No. 13

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NOTE:—The Society is in no way responsible for the opinions of contributors as expressed in the above articles.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Besides the lectures printed in this number, the following lectures of general interest were given during the year: on December 13th 1963, "Monastic Buildings", by Mr. A. Fellows, M.A.; on March 20th 1964, "The Dead Sea Scrolls", by the Rev. P. G. Filby; and on April 10th 1964, "Sumer, the earliest known Great Civilisation in Historic Times", by Mrs. Evelyn Harbord.

Regrettably, there has been no excavation during the year. Mr. Wadsworth was able and willing to lead a team; but volunteers really able to dig were not forthcoming; and the owners of two possible sites found difficulties in the way of granting permission to dig on their land. It is hoped to get permission to dig on some worthwhile site next summer; and in the meantime it would be helpful if any member who would like to take part in a dig would notify Mr. H. Wadsworth, Bungalow Cottage, Catsfield, to enable him to make a list of helpers.

Although there have been no transactions in the museum and field work branches, there has been some considerable literary activity. A third impression of the late Mr. Pyke's *Short Guide to Battle* is in the press, and will soon be on sale at the Battle Bookshop. Purchase of copies by members, and recommendation to their friends will help the Society's funds.

An agreement has been signed by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswood to publish for the Society, as part of the 1966 Commemoration, a book of essays entitled *The Norman Conquest: its Settings and Impact.* The contributors are Prof. D. E. Whitelock, Prof. D. C. Douglas, Lt.-Col. C. H. Lemmon, and Prof. F. Barlow. Mr. C. T. Chevallier is the Editor, and it will be on sale early in 1966.

Mr. Chevallier has kindly contributed to this number of *Transactions* a shortened version of his article in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* on the subject of the *Malfosse.* We may congratulate our Vice-president on his solution of this 113 year's old problem; and thank him for the added prestige which his painstaking research has brought to the Society.

GYPSIES

The origin of Gypsies has always been a subject for controversy; though there is now some measure of agreement that they began a migration from some part or parts of India, in one or more waves, beginning perhaps as early as B.C. 500. They migrated westward, as all other migratory people have done, and appeared in Persia, where they were known as

minstrels. There is record of their reaching Istambul, where they entered Europe. Thence they fanned out into every European country. An early name for them was "The black-faced men", which is the original meaning of Zigeuner and Zingari, the names by which they are called in Germany and Italy respectively today.

In each country they told a different story of their origin. In Italy they said they were pilgrims coming to Rome. In France they said they came from Bohemia, and so were called Bohemians. In Spain they are called Gitanos; while they call themselves Romani, as if they originated in Roumania. In 1449 they arrived in England, saying that they had come from "Little Egypt". It is unknown where this was, but it was certainly not Egypt. They were, however, called Egyptians until this was corrupted to Gypsy in the 19th century. At first Gypsies were well received in Britain with their minstrelsy and dancing. It is recorded that they danced before James I at Holyrood. But they seem to have sent word back that Britain was a good place to come to, for shiploads landed here, and before long the trouble started as their predatory instincts asserted themselves. Acts of Parliament directed against them were passed, and their persecution increased in the 17th and 18th centuries, when they were sometimes hanged merely for being Gypsies. Hitler classed Gypsies with Jews as non-Aryans, and worthly only of extermination. They are, of course, more Aryan than many Germans such as Wends. In this country today, the police tend to regard Gypsies as 'suspected persons'.

The lecturer dealt with many Gipsy customs, which are otherwise known to us only as the result of archaeological excavations, such as 'grave goods' and coins buried with the dead, and the sacrifice of the horse and van of the head of the family on his death. Gipsy signs have always excited interest: the circle (good place), the circle and cross (bad place), the feather placed upright in the ashes of the camp fire (chickens can be stolen here), and the line of sticks left on a camping ground to indicate the size of the outgoing family (long sticks for adults and short ones for children).

Gypsies retain some oriental habits: they sit or squat on the ground as often as they can; and avoid straight answers. As for truth and falsehood, no dividing line seems to exist for them: they say what suits them, what is most advantageous. Gypsies have many legends to extenuate their shortcomings. There are stories that they receive pardon for their sins because of the Gypsy smith who refused to make the nails to crucify our Lord; or the Gypsy who stole one of the nails, for which all

Gypsies are allowed to steal every seventh Christmas. The lecturer spoke of a case which had come to her notice of a chronic rheumatic being cured and abandoning her wheel chair after applying a poultice of pig's milt to her feet on the recommendation of a Gypsy; also of how a Gypsy woman by a trick sold the same scrubbing brush twice to a housewife.

Gypsies are not more gifted than other people in fortune telling: the elders teach the young the technique of telling fortunes, including how to get preliminary information about their customers.

Gypsy music, a feature of Central Europe, is not composed by Gypsies: they play ordinary compositions in an extraordinary manner. Education of Gypsy children is difficult, because they are nearly always on the move, frequently by order of the police; while if their children do not attend school there is more conflict with authority. An experiment was tried at Peaslake, Surrey, of setting up a Gypsy school.

The Gypsy language contains about 240 Hindi words; the remainder having been picked up in the countries passed through during migration. In Britain it is rapidly becoming extinct; though it may survive longer on the Continent.

In the ensuing discussion it was agreed by the lecturer that George Borrow's books were, perhaps, on the whole, too romantic. Actually, there is nothing very romantic about Gypsies.

The Earl of Birkenhead (F. E. Smith) was mentioned as a well known public figure with Gypsy ancestry, of which he was proud; but no other similar cases were known to lecturer or audience.

Lt.-Col. Lemmon, in proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer for her absorbing and delightful talk, recalled that he had been brought up within two miles of Peaslake; in which neighbourhood there were then large numbers of Gypsies. As a child he had been warned not to go near them for fear of being kidnapped. They seemed to speak their own language more then; and he had heard some of it. He then read a written specimen of it he had obtained many years later, which contained several words with Hindi affinities. It was a valedictory message to Dora Yates, who was also what might be called a gypsiologist. In the circumstances, he thought he could do no better than thank the lecturer, on behalf of the audience, in the Gypsies' own words: *Bari parikerbena i gozali romani raniate, Miss Vinall.* (Great thanks to the brave Gipsy scholar, Miss Vinall).

MEDIEVAL SUSSEX CRAFTS

The period 1200 to 1600 was one of great expansion. The guilds of various trades laid down and strictly enforced conditions of trading and of the training of apprentices. Besides the static bodies in each town there were, travelling the countryside, skilled journeymen traders such as sheep-shearers and thatchers. Cottages evolved from original lean-to bowers of branches interspersed with rushes, through lath and plaster, to bricks and mortar. In purely chalk country thatch was the only roofing available; but in the weald, clay led to the early introduction of tiles about 1200; while bricks were made from whatever clay happened to be found near the site. Churches, mainly poor buildings in Saxon times, were replaced under the Normans and early Plantagenets. The larger ones, such as those found at Burwash and Brede, came to be used for all sorts of meetings, even including markets. They had, of course, no seats; so to get any support the weak and aged had to go to the wall; which originated a phrase which has remained to the present day.

Baskets made of withes have been made from prehistoric times, and medieval clay-lined pots often show the pattern of the withes. Trugs, on the other hand, are an early 19th century invention, patronised by Queen Victoria. Glass making was a medieval Sussex craft probably introduced from France in Anglo-Saxon times: it gave its name to men called 'Glasier' and to places such as Glasseye Farm. The making of carts was a profitable trade demanding high skill in getting the angles of the spokes right; as also the relation of the whole wheel to the cart. Shipping developed gradually from the open Anglo-Saxon craft with a single oak mast and a single steering oar, such as the specimen found 19 feet below present ground level beside the River Rother. The iron industry is too well known to describe: it flourished especially in our part of the Weald. Cast iron, fashioned in moulds, was not made until Tudor times. The staple industry, however, in medieval times was agriculture; in which nine out of every ten men were employed. In the Downland area sheep were the sole source of livelihood in nine out of ten villages; the wool being sold in summer, and the meat being salted down in the autumn for winter consumption. As Gilbert White pointed out, sheep, west of the Adur and into Hampshire are white-faced; while eastwards into Kent their faces are black. It is interesting to speculate whether their masters were originally of different stock also—British and Saxon respectively. During the discussion which followed, the lecturer admitted that she could find little trace of strong feminine influence in Sussex medieval life.

Note: A member who had heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot, brought a portable radio to the lecture. It was turned on at 7.30; and after the news came an announcement that he had died. The audience stood in tribute to this great man, whose name will live in history; and was thus, perhaps, the first gathering in England to do so.

SUSSEX FOLK IN BYGONE DAYS

Mr. Dyer pointed out that from the time the Kingdom of the South Saxons was founded—reputedly by Aella, *circa* A.D. 491, the people of Sussex remained for centuries a race apart. Their chief population centres were the fertile strips south and north of the South Downs. Through the centre of the area ran the forest called Cold Andied by the Britons, Anderida by the Romans, and Andre desweald by the Saxons. There were large water areas to the west (Chichester Harbour) and to the east (Pevensey Harbour, now Pevensey Marshes). East of the kingdom was an area occupied by a Jutish clan called the Haestingas, who settled on the Hastings peninsula and who were later incorporated into Sussex. In subsequent centuries, particularly the 15th to the 18th, the forest was whittled away by the Sussex iron industry. Travel however to and from Sussex still remained exceedingly difficult owing to the appalling state of the roads, witness the graphic testimony of Walpole and Burton, as well as other travellers. The effect of this situation was the development of a highly insular race, predominantly Saxon in ancestry and character, with an ingrained dislike of all strangers. Even people from neighbouring counties were looked upon as "furriners". Sussex people kept themselves to themselves and developed their own dialect, customs, superstitions and folksongs.

The 19th century witnesses a tremendous change. It actually began during the closing stages of the previous century, thanks to greatly improved roads and the growth of the fashionable cult of "taking the waters" at the seaside. The integral life of Sussex was not materially affected until the coming of the railway in the 40's and 50's. This heralded an invasion which has continued with increasing intensity until the present day and is indeed now at its height. The population of Sussex in 1800 was about 150,000; by 1860 it had grown to over 350,000. It is now approaching the $1\frac{1}{4}$-million mark. The great majority of these "invaders" have migrated from other parts of the country during the last half-century. The result had been that the true Sussex folk have become largely assimilated by intermarriage and it is now very difficult to find men and women of pure Sussex descent. Moreover, standardised modern ed-

ucation has practically expunged the old Sussex dialect.

Fortunately however, there exists a wealth of records of old Sussex words and phrases (especially in Dr. W. D. Parish's dictionary), songs, customs, superstitions and humour. The purpose of studying these records is that, from them, we could glean a good idea of what the old Sussex folk were like. The type that emerged from such study was that of true sons of the soil, "of the earth earthy", quaintly logical and indeed philosophical in outlook, sturdily independent, obstinate to a degree, yet withal lovable with a well-developed vein of humour in their make-up and always fond of jokes against themselves—provided of course they were only told by their own kith and kin!

After this preamble, Mr. Dyer devoted the rest of his lecture to a number of examples of quaintness in dialect; superstitions and customs, typical Sussex jokes and Sussex songs in which he accompanied himself at the piano. His choice of material under these headlines was specifically designed to illustrate the various characteristics referred to above.

SUSSEX CASTLES

The lecturer began by explaining that, to appreciate the reasons which brought about the erection of the chief castles in Sussex—the castles of the Rapes, it was necessary to study the state of the Sussex coast in the middle ages. There were then a series of expansive but shallow waterways reaching from the sea well into the county. All those waterways, with the exception of one, Chichester Harbour, had either disappeared or dwindled to the proportions of comparatively small rivers. Chichester Harbour still remains much the same as it was eight centuries ago. The River Arun now comes to the sea at Littlehampton as a small stream but then it occupied a large part of the flat area now called the Arun Valley and was known as the Tarrant. Similarly the Adur which now reaches the sea at New Shoreham was once a broad stretch of water reaching Bramber and Steyning and called the Bramber river. The Ouse was once the Midwind and largely covered the valley reaching up to and past Lewes, as a broad area of water. The Pevensey Marshes were mostly sea in the Middle Ages. The original Hastings once covered an expanse of land which has now disappeared beneath the waves and its harbour was a narrow sea-haven rounding the Castle Hill on the west side with its mouth opposite the castle. The haven covered land which is now occupied by the Memorial and part of Queens Road. All these waterways afforded harbourage which was amply sufficient for the craft of Norman and Plantagenet times.

It is not known who first appreciated the opportunity these waterways offered to invading forces and therefore divided Sussex into more or less vertical areas (on the map) calling them Rapes, probably derived from an old Saxon word meaning ropes. Possibly it was Offa who subjugated the South-East in 772. Anyhow, Duke William used one of these waterways—Pevensey—in 1066 and was quick to realise their potential danger. He therefore used the Rapes, which he probably adapted to some extent, placing each under the control of a trusted officer. He ordered strong fortresses to be built in all of them to guard the entrances from the sea and the ports which stood at or near to their mouths. Hence Roger de Montgomery built Arundel Castle; William de Braose built Bramber Castle; Wulliam de Warrenne built the great fortress at Lewes; Robert de Mortain erected a Norman fortress within the mighty wall of the old Roman defensive work known as Anderida at Pevensey; Robert d'Eu constructed Hastings Castle. Roger de Montgomery decided another castle was necessary in his domain. He therefore established a sixth Rape, that of Chichester, and built a castle in that city.

Remains of all these castles can still be seen with the exception of that of Chichester which was dismantled in the 13th century and has now disappeared but its site is supposed to be in the vicinity of the mound behind the old Guildhall, once part of the Priory Church and now Chichester's Museum. These Norman castles in most cases occupied the sites of older strongholds—Roman in the case of Pevensey and Saxon at Arundel, Lewes and Hastings.

Subsequently, secondary castles were built. Verdeley and Knepp served the dual purpose of hunting lodges and second-line fortresses in the Rapes of Arundel and Bramber. Bodiam was built in the 14th century but could hardly be described as a reserve fortress to Hastings Castle as the latter was then virtually out of action. It would however have played an important part had the French attempted a serious invasion during the Hundred Years' War, instead of a number of fierce raids on the coastal towns. During that war, a number of large landowners obtained Royal permission to "crenellate" their large houses, many of which were then called castles, e.g., Iden. The really important fortresses however were those of the Rapes.

Mr. Dyer then described the castles in turn, with slide illustrations. He also dealt with the Ypres Tower at Rye which he described as a sort of keep to an island town which, being strongly fortified and on a hill, was itself in the nature of a fortress. A visit was paid to the blockhouse known as Camber

Castle, one of five built by Henry VIII when he expected a French invasion.

PEVENSEY LEVELS

The history of Pevensey Levels begins with the flooding of a wide, shallow, branching valley by the sea, during the great thaw after the last ice-age. When, as part of the same process, the Straits of Dover were broken through, a gradual movement from west to east began of all the loose material on the shore. In the case of the future Levels, the moving material was mainly flint pebbles, from the erosion of the chalk cliffs. These were carried out across the inlet in the form of a spit, which we now know as the Crumbles. Within this barrier, at high tide there was a large expanse of shallow water, usually calm, being sheltered by the Downs, so that no cliffs were formed on the shore-line, though that can be easily traced all round. At low tide there must have been stretches of sand and mud, with winding channels carrying streams from the higher ground. These streams found considerable difficulty in breaking through the rough shingle bar, and their courses were deflected towards the east. The mud they carried was dropped mainly in the enclosed basin, gradually filling it up.

There are few traces of the Old Stone Age hunters in the district, but when the climate became warmer there was an important camp of the Mesolithic people, who seemed to prefer sea- and river-side life, at Selmeston, on the ridge of well-drained sandy ground along which they could travel to the Ouse, the Cuckmere, or the promontory which is now Pevensey.

The farmers and herdsmen of the New Stone and Bronze ages seem to have kept mainly to well-drained open soils such as the Downs, but recently remains of their tools have been found on the former shores of the inlet. Pevensey was clearly the most convenient site. It was washed by the largest and deepest channel, in which all the chief streams flowing into the area combined; it was defensible, and had a good firm route linking up with the country to the west. These advantages presumably caused the Romans to choose it for a naval base helping to guard part of the "Saxon Shore". The size of the surviving walls (the outer ring) of their fortress, probably called Anderida, show its importance.

According to Bede's History and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, after the Roman withdrawal, the Saxons began a series of invasions intended to lead to permanent settlement. In Sussex they began near Chichester, worked eastward, and "liquidated" the surviving inhabitants at Anderida; "very few" managing to escape into the forest. As the existing place-

names show, the Saxons quickly established settlements on every promontory and island all round the inlet. The widest gap was on the north, where forest, from Horsebridge to Hurstmonceux, prevented the founding of a village.

The next striking event in the history of the Levels was the Norman invasion, which made elever use of the physical features. Pevensey was a port useful enough to be defended by a castle, and to be placed in the hands of one of the king's most trusted followers, so that quick communications with Normandy were always open. The port was a subordinate member of the Cinque Ports organisation.

Medieval records mention many salt-pans round the edges of open water, tidemills at the end of narrow creeks (one belonged to the Grange of Lewes Priory at Langney) and fisheries. They also give indirect evidence of many piecemeal attempts to reclaim various parts which were easily cut off by embankments or which had silted up naturally. Most of the evidence is in the form of complaints and quarrels, when banks were destroyed by storms, or the interests of those who wanted land and those who wanted water clashed.

In spite of all efforts, the port gradually became unusable, and profit was concentrated on the rich reclaimed pastures, still advertised as "fattening marshes". A system grew up of working the high Downland farms in conjunction with areas on the Levels, which could be used in summer only. Many of the drove-ways, used for transferring animals, can be traced; though the beasts which are still moved with the seasons now ride by lorry.

A map drawn a year or two before the Armada, to show what defences, natural and artificial, existed on the south coast, shows a wide belt of salt-marsh between the castle and the sea. The gun in the outer part of the castle belongs to this period.

Judging by the number of comfortable surviving houses, the eighteenth century was a prosperous one for the district. Turnpike roads were built all round the rim of the level, and the Toll-house just outside Eastbourne was destroyed only this year; but, although there was a bridge at Pevensey from quite an early date, only very narrow twisting roads, picking their way over the firmest places, were made across the Levels. The wide smooth roads from Langney to Barnhorn belong to the last forty years.

There seems little doubt that most of the local inhabitants took part in the smuggling of the eighteenth century. Hurstmonceux Castle, the inn at Hooe, and several churches are connected with smuggling stories.

Relics of the Napoleonic wars are the Martello towers (several of which have been undermined by the sea in my lifetime), the Redoubt at Eastbourne, and the gun which was dredged out of a dyke near Glynleigh, having apparently been bogged in transit.

During the 1939-45 war, concealed defence posts were made in the towers of the medieval part of Pevensey Castle.

The most noticeable change made in the twentieth century is the enormous increase in size of the towns flanking the levels, and the extension of houses almost all the way along the coast.

RYE

The first meeting of the summer season was attended by 22 members and took place in fine but cool weather. Sightseeing began as soon as members alighted from coach and cars at the Strand; for the line of warehouses there is marked 'Barracks' on Mudge's map of 1813. One warehouse, we know, was built by John Slade in 1718; and that may not have been the only one there when war broke out in 1793; but barracks they became, and more were doubtless added during the war. Troops were still quartered in Rye barracks in 1818; and some contemporary guns may still be seen, dug into the ground to protect the corners of buildings from modern motor traffic. At the last threat of invasion, over a century later, they were still, so it is said, 'on charge' of the Army Ordnance Department; which in its search for weapons made anxious enquiries after them!

Mr. G. S. Bagley, a former mayor of Rye, whose knowledge of the town and Cinque Port is second to none, very kindly gave a description of the church and conducted members over the Museum, of which he is Honorary Curator. The oldest part of the church of St. Mary the Virgin is the chancel, which dates from about 1120. The nave is a very good example of the Transitional Period; as the arches from east to west, beginning about 1180, become more and more pointed until the last one is typically Early English. In the French raid of 1377 the tower, which was probably surmounted by a spire, was brought down, causing extensive damage to the rest of the church. The present tower dates from the early 15th century. The clock, made by a Winchelsea man in 1562, is one of the oldest in the country which still goes with its original works. The face and 'Quarter Boys' were added in the 18th century.

The Museum is housed in the Ypres Tower, built as the Baddings Tower in 1287 as part of the fortification of the town against the French. It survived the final French attack of 1377, when the rest of the town was almost entirely destroyed.

The present name comes from John de Ypres, to whom it was sold in 1433. The town re-acquired the Ypres tower in 1518, since when it has served as Court House, prison, and now Museum; since Rye museum was largely destroyed by enemy action in 1942. The exhibits are arranged so as to illustrate the long history of the town.

As at the previous visit of the Society in 1955, members visited the Town Hall, and were shown the antiquities housed there. Rye, besides being a port, was once an island. Its name has been abbreviated from *Atter eye*, which is in turn derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Aet thaere ieg*, 'At the Island'.

MOUNTFIELD COURT AND RAMPYNDENE

Mountfield Court

The 52 members who attended this meeting were received by Commander S. Egerton, late R.N., the present owner; who conducted them round his house and garden, and has contributed these notes. Mountfield Court is a XVII century house, thought to have been built in the second half of the century; but the exact date is unknown. There is some evidence that it was not the first house on the site; for some foundations of a building were found in rear of it while constructing a rose garden. The west wing was added about 1750. The drawing room was added in 1855, and a few years later there were further additions to the north side of the west wing.

The manor of Mountfield was before and at the time of the Conquest in the family of De Echyngham; and remained in it until 1687, when it was purchased by John Nicoll. John Nicoll came over from Holland with William III; and it was he who planted the old chestnut avenue at the same time as the King planted that at Greenwich. Mountfield Court remained in the Nicoll family until 1858; when it was purchased by Mr. E. C. Egerton, the younger brother of the first Lord Egerton of Tatton. On his death in 1869, his widow, Lady Mary Egerton, to whom he had left the house, lived in it until her death in 1905. It then passed to Mr. Charles Egerton, who lived there from 1906 until his death in 1912. The next owner was Mr. Edward Egerton, who was killed in action in 1916; on which the property passed to his three brothers, and became the sole property of the present owner Commander H. S. Egerton, late R.N. in 1920.

Rampyndene

This fine William and Mary house, in the main street of Burwash, was visited previously by the Society in 1958. As the back is Tudor, it seems that the wealthy timber merchant

John Butler, enlarged, in 1699, an already existing house. The staircase and frescoed ceilings are particularly fine. Since the Society's second visit, the house has been in the market.

DANNY, HURSTPIERPOINT AND ALDBOURNE PLACE

This meeting was attended by 44 members. The name Danny appears as Danye in 1343, and is identical with Denny, which means *well-watered land in the valley*, and refers to the whole area of the park. Hurstpierpoint is the *hyrst*, or wood, of (Robert de) Pierpoint, who held the manor at Domesday. He was otherwise known as *de Petroponte*, and was so named after *Pierrepont* (stone bridge) near Falaise in Normandy.

Danny

This fine old Elizabethan brick house standing on the lower slopes of the Downs, to the south of the village, was built in 1595 by George Goring of Ovingdean, afterwards in the household of Henry Prince of Wales. Knighted by James I, he became, successively, Lord Goring of Hurstpierpoint, and Earl of Norwich. After being owned by the Courthopes and Shaws, it became the home of the Campion family.

Albourne Place

Albourne, pronounced locally *Ahb'n*, is not 'Sweet Auburn', the deserted village of Goldsmith. He was referring to Aldbourne in Wiltshire. The manor of Albourne was formerly divided between the occupants of two manor houses, one of which is called *Perkins Manor* and the other *Albourne Place*. From the outside, Albourne Place presents the front of a fairly perfect squire's house of the 17th century. Inside, however, it can be seen that the house really dates from about 100 years earlier, the exterior groins having been added in brick. The 16th century building itself was not the earliest, which was the manor house of the De Brocs. Ranulf De Broc was one of the murderers of Thomas Becket. Nigel De Broc is recorded as the owner in 1274, when he got into trouble for exporting wool to Flanders, contrary to the statute of 1271 which imposed 'sanctions' on that country. There is record of the De Brocs at Albourne until 1369, when there is a gap in local history until 1497, when the place was acquired by Edmund Threel. He is probably responsible for the earliest part of the existing house; though in 1510 the Threels parted with Albourne to Richard Sandys, and he may have been responsible. In 1624 the house passed to Sir Walter Roberts Kt., and in 1634 John Juxon bought it, and almost certainly refaced it in the semi-classical style. He was the brother of

Bishop Juxon, who attended King Charles I on the scaffold. There is a tradition that the Bishop worked as a bricklayer on the alterations to evade capture by Cromwellian soldiers, who stayed so long looking for him that he was forced to keep on building; which accounts for the vast size of the chimneys. In 1665, John Juxon's son, also John, sold Albourne to Sir John Fagge, Bart., on the death of whose son, later than 1700, it passed to his brother-in-law Sir Charles Goring of Wiston, to whose descendants it continued to belong down to recent years, when it became the residence of Sir Eric Geddes. It is now owned by P. J. Lowes, Esq. The features of the interior are the noble flight of oak stairs with pannelling, and the screens of the great hall, with openings, now converted into doors. These features all date from the late 16th century.

EAST GRINSTEAD AND WITHYHAM

The meeting which was attended by 34 members, took place on a very fine day.

Sackville College

This delightful old building, originally a hunting lodge and quarters for old retainers of the Earls of Dorset, was founded as a 'college' (which meant then 'a body of collegues with common functions and privileges') in 1609 by Robert Sackville, the 2nd Earl and High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I, and was completed by his son 10 years later. The buildings are of local sandstone, and with their gables, mullioned windows, and roofs of Horsham stone, are attractively grouped around a quadrangle. The College now provides a home for 18 pensioners. In the eighteen forties it had a famous warden, Dr. John Mason Neale, the hymn writer who was the author of 'Jerusalem the Golden'. The College includes a chapel, Common Room, and the Warden's Hall. In the Hall there are several relics, trophies, old maps and prints.

Church of St. Swithin, East Grinstead

A Saxon Church on this site, erected about the end of the 9th century, was granted about 1070 to Lewes Priory. A church was then erected in the 14th century, Twice within a hundred years the tower has fallen down. The present church, erected in 1789 has a spacious but rather severe interior and gave rise to the local rhyme: 'Large parish, poor people, large new church, no steeple'. It contains the marble tomb of Dame Elizabeth Grey, lady in waiting to Elizabeth of York, and her two husbands, Sir T. Grey and R. Lewknor of Brambletye; Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons from

before Trafalgar until after Waterloo, Dr. Neale, the hymnologist; and is a veritable museum of curious relics. Grinstead, it may be mentioned, means simply *Green place*; but the word *stede* sometimes had a religious significance.

Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Withyham

Members were received by the Rector, The Rev. P. L. Scott, who described his church. A church must have existed at Withyham from a very early period; since it contributed to Pope Nicholas's taxation of 1291. In the 14th century it was almost completely rebuilt, and at the end of the north, or 'Lady Aisle' was the chapel of the Sackville family. On June 16th 1663 the church was struck by lightning and almost completely destroyed, the bells being melted and the monuments of the Sackville family torn to pieces. Two 'Briefs' were granted by the Privy Council to enable collections to be made in many counties for the rebuilding, which does not appear to have been completed before 1672. All that survives of the old church today is the lower part of the tower, part of the wall of the North Aisle, and of the south wall of the chancel; while the red colour of some of the stone testifies to the fierceness of the flames which destroyed it. Between 1841 and 1864 the church suffered a Victorian 'restoration' of the usual type, in which Carolean pews, panelling, and pulpit were torn out, and the beautiful south porch destroyed. This completed the work of the fire in making the church rather bare. The finest part of the church is the Sackville Chapel. Here are the monuments of the Sackvilles, Earls and Dukes of Dorset, and their descendants in the female line, the Earls De La Warr, and the Barons Sackville. To this chapel, ever since the 15th century, the Sackvilles have been brought, wherever they may have died, to be buried in the vault below; for, as the Latin inscription in the heraldic window runs, 'The noble family of Sackvilles here await the Resurrection'. The glory of the chapel is the monument by Cibber, Sculptor-in-ordinary to William III, who also carved the relief on the base of the monument in London. It is said to be one of the noblest works of art in England, and portrays the 13 year old Thomas Sackville, who died in 1675, reclining on an altar tomb with his parents, the fifth Earl and Countess of Dorset, kneeling on either side. Other memorials to Sackvilles down to recent years, include some by Flaxman, Nollekens, and William Tyler.

The Sackvilles are descended from Herbrand Salkavilla, a Norman who took his name from the village of Sauqueville between Dieppe and Longueville. Formerly of East Anglia, they became possessed by marriage of the manor of Buckhurst about 1200, and still possess it; for Earl De La Warr lives at

the modern house in Buckhurst Park, half a mile from Withyham. The old moated house of the Sackvilles until they moved to Knole about 1630 stood not far away. It had a grand hall and eight noble towers. Of this nothing now remains except the solitary tower of the Tudor gateway, and some picturesque outbuildings occupied as a farmhouse. The name Withyham means a water meadow, which was either wide, or on which withies grew.

CHARLESTON MANOR, WEST DEAN, AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, EASTBOURNE

Charleston Manor

The 28 members who attended this meeting came to Charleston by the winding road through Lullington, which keeps a short distance from the meandering Cuckmere river to a point a mile north of Exceat Bridge. They thus saw the White Horse above Frog Firle, which recalls those of Wessex, though it is said to be recent. Charleston lies in a secluded cul-de-sac, as does West Dean in which parish it is situated. Charleston was the Ceorl's or Gentleman's Farm as opposed to the nobleman's manor at West Dean; which was King Alfred's own manor, which he left to his younger son, and to which he brought the Welsh scholar Asser to help his own studies. Domesday Book shows that both manors suffered heavily in the Norman subjugation of 1066-7, which established the Conqueror's half-brother, Count Robert of Mortain as Lord of Pevensey Rape, and Ralph de Dene, probably the son of Robert's Seneschal as owner of both Dean and Charleston. Charleston Manor House is of late Norman, Transition, and early English architecture, one small north window being pure Norman. It was occupied by monks in the early XII century; perhaps as an offshoot of Wilmington Priory, which Count Robert founded as a dependency of his father's foundation at Grestain near Honfleur. The house has a charming Tudor wing, but the dovecot and tithebarn are much older. The whole, with its delightful by unostentatious gardens has been beautifully restored by Sir Oswald Birley, whose widow still makes it her home. Many pictures adorn the walls of the house, including Sir Oswald's portrait of Sir Winston Churchill; one of whose own paintings hangs there among the works of Augustus John, Alfred Munnings, and other distinguished artists.

Eastbourne Public Library

An excellent display of maps had been arranged for our members by the Town Clerk, the Librarian, and Miss Hodsell. It was comprehensive, because photographs and prints were

provided where it had not been possible to obtain originals. The series began with the maps of Ptolemy (150 A.D.); which have been constantly copied in Italy down to the days of printing. His British Isles map erred through a mis-survey by his informant, which placed Scotland running east and west. Matthew Paris' map of England (*c.*1250) was purposely distorted to bring Dover to the middle of the foot of the sheet; being intended to guide travellers to the crossing-place to the Continent. The Gough, or Bodleian, map of 1335 was the first to show roads, though by straight lines between towns, with mileages alongside. The Elizabethan and later maps and charts began with Saxton (1575); followed by Norden (1595); Kip, following Norden as far as he went, to illustrate the 1611 edition of Camden's *Britannia*; and Speed (1611). In 1675 John Ogilby produced his series of over one hundred strip maps, showing the course of all the main roads of England with all their adjacent villages. By using a mile of 1760 yards, he established it as a standard for the whole country. In 1797 a map of part of Kent and Sussex appeared which showed the accurate triangulation upon which the first edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey was to be based. That for Kent was the first to be published in 1801, followed by Sussex in 1813.

C.T.C.

DOVER

Dover, which provides the shortest crossing to the Continent, is often called the Gateway of England; and most people consider it as just a convenient port. But the 46 members of the Society who visited the town on July 11th 1964, were privileged to see some of the landmarks of its ancient and stirring history. Dover got its name because the original settlement stood at the mouth of the little river Dour. In Cornish, the last Celtic dialect to be spoken in the south of England, *dour* is the word for *water*. The Romans called it Dubrae or Dubra, and it appears that it was the commercial port and base for the *Classis Britannica*, the Roman fleet which protected the Channel. It was during this period that the Romans built a lighthouse on either side of the harbour. The Pharos in Dover Castle is said by some to be the oldest building in England. Built soon after A.D. 43, it is octagonal; and is thought to have risen originally to a height of 80 feet by eight stages, each of which was set back one foot by thinning the wall. Each stage had a wooden floor and formed a chamber fourteen feet square. Four original stages now remain, topped by a fifth, which is castellated, and was added in medieval times. Ruins of the Roman lighthouse on the

other side of the harbour stood till the XVIII century; and a small part of its masonry remains at Drop Redoubt. Edward the Confessor granted privileges to the ports of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich; which eventually became the Cinque Ports under the great charter of Edward I. There is doubt about the origin of the Castle; but it came into prominence during the XI century; and in the XII century it was strengthened and enlarged. In 1216 it was successfully held by Hubert de Burgh against the Barons and Prince Louis of France. That was its last siege. At the end of the XIII century it was again brought up to date and became a first-class fortress. Ever since Norman times the Castle has been a Crown possession, and one of the principal fortresses of England. The Castle Keep, 100 feet square and 83 feet high, was built between 1180 and 1186. It is of three stories and contains two chapels, numerous apartments, and a well which has been followed to 289 feet, and may have been deeper. In its time, the building has served as royal residence, French prisoner-of-war camp, gun emplacement, magazine, and store. It has now been thrown open to the public; and a fine collection of armour can be seen in the East Hall on the second floor.

The Maison Dieu

The Hospital of St. Mary, *Domus Dei*, which now forms part of Dover Town Hall buildings, was founded in 1203 by Hubert de Burgh, Constable of the Castle, for the accommodation of pilgrims passing through the port. Later, soldiers were also admitted; and it even became a sort of 'grace and favour' residence for a few persons who had rendered good service to the state. King Henry III added a chapel, and was present at its dedication. This is now represented by the Sessions House, which was made out of it during the last century. In 1536, when the Hospital was suppressed by Henry VIII, it consisted of a chapel, vestry, Great Chamber, a little chamber within it, a chamber "over the water", Sir Piers' chamber, the masters' chamber, and a kitchen. It also had a complete farmery attached. In 1552 the buildings were appropriated as a brewhouse and bakehouse for the Navy; and from the Restoration until 1830 it was again used by the Navy as a victualling yard. An echo of this period can be found in Pepys' Diary. Under date June 29th 1666 he records that the Governor of Dover Castle, alarmed at the Dutch naval concentration at "Callice", was getting the victualler's provisions out of the town and into the castle to secure them. This, he considered, was "a ridiculous conceit". In 1834 the Maison Dieu was bought by Dover Corporation. Between

1852 and 1862 the building was 'restored'; with the result, so typical of that period, that whatever evidences of the old construction remained in the Great Hall were either removed or covered with plaster. The windows, however, were filled with one of the finest series of modern stained glass in the country. Seven in number, and in memory of local people, they were designed by Sir E. J. Poynter, and represent notable events which happened at Dover: the founding of the Maison Dieu, the relief of the castle in 1216, the embarkations of Edward III, and Henry VIII (Field of the Cloth of Gold), the landings of the Emperor Sigismund in 1416, and Charles II at the Restoration in 1660.

HEVER CASTLE AND CHURCH

This meeting was attended by the record number of 76 members.

Hever Castle

The first owners of the lands of Hever were a family called Hever who came from Northfleet near Gravesend. It appears, therefore, that the place was named from them. The name itself may possibly derive from the Anglo-Saxon *Haefer*, a he-goat.

The original building was a moated and fortified farmhouse, possessed by Sir William de Hever, Sheriff of Kent in 1274. About 1330 his descendant, also William, built the castle. His daughter Joan had a distinguished son, Reynold Cobham, born in 1295, who was a soldier, sailor, and ambassador. He was made a knight of the Garter in 1353, and was a Marshal in the Black Prince's army at Poitiers. His descendant, Sir Thomas Cobham, sold the castle to Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, a rich mercer, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1457. His grandson Thomas, born in 1447, succeeded to the castle in 1506. About 1516 he became firmly established in the favour of Henry VIII. In 1519 he was responsible for the arrangements for The Field of the Cloth of Gold, and was later created Viscount Rochford, Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond, and Knight of the Garter. There can be little doubt that these honours were not unconnected with the King's fascination for his daughter Anne.

Anne Boleyn is the most famous of the residents of Hever. She was, of course, one of Henry's ill-fated wives and mother of Queen Elizabeth I. After Anne's execution, her father continued to live at Hever until his death, three years later, at the age of 92. On his death, Henry seized the castle and gave it to Anne of Cleves. Subsequently it was possessed in turn by the families of Waldegrave, Humphreys, and Waldo.

In 1903 it was purchased by William Waldorf Astor, an American who became a British subject and was created Viscount Astor of Hever Castle, in whose family it still remains.

To enlarge the house without detracting from its architectural merits, the additional accommodation was built in the form of a Tudor village, the various cottages being joined by covered ways; but this extensive and rambling house has now been converted into separate dwellings. In addition to the formal courts and rose gardens around the castle, the former marsh, orchards, hop fields, and meadows through which the River Eden runs have been transformed into gardens and pleasure grounds with avenues and walks, Italian gardens with fountains, cascades and grottoes. This tremendous work took 4 years to complete and at times 2,000 workmen were employed. A huge loggia with a colonnaded piazza over looks an artificially excavated lake of 35 acres. Such forms the setting for an almost inconceivable collection of statuary and sculpture, topiary hedges, a maze, and a unique set of chessmen cut from yews. The statuary and sculpture include Roman sarcophagi, fountain troughs, and busts of the 1st and 2nd centuries, Coptic columns of the 6th century and Italian work of the 13th to 15th centuries. It seems questionable whether such a valuable and unique collection should not be housed, and protected from the rigours of the English climate. The interior of the castle contains a collection of pictures by such famous artists as Holbein, Titian, and Jean Clouet, as well as a collection of antiquities. Some of the latter, such as a bedhead and posts, belonged to Anne Boleyn; as well as a head-dress she worked. A mirror and some toilet articles belonged to her daughter Queen Elizabeth I. Many of the other pieces were personal belongings of ruling families and eminent persons of the 16th and 17th centuries, and come from most of the countries of Europe.

Church of St. Peter, Hever

The consecration of this church is mentioned in a document dated between 1115 and 1125; and the list of its rectors begins in 1200. However, the oldest part of the existing church is Early English, dating from about 1292, though it contains stones from the Norman building. The roof of the nave retains its mid-fifteenth century timbers. At some time the rood screen has been removed; for the entrance, staircase and door remain. The pulpit with sounding board is dated 1621. Behind the organ is the matrix of a brass which, if it had survived, would have been one of the earliest known. It was that of a priest named De Vane, in Mass vestments and dated about 1320. The Bullen Chapel, with Perpendicular window, dates from the

mid-fifteenth century, when the Boleyns became possessed of the castle. The main feature is the tomb of Sir Thomas Boleyn (Bullen), grandfather of Queen Elizabeth I. On it is a very fine brass depicting him in the full robes and insignia of the Order of the Garter; there being only one other brass in England (at Little Easton, Essex) in which these are displayed. In the chancel is the beautiful brass to Margaret Cheyne, dated 1419, with two angels, coat of arms and Latin inscription. The date is clearly visible; though Boutell has recorded it as 1417. These are two well-known brasses, rubbings of which are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The church contains some good modern stained glass, also a squadron standard of the Life Guards, which was carried from 1925 to 1953.

MALFOSSE

Five Norman chroniclers, writing between five and fifty years after the event, give varying descriptions of the locality which formed the setting for the concluding scene of the Battle of Hastings. Pieced together, they amount to the following:— A high steep bank, on which the English had rallied, was fronted by a deep ravine, concealed by long grass and brambles; which led the Normans charging downhill in the dusk to fall unexpectedly into it and become an easy prey for the English above. In front of this ravine in one place was a series of 'frequent ditches'; and at another point it was crossed by an 'ancient causeway', presumably so dilapitated that other Norman horsemen fell headlong off it into the ravine as they sped along the track. Only one of the chronicles, that of Battle Abbey, written as to this section about 1115, names the ravine in these words: "and so, from this disaster, this abyss is still called Malfosse". These words suggest that the place lay within the scope of the monks' knowledge; that is, that it was within or close to the limits of the Abbey estate, which ran in a rough circle drawn a mile and a half from the Abbey. If a valley which has all the features described, and is in a likely direction for the English retreat, can be found within that distance, that valley (and there could hardly be two such) should be Malfosse.

M. A. Lower, of Lewes, who translated the Abbey Chronicle in 1851, and drew his local information from John Vidler the schoolmaster of Battle, felt unable to identify the valley; for, though 'Wincestre Croft' said from a deed of 1279 to be in 'in Mainfosse', was still known as lying west by north of the town; there was nothing really precipitous in the approaches to the valley running down from Beech Farm in that quarter. Professor Freeman in his *History of the Norman Conquest* (1869) proposed a site in the descent to the Little Park valley behind

Battle Church; but this shows none of the requisite features, except the steep descent, and was far too close to the Senlac Ridge, for events to have been as described. Mr. W. A. Raper, in a short address to the Sussex Archaeological Society in 1898, thought that the Malfosse valley lay somewhere to the north of the town, but gave no details. In 1906, in his *Notes on the Battle of Hastings*, the Hon. F. H. Baring gave the results of his local investigations. He studied the Manor maps of 1724 and 1811 and also the *Catalogue of Deeds of Battle Abbey*, which contains brief but largely accurate summaries of the 1,400 deeds; a collection in 97 volumes which Thorpe had bought in 1835 and then listed for resale. Baring saw that in four XIII century deeds, the catalogue referred to properties 'in Manfosse'; and as Mansers Shaw lay 800 yards west of the Abbey, and on a possible line of retreat for the English, and had some of the required features, he was convinced that Mansers Shaw was Manfosse; and that 'Malfosse' was only a French corruption of this name, attractive to the monks. Baring found his view supported by finding on the 1724 map a field called 'North Road', stretching alongside the North Trade Road and part of Chain Lane; while in Thorpe's catalogue a deed of 1332 conveyed crofts called 'North Rode', 'Winchestre', 'Caldebek', and other lands. No other 'North Rode' croft was there mentioned; so 'Wincestre Croft' was probably near the 'North Road' field of 1724, and this lay within 400 yards of Mansers Shaw. Baring sought to show that the name 'Mansers' derived from 'Malfosse'; but the name Fitz Manser, the son of Manasser de Herst, seems to be the obvious origin of the name. There is no Caldbec meadow in that area, and no land near Mansers Shaw ever passed between private parties in the Middle Ages; because land south of the North Trade Road was part of Almonry Farm, which the Abbey had always farmed themselves. In short, the location of Malfosse at that point is not supported by any deeds. However, Baring's theory that Manser's Shaw was Malfosse was accepted by nearly all historians.

Where then, did the crofts called Northrode, Caldbek, and Wincestre, in the deed of 1332, lie? After trying for several years to locate the various holdings listed in Thorpe's catalogue, the present writer had come to the conclusion by 1953 that the croft in the position of 'North Road Field' on the map of 1724 was, in fact, called in 1324 'Hogherode on the King's high road to Ashburnham'; and that the lands mentioned in the deed of 1332 lay along the Whatlington road. It also seemed more likely that *Manfosse* was a misreading of *Maufosse*, a

form which in French had replaced *Malfosse* by about 1200; than that *Malfosse* should be a monkish version of *Manfosse*. The deduction to be made from these considerations was that Oakwood Gyll, about 200 yards north of Virgin's Lane, and running west from Oak Wood, was Malfosse.

So matters rested until 1962, when the visit of our member Mr. E. C. Hole to California established contact with the Huntington Library at San Marino, where the collection of Abbey deeds has been stored since 1928. (Baring had previously had the deed of 1332 inspected for him at Cheltenham in 1905). The Librarian of the Huntington Library kindly presented our Society with photostats of the four 'Manfosse' deeds; and of the conveyances to one Pessoner of 1324, 1328, and 1332, all made by different vendors. All the photostats clearly showed *Maufosse* and not *Manfosse*; while the *Hogherode* of 1324 was shown to be a misreading by Thorpe for *Northrode*. Thus there were two Northrode Crofts, conveyed to Pessoner by different persons within eight years. The 'Northrode' of 1324 was clearly the 'North Road' of 1724, which lay along the North Trade Road; so the 'Northrode' of 1332, and with it 'Wincestre Croft' and 'Caldebek' must lie elsewhere. There is a good reason for two crofts, in different parts of the parish, being called by the same name. The word 'North' had evidently been used in two senses. From the early 13th century the first three miles of the North Trade Road, which runs due West, carried timber for the flood-defences of the Abbey properties at Northeye and Tiade Bridge in the Pevensey Marshes,—hence the present name, the 'Northrode Croft' of 1324, and the 'North Road Field' of 1724.

By the deed of 1332 the Rector of Whatlington granted Stephen Pessener five crofts, two of which were named *Northrode*, one *Caldebek*, one *Wyncestrecroft*, and one whose name is illegible. The fact that the grantor was the Rector of Whatlington, that the Whatlington road runs truly north, and that it runs over Caldbec Hill prove beyond reasonable doubt that the Caldebeck and Northrode crofts lay alongside that road.

By the deed of 1240, Reginald de Camera and his wife granted to Abbot Ralph and the Abbey six acres of land and a wood in Maufosse, and also a right of way over other of their land *alongside the great trench*. By the deed of 1245, Adam Picot and his wife granted to Abbot Ralph and the Abbey nine acres of land and a wood in Maufosse. By the deed of 1279 Adam Picot the younger confirmed the grant of the nine acres and the wood in Maufosse; and mention was also made of rents to be paid for a long croft called *Wicnestrecroft*, which lay to the east of the nine acres and wood.

The manor map of 1724 shows six fields on the north of Virgins' Lane. Of these, two, *Loxbeech* and *Wellers* between them measure nine acres; and as they border Oak Wood, could be the nine acres and wood in Maufosse of the 1245 and 1279 deeds. The next field to the east, lying lengthwise along Virgins' Lane up to the main road is called *Hicket's Croft.* From its position it could well be the Wyncestrcroft of 1279 and 1332. By means of this Wyncestrecroft link we have identified 'land and wood in Maufosse' with Oak Wood and land to the south.

Two features of Malfosse were, as we have seen, 'frequent ditches' at one point and an 'ancient (i.e. dilapidated) causeway' at another. The above *Maufosse* deed of 1240 refers to the six acres of land and wood in *Maufosse* as 'enclosed by a newly-dug trench of their own'. A *Maufosse* deed of 1302 relates to 'land lying in the old Park of the Abbey to wit at Maufosse'. *Park* did not then have its modern meaning: it meant land enclosed by a fence or ditch to keep livestock in, and to prevent their theft. Oakwood has a very deep ditch all round its north side; while the field to the south is bounded by a steep ditch and bank on its south side; with signs that a similar ditch divided it from the wood, and that both the east and west ends were similarly enclosed. This, of course, carries us back only to the beginning of the XIV century; but if the same farm-use applied just over two centuries earlier, as well it might, the 'frequent ditches' of 1066 would be accounted for.

As to the 'ancient causeway', the map of 1724 shows a track, running a little east of north, prolonging the short northward length of Virgin's Lane, where the latter joins the Netherfield road at Wattles Wish, also a field alongside that track called *Fotherland.* The track and field run down to Oakwood Gyll; and the field beyond the Gyll at the same point is called *Forthland.* Both names must be derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Fothor,* meaning (the measure of) a load, as well as food and fodder. In Devon, *Fotherford* is a ford which can carry a cartload; while at Pett, a *Fothre* meant land which can produce a cartload. It therefore seems likely that the presence of *Fotherlands* on both sides of a gyll implies a causeway, used by carts, across the gyll. Unfortunately any causeway which may have existed at this spot (Nat. Grid Ref. T.Q. 745171) would now be entirely obliterated by the high and wide embankment thrown up in 1836 to carry the Turnpike Road across Oakwood Gyll.

Anyone inspecting Oak Wood and the Gyll to the west of it cannot fail to recognize the features described by the Chroniclers: the frequent ditches in and south of the wood, the high

and defensible far bank, and finally the Gyll proper; which, if silt had not accumulated in it since 1836 would not have, as now, a flat bottom; but would have been a ravine, many feet deep, in which a stream ran in a narrow bed. It was undoubtedly the Malfosse.

Fuller research details and criticism of Baring's case may be seen in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Volume 101; and the military aspect is dealt with in the 3rd edition of the *Field of Hastings*.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 898th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS COMMEMORATION LECTURE

Delivered by Group Captain G. M. Knocker on Friday October 16th 1964

The lecturer began by saying that the literature about which he wanted to speak is the product of what we may call the Heroic Age, say from the 8th to the early 11th century. Its distinguishing features are an emphasis on the heroic side of men's characters. Men had a very definite conception of the evil of life, and the courage to face and overcome it. They knew the purpose of this courage. The heroic problem lay primarily in the struggle for the freedom of the will against the pains of the body and the fear of death; against fate itself. The hero knew that he could not save his body from destruction; but he could preserve an undefeatable spirit if his will were strong enough. To yield would gain nothing, for old age gave no quarter 'even if spears do'; and yielding made his a lesser man. Surely that is no bad philosophy.

The heroic strain runs through nearly all the literature of the period; for instance, the defeat of the men of Sodom by the Elamites, as recorded in Genesis xiv. 1-10, is made to look like a Viking foray from the following extract of an eighth century transcription: "There was stern play, exchange of deadly spears, great uproar of battle, loud clamour in the fight. Men drew swords, mighty in their edges, from their sheaths. There was plenty of fighting for an earl, for him who before had not known much of battle. The Northmen were treacherous to the men of the South. Sagas in some form were known all over the Germanic north, though their true home was Iceland. Originally spoken stories, they were not written down till between the 12th and the 14th centuries. There are family sagas such as *Vjal's Saga*, the *Ere Dweller's Saga*, and the *Laxdaela Saga*; sagas about one special hero such as *Gretti* and *Gish*, who were outlaws; and there were sagas about happen-

ings in one particular locality, such as the *Faeroe Islanders' Saga* and the *Orkneyingar Saga*. The latter deals with the Norse earls of Orkney; for it should be recalled that our northern islands, where nearly all place-names are Norse, belonged to Norway until the 14th century; and that the inhabitants were bilingual far later than that. In fact, even today Faeroese fishermen have little difficulty in making themselves understood in Orkney and Shetland. Next, there are explorers' sagas like those of *Erik the Red* and *Thorfinn Karlsefni*. Finally there are the historical sagas which include the *Heimskringla* of the kings of Norway. The saga man and the poet were welcome guests in any household, and the *Scald* could command a high reward for his verses. It is on record that *Sigtrygg Silkbeard*, the Norse King of Dublin about A.D. 1000 wished to reward the scald Gunnlaug Ormstongue with two ships. When his treasurer objected, he gave the scald a fur-lined laced coat and a gold bracelet.

The sagas present a series of remarkable character studies of men and women—the wise Njal, his bitter-tongued and quarrelsome son, his dandified son-in-law Kari Solmundsson, and Grettir the outlaw. Herald Hardrada is shown to have been superstitious, and Tosti, our King Harold's renegade brother, cynical and hard-boiled. Part of the saga about the Norwegian invasion of 1066 is as follows: "Then King Harald sailed to England and came to Scarborough. Then the weather fell to a calm and they lay there during the night. Men woke at that and asked who was aloft, and who seemed to be above the ship. All looked up and saw a troll woman riding upon a wolf in the air. She had a trough on her knees full of blood and men's bones' The King asked Tosti whether he was awake. Tosti said 'I have just been awakened now with all this shouting'. The King asked 'Does it seem to you that that is anything remarkable?' 'No', said Tosti. 'Then you are dead at heart', said the King, 'because I have known battle warnings, and I never before saw such tokens.' Those men landed and went to a place called Cleveland. The King asked Tosti 'what is the name of that hill to the north of the landing?' Tosti said 'every hill has not got a name.' The King said 'nevertheless, that hill must have a name, and you shall tell it to me.' Tosti said 'it is the howe of Ivar the Boneless'. The King replied 'few are they who conquered England who came first to that howe'. Tosti said 'to believe that is to believe old wives' tales'." But Harald Hardrada was right. Ivar the Boneless and his brothers, sons of Ragnar Lodbrok, with the great Danish army, wintered at Thetford in 869 and martyred King Edmund the next year. The Battle of Stamford

Bridge was fought on September 25th 1066, where King Harold of England caught the Norwegian army unawares. When the armies were drawn up, a party rode out from the English lines and their spokesman asked for Earl Tostig, saying that King Harold, his brother, offered him Northumberland and one third of his kingdom rather than they should fight each other. Tosti asked what part of England should be given to King Harald of Norway. The Englishman replied that Harold would give him seven feet of English ground, or as much more as he is taller than other men. When Tosti went back to the Norse lines, king Harald asked him 'who was that eloquent man?' 'That', said Tosti, 'was King Harold Godwinsson.' 'That was too long concealed from me', said Harald Hardrada. Tosti said that if one of them was to die, he would rather that his brother should be his banesman, than that he should be his brother's." And so it turned out; for Tosti died that day. He was a strange man.

Turning to the extraordinary discoveries of the Norsemen, the lecturer said that Gunnbjorn first sighted Greenland about 900; but it was about 982 before the outlaw Eric the Red sailed from Snaefellsness in Iceland and found its east coast. Sailing round what is now Cape Farewell, he found grassy fjords and habitable country. He named the country Greenland, because he thought men would desire to go there if it had a good name. The Norsemen were in Greenland for close on 500 years; and the story of their decline and final disappearance is a tragic one. About 998 Eric's son Leif went to look for a new land which Bjarni had sighted about three years before. The expedition found a rocky shore, possibly Baffin Island, which they called *Helluland*, then a wooded shore, possibly Labrador, which they called *Markland*. Turning south along the coast, they came eventually to a place where there was no frost in winter, and wheat and grapes grew wild. They named this *Vinland*, that is Wineland; and its location has been a subject of speculation. It may have been northern Newfoundland, which may possibly then have had a milder climate, or Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Leif wintered there, and returned to Greenland. Thereafter, says the saga, he was called Leif the Lucky. Later his brother Thorwald went to Vinland; but, falling foul of the local inhabitants who must have been Redskins, was killed in a fight. In a passage which is a good example of the mastery of terseness and understatement which a saga can achieve, the encounter is thus described. "The Skraelinger shot at them for a while . . . then Thorwald asked if any one was wounded, and they said nobody was hurt. He said 'I have got a wound under the arm.

An arrow flew between the gunwale and the shield, under the arm. Here is the arrow, and it will be my death-wound'."

The lecturer, who, not long since, had stood at the fjord-side in Greenland whence Leif Ericsson sailed, invited his audience to consider the hardihood of these in intrepid mariners, who set out into the unknown to spend two or three years in whatever land they might come to. There is no doubt that these bold men found America nearly 500 years before Columbus was born; but, as there were not enough Norsemen to colonise it, it was forgotten.

There is no doubt that saga was a vogue of England: fragments of it can be found in *Beowulf, Widsith, Deor,* and many other old English epics. Beowulf was written down, probably in the middle of the 8th century, at the court of Offa, King of Mercia. It has a Swedish background, but an unexpected English link was disclosed when the Sutton Hoo helmet was found to have Swedish affinities. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is, in effect, a prose saga, which was being written down in Old English as late as 1154; and might have gone on if it had not been for the flood of French romances which followed the Conquest. Most of the other English sagas which have come down to us are in verse. Verse has mnemonic qualities, and people had better memories in those days. You still find this today among country people; and children are often sticklers for verbal accuracy when told fairy stories. Thus was it possible to pass on sagas orally for such a long time before they were written down; and why attention should be paid to small details in them, which are as likely as not to be correct. Writers like Henry of Huntingdon wrote down in Latin in the 12th and 13th centuries what had been handed down to them verbally, and added their own embellishments. Of such is Huntingdon's account of the St. Brice's day massacre of Danes in 1002. Roger of Wendover's story of the slaying of King Edmund in 870 was told by the King's swordbearer, as a very old man, to King Athelstan about 935. The youthful Dunstan heard it and passed it on to Abbo of Fleury, who wrote it down about 965, in *Passio Edmundi,* which Wendover copied. Saga still goes on. The lecturer recounted how his cousin had told him that her grandmother, aged 92, had told her that she remembered her grandmother telling her that as a child she had lived in a croft near Culloden. After the battle English soldiers came to the croft and captured her grandfather, who was a rebel called Moray. They never heard of him again. This, of course, happened in 1745.

How true are the sagas? The lecturer considered that their veracity might perhaps be compared with that of the best

modern historical novels. That is high praise. There is a great deal which we can learn from them of the life of the times they are supposed to portray, and much light has been shed by them on the excavations of archaeologists. Let us, therefore, beware of saying like Earl Tosti that to believe the sagas is to believe old wives tales.

Note. The bibliography of this lecture is too long to reproduce; but two interesting publications may be mentioned.

Heimskringla Snorri Sturluson, translated by Samuel Laing. Everyman's Library, 2 vols. No. 847 (second unnumbered), which gives the Greenland and Vinland stories, and the Norse accounts of the battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings.

The Battle of Maldon. Methuen's Old English Library 1949. In Old English, but has an excellent glossary and a good map.

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

The Rev. R. T. Izard conducted the annual special service in the parish church on Sunday October 11th 1964. The lessons were read by Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Lemmon, President, and Mrs. E. Harbord, a Vice-President of the Society. The sermon was preached by The Rt. Rev. R. W. Stabbard, M.A., Dean of Rochester. In it he said:

"It was a very small battle on October 14th, 1066, but it had a very big result in the history of England and of the world. I don't think King Harold had any idea that it was a turning point in history. Probably most people in England did not know it was happening. Many of the decisive battles of history did not seem important at the time. It often happens today that the really big battles are unnoticed.

There are two great battles going on in our time, which are attracting strangely little attention, but which will change the course of history.

One of them I would call the Battle of the Books. The world-wide battle to control the mind of man. A generation ago few people in the world could read; now half the world can; soon it will be three-quarters. What do they read? This is the battle of the books.

One of the forces engaged is Communism. There is much that is good in Communism, but its greatest evil is its militant atheism. Russia has been fighting for years to stamp out

Christianity, but without full success. Recently an Institute of Scientific Atheism has been established. £500,000,000 a year is spent on atheist propaganda—6 times what is spent on all books in this country. Each year Russia and China produce more than one book for every man, woman and child on earth.

Almost as bad are the perversions of Christianity which are propagated. A well-known organization of this kind floods the world with fifty million copies of its magazine every year. Then there are the materialistic newspapers which pour scorn on any decent ideals of morals or religion.

These ars some of the forces of evil fighting for the mind of man in this Battle of the Books. What are some of the forces on the other side?

Did you know that the Bible Society despatches Bibles at the rate of one every 2 seconds; 100,000 a week, to 132 countries?

Bibles are a start. But anything that can be done to encourage decent literature of any kind is important. Let me quote from an address by the Archbishop of York—

'The passion to read is sweeping like a forest fire through Asia and Africa and Latin America, is fast being satisfied—among the young and among the adults. They will read whatever they are given. Who can blame them? Give them Communist propaganda—they will read it. Give them the production of pornography—they will read it. Give them the message of Christ and his Church—*they will read that.*

The Church is facing the toughest battle in its history—the battle for the minds of men and women. It is the battle of *this* generation, not next.'

There is another unnoticed battle which 1066 makes one think of—The Battle for the Bodies of man. Half the population of the world is living below the hunger line. The Freedom from Hunger Campaign is being fought. In particular the Christian Churches are raising great sums; to reclaim land, to teach modern agriculture, to increase food supplies, if possible faster than world population increases. Private charity, as always, leads the way. But it must be supplemented on a big scale by government. Would you be willing for this? A lady this week was interviewed by a Gallop Poll questioner. She was asked "Which party do you think would help *you* most?" —a nasty question, appealing to selfish motives. The answer was "I don't know, but I would vote for the party which would *increase* taxation in order to assist underdeveloped countries and raise the standard of living for the starving millions of the world".

These battles are for the minds and for the bodies of men. Are we in this town, in this England of ours, any more aware of them than the people, say of Worcester were of the Battle of Hastings? They are the decisive battles of history, and perhaps the hardest thing is to stir the consciences of those who should be waging them.

Today, and next Wednesday the 14th, we commemorate the Battle of Hastings. We thank God for all its results—the development of this country's civilization, the strengthening effect of the new mixture of population, the growth of building, art and literature, and all the progress which has since resulted in this land.

Let us also be aware of the battles of today—The Battle of the Books, for the minds of men, and the Battle for the Bodies of men. Both are worldwide battles. The outcomes cannot yet be seen. It is for us to ensure that the evil forces are defeated, and the battles won."

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on November 13th 1964

At the Chairman's request members stood in silence in memory of Sir John Thorne, a Vice-president, and Chairman from 1953 to 1956, Miss Zoë Lemmon, remembered for her work for the Museum, and the six other members who had died during the year.

The Chairman's report, having been circulated, was taken as read; the following being the salient points:—Paid up membership at the close of the year numbered 246, of which 17 were junior members: an increase of 16 on the last year. The balance of the General Account was £42-10-5, an increase of £21-0-4 on last year; but, it should be observed, this satisfactory balance would not have been achieved without the £46-10-6 which members had contributed in addition to the minimum subscription. The Museum Account was £397-4-5 in credit. This amount will be available for setting up the Museum, when the time comes, in Langton House. The Excavation Fund, established by Colonel Hill, showed a balance of £28-1-5.

The resignation of Miss M. J. Powell as a member of the Committee was received with real regret; and appreciation was placed on record of the services she gave over a long period as a Committee member and as Custodian of the Society's Museum.

The Chairman thanked those who had organized the summer excursions and the editor of the *Transactions*. Copies of the latter were being supplied to Brighton Public Library and the library of Sussex University. Organizing summer excursions entailed substantial preparatory work. It was regrettable that late applications had sometimes to be refused; but once caterers and coach operators have been notified of the numbers, it is not possible to change them.

There had unfortunately been no fieldwork during the year. Both agricultural interests and lack of diggers had combined to prevent it. Sites await further excavation; and Mr. Wadsworth, who, after the departure of Colonel Hill, has undertaken to organise this branch of the Society's activities, would be glad to hear from any members who would seriously be prepared to dig when an excavation is planned. A team from the Department of Economic History of Sheffield University dug on the site of Panningridge Furnace (which was visited by the Society on September 3rd 1952, and reported on in *Transactions* for that year), but very little of interest was found there. (Only, in fact, some post-holes for the wooden facing of the 'bay'.)

Concerning the celebration of the ninth centenary of the Battle in 1966, the Society has representatives both on the Hastings Celebrations Council and the Battle Commemoration Council. The Society's programme envisages the following: (i) A Commemoration lecture by an outstanding personality, and possibly additional lectures during the summer. (ii) An address by The Archbishop of Canterbury at the Commemoration service (to which he has provisionally agreed). (iii) In co-operation with London museums, a special museum of loan exhibits in Battle. (iv) The publication of a Ninth Centenary Commemoration book, with essays by four historians, entitled *The Norman Conquest: its Setting and Impact.*

The Society is publishing the late Mr. Pyke's Guide to Battle at an approximate cost of £170 for 5,000 copies, which is being financed by a number of £10 interest-free loans, which members of the Society have generously made.

There have been unfortunate delays in securing the necessary approvals for the extension of the Battle Memorial Hall, which will accommodate the Society's Museum and Library. But all is now well, and building operations have begun. When re-opened, admission will have to be raised to 1/- for adults and 6d. for children, on account of the greater cost of running at the new premises; and, except for the members' library, which will be open on certain days, the museum will be closed during the winter months.

At the ensuing elections, the Chairman said that the Committee recommended that Mr. A. R. Clough be elected a Vice-president of the Society, which would fittingly recognise the Society's debt of gratitude to one who has served and continues to serve it in so many ways. Mr. A. R. Clough was then elected a Vice-president for three years vice Sir John Thorne, deceased. The following officers were re-elected for one year: Chairman, Mr. B. E. Beechey; Vice-Chairman, Major L. C. Gates, M.B.E., M.C.; Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Orger; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. R. W. Bishop. Major Y. A. Burges D.L., J.P., was elected an additional Vice-Chairman, in view of the extra work which would fall on the chairman in connection with the 1966 Commemoration. Of the three committee members due to retire in rotation, Mr. H. C. Cowen was re-elected; Brig. D. A. Learmont, C.B.E., was elected vice, Mr. A. R. Clough, elected a Vice-President; Mr. B. A. Webber vice, Miss M. J. Powell, resigned; all for three years; and Capt. J. Vickers vice, Major Y. A. Burges, elected a Vice-Chairman; for two years.

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