mr. Pearson has removed many 18th and 19th century features, so that today the Elizabethan character of the building again predominates.

It is not possible here to list the magnificent pictures, mostly portraits, which members were able to see in the house. Indeed none of the great English portraitists after Holbein is unrepresented, for the Pearsons have enriched the collection by many great pictures judiciously selected. For example, they bought from the Denbigh collection the delightful portrait of the Infanta Isabella of Spain, a charming blonde (surprisingly so, if one did not know that she was a Hapsburg) whom Charles I unsuccessfully wooed. When James I threw out this picture in disgust, Buckingham gave it to his sister the Countess of Denbigh.

The furniture and period decor of the six great public rooms create an atmosphere of restrained but magnificent display; and members took away with them a deep impression of English grandeur over the past four centuries, having already seen the relics of a grandeur which was Romano-British and twelve centuries earlier at Bignor.

C.T.C.

FIRLE PLACE AND WILMINGTON

This visit, which was attended by 36 members, was a repetition of the visit to Firle Place on June 13th 1956, and to Wilmington on September 8th 1954, accounts of which appeared in the *Transactions* for those years.

LEWES BATTLEFIELD AND CASTLE

In rather unpleasant weather the Society paid a second visit to the field of 'the other battle'. The attendance was 29. Only two pitched battles of which we possess satisfactory accounts have been fought in Sussex: but what battles they were! One changed completely the course of our history; while the other gave us representative government. As an account of the actual fighting at Lewes was published in the *Transactions* for 1954-55, this article will consider more particularly the terrain.

Much of the fascination of exploring an ancient battlefield comes from the opportunity it gives for reading the mind of the man who chose it; and who may have lived hundreds of years ago. What passed through Simon de Montfort's mind is not difficult to deduce. His object was to get to grips with the King's army which was in the town of Lewes. The Roman road, along which his army had marched from London, ran past the town on the wrong side of the river, to attack across which would be madness. If he took the track which must have existed along the right bank of the Ouse he would have to pass through a narrow defile between the river and Offham Hill; where, if his 5,000 men were caught by the enemy, it would mean disaster.

Such was de Montfort's problem; and he solved it by deciding to get his army formed up on the top of Offham Hill, where he would present a challenge to the King to come out and fight, and from which there was easy access to the town if the challenge were not accepted.

Like many another battlefield, it is a curious piece of ground. From Mount Harry (639 feet) a spur runs south-east, which, at a height of 400 feet, broadens to nearly 1,000 yards to form Offham Hill, the top of which is nearly flat like a parade ground, an ideal place for forming up a medieval army. It then splits into two spurs; a feature which would tend to divide an army which attacked up the hill. And that, in the event, is what it actually did. If the shape of the Senlac Ridge is like a hammer, that of Offham Hill resembles a tuning fork. The rear of Offham Hill slopes down into Combe Hollow and is almost precipitous; but, wonderful to relate, there is a narrow sunken prehistoric track running diagonally up from the village, which renders ascent easy. One feels that de Montfort must have seen his battlefield before; as Harold saw Senlac and Wellington saw Waterloo. However, he evidently had a final reconnaissance made two days before

the battle, which led to a small cavalry action in Combe Hollow.

How strange that de Montfort, who had shown such skill at Lewes, should, fifteen months later, have allowed himself to be caught in a trap at Evesham; where he, and most of his army were slaughtered by what would now be called the forces of reaction. But the Barons' War is full of paradoxes; and the representative government which he established has lasted to the present day.

On January 5th 1938, two skeletons of boys or young men were dug up at Barley Bank, Offham, which was in the area of Prince Edward's cavalry charge. They were only 5 feet high, and one of them, whose youth was denoted by the absence of wisdom teeth, had a round head and short legs. He had had severe head injuries. The skeleton of a horse was found with them. Subsequently three more skeletons were found; one that of a man about 6 feet in height and about 40 years old, who had been decapitated. Two of the skeletons had a piece of iron 6 inches long, presumably a lance point, under the position of the stomach.

A violent episode in the battle is here illustrated, and it is interesting to speculate on what actually happened. The two youths could have been pages or grooms who managed to ride in the charge on their masters' spare horses. Brought down and killed by the three Londoners, their death may have been speedily avenged by the next squadron, the tall man losing his head by a mighty sword cut, and the other two being run through by lances; which the lancers, possibly through inexperience, were unable to 'recover'.

The name *Offham*, it may be remarked, was formerly *Wocham*, pointing to the Anglo-Saxon *Woh*—crooked, and *hamm*—piece of land; a crooked piece of land, perhaps because it was on the bank of the crooked river. The interesting thing is that, in spite of the double F, the O is still pronounced long as in Anglo-Saxon. It has been already noted in this number that the first A in *Parham* is pronounced short for the same reason. Pronunciation of place names, it would seem, is often more stable than spelling.

Members subsequently visited the Castle under the guidance of Mr. N. F. Norris, F.S.A. It is peculiar in possessing two mottes; on one of which the Keep was built, while the other, called Brack Mount, still remains in its original state. The flintwork of the Keep may well date from the last years of the 11th century, and the projecting towers date from the

13th century. The Barbican, in which the archives of the Sussex Archaeological Society are stored, was built in the early 14th century. The first Lord of Lewes was William de Warenne, companion of the Conqueror and Earl of Surrey. The last resident lord was John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey and Sussex, who died in 1347. The barony of Lewes, having been divided between co-heiresses in 1415, is now vested in the Duke of Norfolk, Earl de la Warr, and the Marquess of Abergavenny.

C.H.L.

FINDS AND FIELDWORK

Examination of a Medieval site on Tower Hill Farm

By kind permission of Mr. Taylor of Tower Hill Farm, the Society was able to carry out some excavation in the field immediately south of the avenue leading to Great Park Farm (TQ 759149), on September 25th, October 2nd and October 6th. Digging was carried out by senior pupils of Claverham School, by kind permission of Mr. Court the headmaster. It was supervised by members of the Excavation sub-committee and voluntary helpers. The site had attracted attention in 1960, when a quantity of green glazed bricks was ploughed up. Probing indicated a hard surface in the middle of the field. When 9 inches of soil had been removed it was revealed as a sort of "crazy pavement" 11 inches thick, made of flat stones. This floor, originally laid on the surface of the ground, may be between one and two acres in extent. About 250 square feet was uncovered, and the line of the eastern edge found. Along it, burnt earth, charcoal, pieces of roofing tile, nails, pieces of glass, and fuzed lead gave evidence of a burnt-down wooden building with leaded windows.

The following objects were found on the site: 1 piece of encaustic ecclesiastical floor tile, dated by British Museum 1275-1325. 2 small complete glazed floor tiles, early 14th century. 1 yellow firebrick (portion), as found at Bodiam, Dutch early 14th century. 7 pottery shards. 2 knife blades (portions). 150 small pieces of glass, dated Tudor period by the London Museum. 4 pounds of lead in small pieces. 50 nails. 1 iron brace for fixing timbers. A quantity of roofing tile fragments. Some petrified bone fragments. 2 oyster shells. Definite conclusions on the use of the site must await further excavation; but several indications seem to point to a solution. The date of the floor tiles corresponds with that of substantial additions to the Abbey buildings, and the site is only 300 yards

from the quarry, where, traditionally, the Abbey stone was obtained. The burnt-down Tudor house corresponds with the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539, when Sir Anthony Brown was granted, among the Abbey buildings, a "Tilehouse". It may be conjectured, perhaps, that the site was a tile and brick works, stonemason's yard, and probably a pottery and glass works; a set of workshops, in fact, arranged round a courtyard, for supplying the Abbey during the whole monastic period. A detailed account of the excavation, with plan, is being put in the library.

THE BATTLE ABBEY ARCHIVES

Mr. E. C. Hole, who, it will be remembered, gave a talk on "The Moors in Spain" at the 11th Annual General Meeting, visited, during the year, the Huntington Library in California, where the archives of Battle Abbey are now kept. Before he left, the Chairman gave him a list, compiled from Thorpe's Catalogue, of 9 deeds which he thought might throw some light on a subject which has puzzled historians—the location of the Malfosse. Photographs of these deeds have been generously given to the Society by the Huntington Library. After the Annual General Meeting, Mr. Hole gave a short talk about his visit to the Library, of which the following is an extract.

Henry Edwards Huntington, the founder of the Huntington Library, began life by helping in a village store. He decided to go to New York to make his future in hardware. His first job was as porter in a hardware store; but he soon obtained promotion and found his feet. He then looked up his uncle Collis, who had begun by trading with the miners in the gold rush of 1849, and eventually became a railway magnate and millionaire. Henry Edwards made a name for himself, first in association with his uncle, and then on his own account. Collis, on his death in 1900, left him a huge legacy.

Though he had others, his principal hobby was book collecting; and on retirement in 1910 built a house 43 miles from Los Angeles, sufficiently large to house his collection, which already included a complete set of the Kelmscott Press. During this period he was able, when the deaths of other collectors took place, to buy their collections en bloc, as for instance that of Dwight Church of Brooklyn, for which he gave over a million dollars. The Gutenberg Bible, for 50,000 dollars, was another purchase. He soon had to set about the

construction of the present independant building in the grounds. It is of an E plan with underground floors, and the whole collection was moved there in 1920. As soon as the library was ready he formed a trust with a heavy endowment, which ensures its survival and growth in perpetuity. There is a reference library and reading room for scholars.

Mr. Dougan, the Librarian, showed me over. The collections surpass anything I have seen. The Gutenberg Bible I have already mentioned; there are also the Ellesmere Chaucer, and first editions of every English author from Chaucer to the present day. There are five or six thousand incunabula, four First Folios, and 40% of the 26,000 odd books published before 1641.

The Charters of Battle Abbey are certainly well looked after. We descended in a bronze lift to the vaults, where they keep the chief treasures not on exhibition. No moth or bookworm could survive, and certainly no robber has an earthly chance of breaking in. They are also proof against humidity, change of temperature, fire, flood, earthquake, and atom bomb. The books and MSS are disposed in bronze bookcases which line the vaults. I saw the Battle Abbey Muniments: the larger MSS, which had been folded when bound, lie flat for their better preservation. Some of them were deciphered for me by an Oxford undergraduate. Half the staff is from this country, including the Librarian himself. There is no need to worry about your archives; for there is nowhere in this country where they would be safer or better cared for.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 896th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

Before the Commemoration Lecture, the Chairman read out the names of the only Englishmen, 14 in number, who are definitely known to have fallen in the battle; and members stood in silence in memory of our ancestors on both sides who were killed in action.

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

Delivered by Mr. James Campbell, M.A., Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford

England at War 1347 - 1389

That part of the Hundred Years War which was fought in the fourteenth century means to most people the great English victories of Crecy and Poitiers and not much more. Three important things about it are commonly overlooked. Firstly that it was nearly as much a sea war as it was a land war. Secondly that for long periods the English were on the defensive. Thirdly that it involved many more countries than France and England alone. The fortifications of the period along the Channel coast remind us of all three of these things.

In Battle itself the fortified gatehouse of the abbey dates from *c.*1338. The lower part of the Land Gate at Rye was built *c.* 1340, the upper part probably *c.* 1380-85. Sir Edward Dalyngrygge began to build Bodian about 1386. In Kent we find the West Gate of Canterbury, started in 1380, Cooling Castle (*c.* 1381) and the gatehouse of Saltwood Castle (*c.* 1383); in Hampshire the town wall of Southampton (from 1360). These are surviving fortifications. There were many more which have gone.

Why were they built? All through the Hundred Years War the French raided the south coast of England as the English raided the north coast of France. At times when the French were very strong on the sea the tempo and weight of the raids on England increased and the threat of full scale invasion was added. It was in such periods of great danger that the greater part of the new fortifications seem to have

been built. One of these was at the beginning of the war, *c.* 1337-1340. The English began the Hundred Years War in the midst of, and perhaps largely because of, an invasion scare. In 1336 and 1337 orders poured out to the coastal countries to be on their guard, to muster men and to prepare beacons, but how real the threat was remains an open question. Certainly the French made many raids. For example, Portsmouth was burned in 1337 and several of the Cinque Ports attacked in 1340.

There can be no doubt of the seriousness of the danger during the period 1369-86. These were the years which saw the collapse of the great empire of Edward III. England was on the defensive and her rulers had to struggle hard to protect her remaining continental fortresses, her long and vulnerable trade-routes, and her numerous allies against the inherently superior and now well-ordered power of France. In this phase of the war the French were the greater naval power and could sometimes ravage the south coast almost at will. The worst year was probably 1377 when John of Vienne made two raids with a very big fleet and some thousands of troops. He was repulsed from Winchelsea, thanks largely to the Abbot of Battle, but did much damage to other towns, among them Rye and Hastings. A few years later a worse danger arose. In 1386 the French gathered a very large fleet and army at Sluys and prepared to invade. The threat to England was on very much the same scale as that of 1588, though through various chances the French armada never set sail. It was in response to such threats that so much fortification was undertaken in the south-east.

One may ask why England lost control of the sea. In the first place the French had reformed their fleet. In the second they had the invaluable aid of Castile. The throne of Castile had been disputed in the 1360s. The French had supported the successful candidate, Henry of Trastamare, whilst the English had supported the loser, Pedro the Cruel. After Pedro's death Edward III's son, John of Gaunt, married his daughter and laid claim to Castile. While he did so Henry was very dependent on French help. The price for this was the maintenance of a Castilian fleet in the Channel. This force consisted of up to 17 galleys. These were big ships of up to 200 tons, very fast in good weather and provided with highly professional crews and commanders. They could each carry up to 50 troops and were in some cases armed with cannon. They proved an ideal force for raiding in the summer months and a good deal of the French success was due to them. In

effect the complexity and far-reaching extent of the war were such that a disputed succession in Castile had consequences which were largely responsible for the construction of new towers and walls in Sussex.

J.C.

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THE COMMEMORATION SERVICE IN THE CHURH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, BATTLE

Mr. R. G. Stainton, Headmaster of Glenforse School, a lay reader, and a member of the Society, conducted the annual special service in the parish church on Sunday morning October 14th 1962. The lessons were read by Mrs. Harbord and Lieut.-Col. C. H. Lemmon, Vice-Presidents; the first lesson, taken from Joshua IV, having some bearing on Archaeology. Mr. Stainton began his sermon by remarking that this year the Commemoration service was being held on the actual date of the battle and continued:

"Every Sunday for most of the year a column of 'infantry' from the Telham Ridge meets another from the hill of Senlac. There are no signs of hostilities; they are going to church, boys and girls in whose veins runs the blood of Saxon and Norman, citizens of the United Kingdom.

We cannot hear the thudding hooves, the clash of steel, the shouts around the hill, nor can we feel the horror of death and defeat that came down with the darkness here 896 years ago. Perhaps that is why we call the Norman Conquest 'a good thing'. We look back at the centuries that followed when the nation grew to maturity. We cannot feel—not we, at least, in Britain—the exasperation, helplessness and misery of the conquered, nor see the woman searching for the body of her king. Nor can we imagine the immense effort of mind and

spirit needed to turn disaster—yes, and triumph—into reconciliation and to give life to a new and greater civilisation. But the Historian cannot forget that our way of life was founded by men and women many of whom were themselves victims of apparently final catastrophe. He might look back the further than 1066, to the Roman Conquest of Greece or to the captivity of the Hebrews. For the Hebrews' temple, homes, children, everything was lost. They did not curse but pondered the judgement of God, and between the hammer of slavery and the anvil of desolation they fashioned a deeper conception of righteousness for the world. They still believed in God's promise, and felt that there was a Providnece over the affairs of men.

The Normans and the English, too, were somehow able to bring good out of evil. For all its harshness, the Norman Conquest gave a new discipline and unity to the legacy of Alfred and of Edward. We cannot perhaps measure the moral effect of the unyielding front of Harold and his thanes at Senlac. Such men even in defeat made their contribution to the future.

A Symphony does not keep its point to the end, but every note has its share in the work of art. So it is with each generation and individual. They exist in their time to utter their own note, adding to the past and preparing the future.

'For thy glory they are and were created.'

But what note do we sound? Here is the rub. Do we in our day shelve the individual for mass ideas, for production figures, for the party whip, and the intelligence for 'the spirit of the age' or for the state? In this too, is tyranny. Here is the violation of man's nature and God's will. The search for power, the desire for revenge, all kinds of violence in deed and word and thought are a defiance of Providence. They lead to historic judgement in confusion and unhappiness, since in belittling Man we still glorify not the Creator but the creature.

Yet the opposite is equally true. It is the Christian's conviction that love unites and creates, and by freeing the individual—for the sacrifice of self is true freedom—welds society, consummating all human thought and work under law. And as we regard the past, we can see that where men have failed to love, or in serving mere habit have abandoned truth, there have been sown the seeds of destruction. The understanding and the doing of God's will are the key to human history. 'God' said Plato, 'is the measure of all things'. We, each of us, are making this history now, daily. It must be clear that we cannot, as men and women or as nations, live in

self-sufficiency, or prosper in scientifice achievement, or organise the world by statute or treaty. I am not 'the captain of my soul'. But there is a Providence over all, which guided this island in days as dark as October the Fourteenth, 1066, and teaches that the fate of Man depends on his reconciliation to God. This was the work of Christ. We too are called to that destiny, and in the same way that He lifted his friends in the Upper Room:

'Father, I in them and Thou in me, I pray that they may be made perfect in one.'

A Saxon Bishop, St. Wulfstan, at the time of the battle carried with him this prayer: 'O Lord, have mercy on me a sinner. Stablish my heart in thy will. Grant me true repentance for my sins, right faith and true charity, patience in adversity and moderation in prosperity. Help me and all my friends and kinsmen, all who desire and confide in my prayers. Show mercy to all who have done me good and shown me the knowledge of good, and grant everlasting forgiveness to all who have spoken or thought evil against me. To thee, my God, and to all thy holy ones, be praise and glory for ever . . .'

It is this that overcomes the World."

R.G.S.

TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on November 16th 1962

The Chairman began by reminding members of the loss the Society had sustained by the deaths of the President, Professor G. M. Trevelyan, O.M., C.B.E., and of Mr. L. H. Pyke. Professor Trevelyan's tenure of the office of President of this Society since its formation had added greatly to its distinction, so high was his standing as a historian of social and national conditions. The Society had expressed its deep sympathy to his daughter Mrs. Moorman, who, it is hoped, may be able to visit Battle next year with her husband, the Bishop of Ripon. Mr. Pyke's death was a grievous loss. His was the vision which brought into being both the Society and its Museum. Not only this society, but the Youth Club, and other institutions in which he was interested, will always be in his debt. The names of other members who had died during the year were mentioned; and members then stood in silence as a tribute to the deceased.

Membership had again fallen, from 268 to 238. Although the financial situation was reasonably satisfactory, the balance at the bank being £42-7-2; this was largely due to the generosity of those members who regarded 7/6 as the *minimum* subscription. The overdraft on the Museum Account had crept up again to £12-15-11.

The lease of the Museum premises at Old Church House expires on March 25th 1963. Negociations were in progress between a special sub-committee of this Society and the Trustees of the Battle Memorial Hall with a view to the establishment of the museum in an annex to be built on their premises; following an extraordinary general meeting which was called to consider the matter. To cover the cost of removal, and fitting up of the new premises, including heating apparatus, the extraordinary general meeting had given authority to open a special fund to provide £400. The response to this appeal had so far produced £220.

On May 4th a Social Evening was held at Powdermill House, Battle, at the kind invitation of Mrs. Harbord (Vice-President); which was much enjoyed by the many members who attended. The Chairman then referred to excavations at Bodiam and Tower Hill Farm, Battle, directed by Lt.-Col. Darrell Hill, Lt.-Col. Lemmon, and Mr. Oliver, an account of which appears under *Finds and Fieldwork.*

At the ensuing elections, the Chairman said that as yet the Committee had no recommendation to make for filling the office of President. Mr. B. E. Beechey was then elected Chairman for the ensuing year. Major L. C. Gates was elected Vice-Chairman. Major L. C. Gates was also re-elected Hon. Secretary, with the proviso that he should hand over that office to Mr. W. Orger, as soon as the latter was able to take over. Mr. R. W. Bishop was re-elected Hon. Treasurer. Of the four Committee members due to retire in rotation, Sir James Doak and Miss Chiverton were re-elected; Mr. A. E. Stevenson and Mrs. O. Bindley were elected elected, *vice* Major Burges and Miss Guinand: all for a period of three years. Mr. C. T. Chevallier was then elected an Honorary Life Member, *Honoris Causa.*

Note: As we go to press, the New Museum Fund stands at £319-13-8.—Ed.

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