No. 14

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Transactions
1965 - 1966

BATTLE OF HASTINGS
NOVO CENTENARY

Price: 2/6
(free to members)

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

President:
LIEUT.-COLONEL C. H. LEMMON, D.S.O.

Vice-Presidents:
MRS. E. HARBORD
THE VERY REV. A. T. A. NAYLOR, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.A.
MR. A. E. MARSON, M.B.E. MR. C. T. CHEVALLIER, M.A.
MR. A. R. CLOUGH

Chairman: MR. B. E. BEECHEY

Vice-Chairmen:
MAJOR L. C. GATES, M.B.E., M.C. MAJOR Y. A. BURGES, D.L., J.P.

Hon. Secretary: MR. W. ORGER

Hon. Treasurer: MR. R. W. BISHOP

Committee:

Till 1966:
MISS J. E. S. ROBERTSON
MR. H. WADSWORTH
CAPT. J. VICKERS

Till 1967:
MR. H. C. COWEN
BRIG. D. A. LEARMONT, C.B.E.
MR. B. A. WEBER

Till 1968:
MRS. O. BINDLEY
MISS R. CHIVERTON
SIR JAMES DOAK
MR. A. E. STEVENSON

Museum, Library, and Excavation Committee:

Chairman: MR. A. R. CLOUGH

Hon. Secretary: MISS J. E. S. ROBERTSON

Members:
MR. C. T. CHEVALLIER MR. W. ORGER
MR. H. WADSWORTH CAPT. J. VICKERS

Hon. Editor "Transactions": MAJOR L. C. GATES

Delegate to South-Eastern Federation: MISS J. E. S. ROBERTSON

CONTENTS

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

The novocentenary year, the 16th year of the Society's existence, has come and gone. Two Commemoration lectures were given by Professor Dorothy Whitelock, and Professor David Douglas, who dealt respectively with the Anglo-Saxon and Norman sides; and in addition to the three other lectures which appear in this number, Miss M. Vinall lectured on "The Origin of Surnames", Mr. H. E. Hinings on "The Story of Sussex", Mr. A. Colin Cole, Portcullis Pursuivant, on "Curiosities of the Crest", Mr. W. H. Dyer on "Normandy", and Mr. W. J. C. Murray on the birdlife of Romney Marsh.

The Chairman dealt in his circulated report with the affairs of the Museum, thanking individually those members who kept the Museum open on Sunday afternoons, and those who had given their time and skill to making it such a success. The Museum opened on April 4th, and closed on October 15th. During that time 5,182 adults and 1,843 children paid individually for admission. In view of the crowds of people who visited Battle during the period the numbers are disappointing; but they do not include the arranged visits of Societies and Conferences, numbering more than 500 persons in all, who were conducted round by a member of the Society.

This brings us to an activity which formed a feature of the Society's year, namely giving a description of the battle on the ground to visiting societies and conferences. This was carried out by member volunteers who were first briefed on February 16th. Some of these also took voluntary duty at the Museum, as stated above. Their names will not be mentioned here: they themselves know what they did, and can rest assured that their efforts enhanced the name of the Society, and have earned its gratitude.

The biggest operation was mounted on September 10th, when 300 members of the Sussex Archeological Society were taken round the battlefield in six parties. At other times parties from French societies were given the battle narrative in their own language, and when, on September 22nd, the Chateau Gaillard, an international body of French, German, Dutch and English delegates, who had held the whole of their third conference in Battle, appeared, 90 strong, on the battlefield, four parties were formed, two receiving the story in English, one in French, and one in German. Unfortunately we had no member who could explain the battle in Dutch. On October 2nd the Anglo-French Conference on the Norman Conquest which had been sitting at London University, was conducted round the battlefield in

two parties with a description in each language. The party included Professor Wormold, Professor David Douglas, and Professor Edouard Perroy of the Sorbonne, which, with the Co-ordinating Committee for the Commemoration of 1066, numbered 35. An Education Inspectors' conference, sitting at Tunbridge Wells, was given the story on the ground on October 11th. Mr. Redhead, Minister of Education, was one of this party. From France, M. Réné Varin, Inspecteur Général de l'Instruction Publique, had already been shown the battlefield by one of our members earlier in the year. Other parties dealt with were one of 77 members of the Royal Overseas League (October 15th), Kent Archaeological Society (September 3rd), Goudhurst Local History Society (August 10th), Hawkhurst Local History Society (September 21st), and The Holborn Society (October 1st).

October 14th, the anniversary of the battle, was a memorable day for the Society. At 1 p.m. 127 members and their guests sat down in Langton House to the first ceremonial luncheon which the Society has ever held. The guests included the Dean of Battle, Mr. Margary, President, and Mr. Burstow Chairman of the Research Committee from the Sussex Archaeological Society, Professors Douglas and Barlow, two of the co-authors of *The Norman Conquest: Its Setting and Impact*. Mr. Manwaring Baines, Curator of Hastings Museum, and Mr. Dyer, who have given valuable help to the Society during its 16 years existence. After the toast of "The Queen", the names of those definitely known to have been killed in the Battle of Senlac were read out, and a short silence to their memory was observed. Toasts of "The Society" and "The Guests" were proposed and replied to. In his speech, the President told members that on behalf of the Society he had sent a copy of *The Norman Conquest* to H.M. The Queen, and that he had received that morning a letter, which he read, from Balmoral Castle graciously accepting the gift, and stating that Her Majesty hoped to read the book before her visit to Battle. After the luncheon the company went to the Cloister Garth at Battle Abbey, where seats had been reserved, to witness the ceremony of unveiling the plaque commemorating the 900th anniversary of the battle. The day concluded with the Commemoration Lecture by Professor Douglas.

On Sunday, October 16th, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury preached at the Society's annual Commemoration Service. An account of his visit and his sermon are given in another part of this number. Before he left, the President and

the Chairman of the Society presented him with a copy of *The Norman Conquest.*

In addition to the Society's own activities during the year, its advice was sought and given on the battle sequence of the Bexhill Round Table pageant, and members wrote four articles in *The Last Invasion,* a magazine produced by the organisers of the pageant, which had a large nation-wide circulation. Articles on the museum and the battlefield were also written by members for *Sussex Life.* Members of the Society took part in, and in at least two cases directed, other commemorative events in the town, accounts of which appear in the next article.

Exactly a fortnight after the anniversary luncheon which marked the end of the Society's official year, Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh visited Battle. The Society was invited to send a representative to attend at the Abbey; and the President also, having been presented to Her Majesty and His Royal Higness, had the honour of giving them a brief description of the battle which was won by Her Majesty's ancestor of 29 generations back. A photograph of this incident, taken by a United Press photographer, appeared in the national press, and was circulated apparently all over the world, as it appeared five days later in the *Otago Times* of New Zealand. So ended a memorable year.

ANNUS MIRABILIS

An account of the events organised in commemoration of the nine hundredth anniversary of the conflict which in the words of the first President of the Society, "gave Battle not only its existence and name, but also its unique place in the history of our country".

BATTLE ARTS GROUP SPRING EXHIBITION of pictures and sculpture by local artists and artists from St. Valery-sur-Somme, Battle's twin town. From 27th March to 9th April.

BATTLE REMEMBERS. The story of the church and town was presented in the parish church of St. Mary from July 11th to 16th. Five episodes were depicted, the first being *The Feast of the Porpoise,* in the 12th century; the second a morality play *Abraham and Isaac* in the 14th century; the third *The Hammer of the Monks,* in the 16th century; the fourth *Isaac Ingall has a visitor,* in the 18th century; and the fifth *Living Memories* of the 20th century, which included two world wars. These were dramatised by the church folk, the Battle Players, the Abbey, Battle and Langton, Claverham, and Glengorse

Schools, and culminated in Vaughan Williams' *Te Deum in G* sung by the combined choirs.

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE FAIR. Held at Langton House on July 14th. Art display. Demonstrations of old crafts. Preserves, sweetmeats, cakes, flowers, fruit and vegetables on sale at market stalls.

BATTLE ARTS FESTIVAL. Held at Langton House from July 18th to 31st and organized by the Battle Arts Group. The concerts were given by the Alberini String Quartet and Bryan Vickers with a new work composed for the occasion by Stephen Dodgson, Ernest Lough and members of the Temple Choir with G. Thalben Ball and Jean Harvey (violin), Thea King (clarinet), Wilfred Brown (tenor), and Eric Heidsieck (pianoforte). There were also evenings devoted to French songs and films, and a dance. On Sunday, 24th July, there was a service in the parish church in connection with the festival, at which the Bishop of Chichester preached.

A FAIR IN THE GROUNDS OF BATTLE ABBEY, with decor and costume in period. Held from August 1st to 6th. There were trade stands, demonstrations of cottage and country crafts, country dancing, plays, tableaux, and music by French and English groups.

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL. A festival of flowers in the parish church, organized by the Battle Flower Decoration Society. August 6th to 9th.

BATTLE FLORAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SUMMER SHOW, held in the grounds of Battle Abbey on August 10th.

HORSE SHOW & GYMKHANA, in the Abbey Park, organized by the Battle Young Farmers' Club. Horse and Pony classes, and driving in carriages, some over 50 years old. August 20th, and on the following day a veteran car rally.

AN EXHIBITION OF FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS entitled "1066 and All Flowers", held in Langton House on September 15th and 16th.

NATIONAL CEREMONY AT BATTLE ABBEY. Held on October 14th, the anniversary of the battle, the central feature was the unveiling of a grey stone plaque to commemorate "the fusion of the English and Norman peoples" by Prince Jean de Broglie, French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Present at the ceremony were Mr. George Thomson, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the French Ambassador, Lieut.-General Sir Reginald Denning, Chairman of the co-ordinating Committee for the 1066 Commemoration, Lord Mayors and

Mayors of various towns in Britain, the Mayors of the Cinque Ports, and representatives of the twin town of St. Valery-sur-Somme.

After reception in the great hall of the abbey by Mrs. Harbord, Commander J. D. Ross, Chairman of Battle R.D.C. and the Chairman and Governors of Battle Abbey School, a procession was formed, headed by the parish church choir. The 1st Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment received the procession at the abbey ruins with a fanfare, and a guard of honour gave a general salute. Speeches were made by Prince de Broglie and Mr. Thomson, both of whom stressed the importance of the fusion of the English and Norman peoples as the result of the battle; by which a great and new nation emerged and two cultures mingled. Prince de Broglie then unveiled the plaque.

There followed a short service of dedication conducted by the Very Reverend F. H. Outram, Dean of Battle; the hymns being accompanied by the band and drums of the Staffordshire Regiment. The service ended with the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi and the Blessing, given in English and French. The National Anthems of both countries concluded the ceremony.

AN OXROAST, BONFIRE AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS in the Abbey Park was organized by the Souvenir Normand in the evening of October 14th.

AT ST. MARY'S PARISH CHURCH on the evening of the novocentenary day a full peal of grandsire triples (5,040 changes) was rung. It was conducted by Mr. Ian V. J. Smith, and took three hours and eight minutes.

THE PAGEANT. On Saturday, October 15th, The Bexhill Round Table presented a 1066 Grand Pageant in the fields to the South of Powdermill Lane, which can be considered as on the edge of the actual battlefield. Beginning at 10.30 a.m. with an International Archery Tournament, and ending at 8 p.m. with a firework display, other events included an air rescue operation by the R.A.F., a Medieval Jousting Tournament presided over by "Miss World" and her entourage. Mounted knights in armour joined in combat with lance, sword, axe, mace, and chain. There were also many other events. The highlight of the day was "The Second Battle of Hastings" in which nearly 500 students represented the combatants, those from Kent University representing the Saxons, and the students from Sussex University the Normans. The latter were reinforced by cavalry from local riding stables and hunts. About 24,000 spectators paid for admission; but so many more gained admission through hedges that it is estimated that some 30,000 people made their way to the battlefield.

Owing, it is thought, to disregard of the no-parking notices in Powdermill Lane, traffic built up until the roads were congested from the outskirts of Hastings on the south, Mountfield level crossing to the north and Ninfield to the west. The Chairman of the Rural District Council, Cmdr. Ross, arrived over an hour late, and was unable to perform the opening ceremony as arranged; while the Mayor of Hastings gave up the task of trying to get to Battle at all.

THE COMMEMORATION SERVICE of The Battle and District Historical Society at St. Mary's parish church on Sunday, October 16th. Preacher: His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. A full account appears on another page of this number.

"THE HOAR APPLE TREE". On October 20th-22nd Battle Players presented a chronicle play with this title which was specially written by Bertram Weber, a member of the Society. The play set the Battle of Senlac and the Norman Conquest in the context of the contemporary world. The scene was a Saxon croft on Caldbec Hill which was visited by King Harold on the day before the battle, and by Duke William when the battle was over, thus providing opportunities for the English and Norman views to be presented.

THE ROYAL VISIT. On October 28th, Her Majesty The Queen, and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visited Battle, Rye, Hastings and St. Leonards, Bexhill, Pevensey and Eastbourne. The Royal car entered the town by the North Trade Road, which was lined by pupils of Claverham and other local schools. Battle R.D.C. had erected an avenue of Union and Commonwealth flags across the Abbey Green, and the Battle Floral Decoration Society had arranged banks of flowers at the Abbey Gatehouse, outside which the ex-Service organisations paraded. Inside the precincts of the Abbey the drive was lined by Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, A.T.C. Cadets, girls of Battle Abbey School and boys of Glengorse School.

At 10.30 a.m. the Royal Car entered Battle Abbey and the Royal Standard was broken over the Gateway. When the Queen and the Duke alighted at the front porch of the Abbey building they were received by the Duke of Norfolk who presented Mr. P. F. J. Colvin (High Sheriff) and Mrs. Colvin, Commander J. D. Ross (Chairman, Battle R.D.C.) and Mrs. Ross, Mr. B. Godman Irvine, M.P. and Mrs. Irvine, and Mrs. E. Harbord. Presentations then followed of local government officers and the Governors and Principals of Battle Abbey School; the total number of presentations being 45. On the

opposite side of the porch were assembled 145 representatives of the various societies in Battle, and leading townspeople who had been invited to be present. Entering the Abbot's Hall, the royal visitors signed photographs for the School and the R.D.C., after which they were escorted into the grounds, past the newly-unveiled plaque and the Norman Stone near which Harold fell. Escorted by Commander Ross, they left the grounds by the postern gate to visit St. Mary's Church, where 250 children from the primary schools were lining the churchyard path. The Very Reverend F. H. Outram, Dean of Battle, having been presented, described the church, in which Her Majesty showed great interest, and pointed out the tomb of Sir Anthony Browne. The Queen and the Duke signed the visitors' book in the Lady Chapel. Returning through the postern gate and past the Dorter range they were escorted to the terrace, where Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Lemmon gave a five-minute description of the battle. A bouquet was then presented to Her Majesty by the head girl of Battle Abbey School. This being the last item on the programme of the Royal visit to Battle, the Royal party returned to their cars, which, to the cheers of the school-children and youth organisations, disappeared through the Abbey gateway. The Royal Standard floating above the gate-way tower was lowered and the ceremonies of the novocentenary year came to an end.

THE BLACK RAT AND THE BLACK DEATH

It must be acknowledged that the whole course of history has been changed by the acts of individual men, but it is only in recent times that the rôle of apparently insignificant members of the animal kingdom in the dissemination of disease has been appreciated—the mosquito in malaria and yellow fever, the louse in typhus, and the rat and its flea in bubonic plague. It may be argued that these creatures have had more influence on man's destiny than the deeds of any individual human leader. Thus if in 1966 we commemorate the 'heroic' concept of history, 1965 is a no less important landmark, being the ter-centenary of the great plague of London. The year 1665 saw the last major outburst of a disease, bubonic plague, which scourged this country for the 300 years following its first appearance in 1348 under the name of 'The Black Death'. For these three centuries it formed part of the familiar background to the life of every Englishman, including Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton.

The great plague of 1665 had been preceded by epidemics in 1563, 1592/3, 1603 and 1625; which, each in its turn, had

been called 'Great', and between times almost every year there was plague somewhere in England. The population outburst of the first half of the 14th century, due to the growth of the towns, was not only completely halted by the Black Death, but did not resume its momentum until after the last great epidemic of 1665. Plague lingered on sporadically in England into the early years of the 20th century, and is still endemic in many parts of the world—notably in South China, and in the great cities of India. There is no evidence that the great epidemics which ravaged the declining years of the Roman Empire were bubonic plague, though they were often called 'plague'; nor can the Biblical 'plagues' be identified as such. The first authentic record of true bubonic plague is the Great Plague of Justinian, described so vividly by Procopius. Starting in A.D. 540 at Pelusium in Egypt, it reached Byzantium (Constantinople or Istambul) through Palestine in the Spring of 542. The effect was devastating. Gibbon relates how, at the height of the epidemic, 10,000 people perished each day in Constantinople. It is strange that this epidemic did not spread to Western Europe, which was to escape the blow for another 800 years. The plague of Justinian originated in Egypt; the Black Death in China. Spreading along the trade routes to the Black Sea, it reached Genoa by ship, and from there spread across Europe.

The Plague entered England through the port of Melcombe Regis (Weymouth) towards the end of July or the beginning of August, 1348, and reached London in November. The mortality was appalling. It is difficult to give an accurate estimate, as the chroniclers differ and all exaggerate. Professor Hamilton Thompson using scientific methods to estimate the number of clergy who died from the Black Death in the two largest dioceses of that time, Lincoln and York, arrived at the figure of 44.37 per cent. for the former and 44.2 per cent. for the latter.

The immediate political economic and religious effects of the catastrophe were due to depletion of the labour force. Full employment caused steadily rising wages, and agriculture was soon unable to pay its way. Then, as now, a policy of wage restraint, proclaimed in 1350, met with so little response that in 1351 there was passed a 'Statute of Labourers' imposing severe penalties on master and man for any evasion of the rates laid down. This 'wage freeze' sowed the seeds of the subsequent Peasants' Revolt. The depleted ranks of the clergy were filled by men, many of whom had no vocation and very little learning. Perhaps as important as the political and economic consequences of the Black Death was its impact on the minds of the survivors. In an age when faith was matched by an ignorance

of science, men regarded natural catastrophes and disease as a punishment for sin. Many became obsessed with such a sense of guilt that it led to mental aberrations. Some manifestation was seen in the 'Flagellants', a brotherhood who wandered from city to city scourging one another for the sins of the people. The Crusade of Peter the Hermit, and the Children's Crusade may be other examples of this mass hysteria; but perhaps the most bizarre of all these disorders was the dancing mania, which began at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1374. It spread rapidly over Europe: men, women, and children, linking hands, danced for hours on end until they collapsed from exhaustion, many in hysterical fits.

But among some men a more rational view prevailed. As early as 1388 the English Parliament passed the first urban health act which laid the foundation of all subsequent sanitary legislation. The disposal of refuse was one of the main problems of the medieval town, and this act aimed at its enforcement. For plague itself there was no cure; but measures were taken to prevent its spread by isolation and quarantine. These measures were frequently harsh and oppressive. During the great epidemic of 1563 Queen Elizabeth had a gallows erected at Windsor, on which to hang any Londoner who might come there, bringing the risk of infection.

The cause of Bubonic Plague was not known until the end of the 19th century when Kitasato in Hong Kong isolated a bacillus from the blood of plague victims. When the same bacillus was found in the blood of dead rats and the bodies of their fleas, it was proved experimentally that Bubonic Plague is an endemic disease of rats, transmitted from rat to rat by the bite of the rat flea. A severe epidemic causing the death of rats in large numbers lets loose myriads of infected fleas. These creatures, given favourable conditions of temperature (50 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit) and humidity, can survive for up to two months in the dust of floors and in clothing or other materials. That is why plague generally occurs during the summer and autumn in temperate climates; but during the cool season in hot climates. In their famished condition they readily attack man, injecting into him this deadly disease.

The history of the rat gives the clue to why Western Europe was spared from plague for 800 years. There is evidence of the prevalence of the rat in pre-historic Europe; but none in historic times until about the time of the Crusades. The rat is not mentioned by classical writers, though the mouse is frequently described. The first clear differentiation between rats and mice

is found in the writings of Gerald the Welshman (1147-1223). We can assume that before the Crusades there were few, if any, rats in Europe—at least in historic times.

The first rat to re-enter Europe was the black, slender, long-nosed Alexandrine rat, which probably originated in the Arabian deserts, living an existence out of contact with man. But some time between the fourth and the seventh century A.D. it began to change its habits and, adopting an urban life, became parasitic on man. The consequent plentiful food supply led to a population explosion of rats, and set in train migratory movements. Being good climbers they took to the ships; and it was by this means, aided by the increased traffic caused by the Crusades, that they invaded Europe.

By the end of the 13th century it was already a pest—the legend of the 'Pied Piper of Hamlyn' can be placed at about 1284. Once established with man in his insanitary dwellings, it was only a matter of time before a catastrophe would occur. It seems probable that the black rat had become immune to the original 'Egyptian' strain of the plague bacillus; and that a new virulent strain was introduced from China to which it succumbed in vast numbers with the consequent repercussions on man. As for the black rat; it was to rule in Europe for nearly 500 years until driven out by a more ferocious enemy, the short-nosed, short-tailed brown rat. This rat came from the East, and had its origins in Chinese Mongolia and the regions east of Lake Baikal. In 1727 hoards of brown rats invaded Astrakhan and spread across Europe. They reached England in 1728. They delayed their invasion of Scotland until 1770; but by 1775 were established in North America; but it was not until 1851 that they arrived in California. Wherever the brown rat has gone it has driven out the black rat, which today survives only in seaport towns, in some islands, and in South America. Only on ships, because of its superior climbing ability, does it still hold its own.

Why did the Bubonic Plague vanish from England? Not because of the discoveries of science, because plague was practically extinct here before these could become effective; not because of the extinction of the black rat, for the brown rat is equally susceptible to plague. Improvements in living standards and hygiene, the unremitting vigilance of our port authorities in preventing the ingress of infected rats, and the fact that the brown rat is less 'domesticated' than the black, have no doubt played their parts. But the main factor is probably the plague bacillus itself. It may have undergone a mutation or

change in virulence—a common occurrence in epidemic disease, and the rat may have developed a high degree of immunity. The rat community has kept pace with man, and today at least equals him in numbers. What mght be the consequence if the plague bacillus were to suffer a new mutation?

SUSSEX BEFORE THE RAILWAYS

The coming of the railways during the first half of the last century, represented the first break-through in the history of transport, comparable with the four-minute mile and passing the sound-barrier in other methods of getting about more quickly. Before the railways, the horse and the ox provided the motive power through the ages for moving from place to place.

'Before the Railways' is therefore the story of the various forms of animal-drawn transport through thirty or more centuries, a story void of highly sensational happenings and yet one which interest never flags—and in which the real heroes are those patient, long-suffering friends of man, the horse and the ox.

The first roads were the ridgeways, those tracks driven deep into the Downs and other uplands as the trading caravans moved from settlement to settlement—tramped by the feet of countless generations from Neolithic times down through the Bronze and Iron Ages. In the Bronze Age, the discovery of metals in Britain brought traders from overseas, especially Phoenicia, bringing amber, lapis lazuli and other luxuries which must have delighted the people of this land. Trading developed, hill communities coalesced into larger units and great enclosures —hill cities—were constructed not only as forts but as shelters for the itinerant traders. The development of trade necessitated some sort of token of exchange and iron bars—the first money—were used. Rings followed and then discs from which to coinage was but a small step. The middleman, too, made his appearance during the Bronze Age. By the time the Romans came, the country was covered with a network of main roads including the predecessors of Watling Street, Icknield Way, Fosse Way and Ermine Street, the origins of which are often wrongly credited to the Romans. True, the Romans developed them into that wonderful system of highways which linked the country—but the main ways existed probably from 400-500 B.C. The magnificent Roman roads, remarkable for their durability and their straightness, were laid in five or six layers of sand, broken stone and gravel topped by paving. They were straight

because the chief roads were laid by legionaries—and soldiers do not like marching round corners! Along them went the cursus publicus carrying the imperial mail, changing horses at every positus—hence our word 'post' for the carrying of letters. Along them went the wealthy in their cisia—light carts—in which, incidentally, they were often fined for speeding. Along them went the chariots all with a gauge of 4ft. 8½ins. Much later, the gauge of the stage coaches was 4ft. 8½ins. and, today, the gauge of our railways is the same. This does not prove anything except that the human animal is loth to change, unless he has to. Along them marched the Roman legions, the soldiers sometimes bringing from the Continent in their sandals the seeds of wild flowers and plants which took root in our soil.

The Romans went, the Dark Ages followed and then came in succession the various periods of our history, ranging from the Saxon to the Georgian—but England was never again to know good roads from the time of the going of the Romans down to the time of Blind Jack Metcalf of Knaresborough and the two Scotsmen, Telford and Macadam who, in the late years of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th, founded the scientific road-building with which we are familiar today—and their methods were based on those of the Romans!

Travel in the later Middle Ages was mostly on horseback—often a risky business, as footpads abounded. Vehicular traffic developed in Tudor times thanks chiefly to that ubiquitous traveller, Queen Elizabeth I. The first stage coach made its appearance in 1657 but the first springs—large steel ellipses—were not introduced until about 40 years later. The roads were appalling and those of Sussex were the worst of all. The movement of iron from the Sussex forges and trees for ship-building from the forests of the Weald were largely responsible for this, but it is also strongly suspected that the Sussex people took a secret delight in the badness of their roads because it helped the smugglers who had their own methods of crossing the county—the Hollow Ways. In 1690, for example, Lord Chancellor Cowper described Sussex ways as 'bad and ruinous beyond imagination'. Walpole said our roads were 'bad beyond all badness'; Dr. John Burton described Sussex as 'a land desolate and muddy'. From 1663 onwards, sundry Turnpike Acts endeavoured to bring about improvement in the country's roads but their operation was largely nullified by graft and jobbery.

The real change began in 1784 when, exasperated by the behaviour of the post proprietors towards carriers of the Mail, the Government instituted Mail Coaches. At once tremendous

competition grew between the Royal Mail and the stagecoach proprietors. Roads were improved out of all knowledge. In 1750 a coach took three days to accomplish the journey from London to Hastings; in 1794, the same journey was done in one day. Thus began the heyday of coaching, the halcyon period described by Dickens and pictured so alluringly on the old Christmas cards. The drivers of the coaches became the darlings of the aristocracy and the envy of lesser mortals—'mighty fine gentry' Borrow called them. Nobody bothered very much when Stephenson's Rocket locomotive made the journey from Stockton to Darlington, hauling a train, in 1825, but it was the beginning of the end for the magnificent coaching traffic. By 1850 those same 'mighty fine gentry' accounted themselves fortunate if they landed jobs driving buses. The era had ended and with the coach very nearly went the traditional English Inn—but the latter was saved by the development in the 'eighties of cycling and, in this century, by the growth of the motor car industry.

EARLY RAILWAY HISTORY IN KENT AND SUSSEX

The Railway Era came late to the South of England, mainly owing to the absence of heavy industries, and when railways were built they were primarily passenger-carrying lines—a distinction still maintained by the Southern Region of British Railways.

In the middle thirties, two short lines were authorised, from London to Greenwich and from London to Croydon, but the promoters had ulterior designs to use them as approach roads into London for trunk lines from the East and South.

The Greenwich Railway, 3¼ miles from a terminus at the South end of London Bridge, was built throughout its length on a brick viaduct by Lt.-Col. Landmann, a retired officer of the Royal Engineers. Opened in December, 1836, by the Lord Mayor of London, traffic proved disappointing after the novelty had worn off, and it was not until later railways paid toll for the use of its tracks that its income increased to any extent.

The Croydon Railway was completed in June, 1839; running North from West Croydon for 8¾ miles, thence over Greenwich metals to a separate but adjoining terminus at London Bridge. William Cubitt was the contractor; the Lord Mayor again officiated at the opening, and 150 guests were conveyed in two special trains.

Meanwhile, two trunk lines were authorised to Dover and to Brighton. Strangely enough, the traditional route to Dover by Watling Street was not followed, partly because of the difficult water obstacle at the mouth of the River Medway, but mainly because the Admiralty, for no obvious reason, refused to allow any extension beyond Greenwich. Furthermore, Parliament insisted that the existing entrance to London should be used, so the South Eastern Railway started at a junction at Earlswood Common (later Redhill), crossed the North Downs at Oxted and thence through the Vale of Kent, Tonbridge-Ashford-Folkestone, achieving a main line of nearly 30 miles, almost level and dead straight. From Folkestone, the engineering work was much heavier, entailing a lofty viaduct at Foord, the blowing up of Round Down Cliff with 18,500lbs. of gunpowder, and tunnels through Abbotscliff and Shakespeare's Cliff. William Cubitt was again the contractor and the cost was actually less than the estimate. Trains began to run to Dover in February, 1844, eight trains each way, but only three conveying 3rd class passengers. The average speed was only 29.6 m.p.h., but this was three times the speed of the mail coach and was moreover cheaper and more comfortable.

The London to Brighton Railway was incorporated in July, 1837, again starting from a junction with the Croydon Railway. There were thus four railways, all mutually antagonistic, using the same metals into London, which gave rise to much confusion, constant bickering and chronic bad time-keeping.

The Engineer of the Brighton line was John Urpeth Rastrick, who with the Architect David Mocatta constructed the Ouse Valley viaduct, Brighton Station and the later London Road viaduct in Brighton, which withstood a near miss from a German bomb just 100 years afterwards. On 21st September, 1841, the railway was ceremonially opened with bands and massed choirs. According to the *Brighton Herald,* ". . . the country poured forth its inhabitants ; Hurst and Ditchling sent out their populations in holiday array . . . and Patcham, Withdean and Preston all lent their quota . . ."

At first there were six trains a day each way, stopping at all stations and taking 2½ hours over the journey, but there was also one express, first class only, leaving Brighton 8.30 a.m. and reaching London Bridge at 10.15 a.m., an average of 35 m.p.h. Single fares were: first class 14/6d., second class 9/6d., comparing very favourably with the coach journey of 6 hours, 21/- inside and 12/- outside.

The first Excursion Train was run on Easter Monday, 1844. Leaving London Bridge at 9 a.m., the train of four engines and 45 carriages, was joined at New Cross by another engine and six more carriages, and finally at Croydon by a sixth engine and another six carriages. This unlikely cavalcade reached Brighton at 1.30 p.m., but there is no record of when the excursionists got home again.

In the same year, 1844, a new line from Brighton through Lewes to Hastings was authorised, with a possible extension to Ashford. This projected incursion into Kent brought an immediate reaction from the South Eastern and they promptly obtained powers to build a line from Ashford to Hastings via Appledore and across Romney Marsh. The two lines met at Bopeep Junction, at the West end of St. Leonards. On Friday, February 13th, 1851, a Brighton train, endeavouring to exercise its running powers over South Eastern metals, was held up at Bopeep for so long that it had to set back to its own station, called then 'Hastings and St. Leonards' but known later as 'St. Leonards Marina'. An immediate complaint was made to the S.E.R. Superintendent, a Mr. Finnegan, and eventually a few trains were allowed to work through to Hastings on the Saturday and Sunday, and two engines and 17 coaches were stabled in Hastings' yard in readiness for Monday. Early on the Monday morning, S.E. railwaymen removed the track at Bopeep and shunted a ballast train across the sidings in Hastings. Expostulations by the Brighton agent resulted in his being locked up in his office with the gas cut off, and when he managed to order an omnibus to take his passengers to St. Leonards, the station yard was barricaded so that the bus could not leave. Eventually matters were straightened out from headquarters at London Bridge, but for some years afterwards Brighton trains were not allowed to stop at St. Leonards (Warrior Square). This doubtful victory left the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (as it was now called) with a route to London via Lewes of 76½ miles, against the South Eastern's 94 miles through Ashford. The latter railway therefore decided to extend its existing branch from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells and to continue the line through Robertsbridge and Battle to join up at Bopeep Junction, thus reducing their London route to 73½ miles. The new line entailed much heavy engineering, including four tunnels, which owing to shortage of funds were built to a restricted loading gauge, which has affected ever since the type of rolling stock that can be used on this line. William Tress, an architect from Bermondsey, was commissioned to build the stations and his station at Battle is generally con-

sidered to be his masterpiece. Influenced, no doubt, by the proximity of Battle Abbey, his design in grey stone has a strong ecclesiastical flavour and even included a small belfry with a bell to warn travellers of approaching trains. The bell has long since disappeared, but the belfry remains. The line was completed by February, 1852, and the Chairman and Directors of the Company travelled on the first through train leaving London Bridge at 11.30 a.m. and arriving at Hastings at 2.15 p.m. The era of bands and triumphal arches was over, but the record speaks of the Directors and their friends partaking of 'an excellent dinner'. Incidentally, the Mayor of Hastings joined the party at Battle shortly before 2 o'clock.

Under the influence of the railway, the small village of Bexhill, which clustered round the Church on top of the hill a mile or more from the sea, started to develop into a seaside resort and by the end of the 19th century plans were already on foot for extension westwards towards Cooden. Unwilling to leave this prize in the hands of their competitors, the S.E. Railway obtained authority in 1897 to build a branch from Crowhurst on their existing line to Hastings, via Sidley, to a new terminus at what was then the western outskirts of Bexhill. The new line was opened in June, 1902, giving the South Eastern a route to London of 62 miles, against 71 miles by the L.B. and S.C. Railway. Although through carriages were provided, traffic did not develop as expected, possibly because the station was not central enough. In 1917, the line was closed as a wartime economy measure and reopened in 1919. In 1923, after the 'Grouping', the Southern Railway used the line for its principal services to London, pending the electrification of the old L.B. and S.C. main line. Diesel electric trains were introduced in 1957 but no through coaches were provided, and a change at Crowhurst was always necessary. Eventually, in 1964, the line was closed by British Railways, the track was lifted and the ballast sold for road metalling. Of this once promising branch line, little now remains except a derelict viaduct of 17 brick arches across Crowhurst Marsh.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S 'RIGHT' TO THE ENGLISH THRONE

William of Malmesbury, writing about 1125, with access to most of the early sources which have survived, and in a position to consult old men who had lived through 1066, admits that he cannot precisely find out the truth. The position remains the same today. The difficulty is to assess the value of conflicting

early accounts, to judge the degree of information, the bias, the veracity of each author; to decide how far authorities which tell the same tale are independent of one another, and how far those who tell a different story are deliberately ignoring or altering another version. On many matters, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is silent; the three early versions of the Norman tale, William of Jumièges, William of Poitiers and the Bayeux Tapestry may be versions of a Norman propaganda story; later writers in England knew this story, but did not accept it. Florence of Worcester ignored it, the author of the *Life of King Edward* confines himself to some quiet asides directed against it, Eadmer tells a similar story but with changes which rob it of weight in proving the Norman case.

One thing that is certain is the truth of the Norman claim to have papal approval. A letter of Hildebrand in 1080, after he had become Pope Gregory VII, to King William, reminds the king of his services to advance him to the throne, before he became Pope, and refers to criticism he has undergone for causing so great loss of life. He justifies his actions by his belief that William as king would be more useful to Holy Church, by which he means would press the Hildebrandine scheme of reform. The Norman claim that Pope Alexander II sent a consecrated banner to William is supported by his doing exactly this in 1063 to the Norman, Robert Guiscard of Sicily. Gregory VII's letter states the motive for the papal action, but not what pretext was given in 1066 for a favourable judgment of William's case, and there is no doubt that the judgment was given without hearing the other side. It was not justice, but expediency, that prevailed. We have no official statement of what William's case really was, but the various chroniclers assume that it had three heads: William's kinship with Edward; an alleged promise to him of the succession by Edward; Harold's perjury.

William was related to Edward only through his great-aunt, Emma, who married King Ethelred and became Edward's mother. He had no drop of English royal blood, and in 1066 an heir in the direct male line, Eadgar Atheling, was alive; even if he were too young, there was also Gospatric, whose maternal grandmother was a daughter of Ethelred. A throne does not descend to a great-nephew of a foreign queen.

No English writer admits that Edward promised the throne to William, though they may mention it as a claim made by William. The simple claim of William of Jumièges that a promise was sent by Archbishop Robert, taken together with

that William visited Edward after Godwine's disgrace in 1051, may be true, but the additional information in Poitiers that the promise was made with the consent of Archbishop Stigand and the earls Godwine, Leofric and Siward, and that Godwine's son and grandson were given as hostages to William, runs contrary to the contemporary accounts of 1052, and should be regarded as an attempt to include the English magnates, since Poitiers would realise that Edward alone could not bequeath his throne. Eadmer accepts the sending of hostages, but tells an equally incredible tale that they were to ensure Godwine's loyalty. Godwine, at the height of his power, would never have consented, but Eadmer thus robs the hostage story of any connexion with a promise of the throne. What is certainly true, is that the invitation to Edward Atheling, son of King Edmund, to return to England proves that the English were not at that time thinking of William; but he died in 1057. Most historians agree that Edward promised the throne to Harold on his death-bed, a fact stated by English authorities and known to Norman writers.

There can be no doubt that Harold visited William and took part in his campaigns against the Bretons in 1064; that he took an oath on that occasion is probably true, for it was widely believed, and even propaganda needs some basis in fact, and the curia at Rome must have had some pretext for their decision. The early authorities differ on why Harold came and on what he swore. The Norman version makes him an ambassador, to renew Edward's promise; Eadmer makes him come to fetch back the hostages; William of Malmesbury prefers the current tale that he was driven out of his course on a fishing expedition, probably because he realised that if Harold was an ambassador or a willing guest, William's behaviour must be viewed in a bad light. Poitiers makes Harold swear to take actions which would have caused an instant revolt in England; Eadmer asks us to believe that William would not have attacked England if Harold had kept a promise of marrying his daughter; Malmesbury makes Harold promise the succession to William *of his own accord,* to ingratiate himself when in a difficult position. Malmesbury saw that, otherwise, Harold could claim that an oath taken under compulsion had no validity. If, as seems probable, Harold did claim this, it would have had to be taken seriously at Rome—if the case had not been judged without his being given a chance to defend himself. It is stated as an axiom by Hildebrand that no one can be held to an oath taken under duress.

William's victory was regarded by the Normans as proof that his cause was just; by the English, as a punishment by a God 'who chastiseth those he loveth'. William, when king, uses words that imply that he was Edward's legitimate successor, but the name by which future generations know him is 'William *the Conqueror*'.

HOW WAS HAROLD TOLD THAT THE NORMAN ARMY HAD LANDED?

Among the flood of literature produced during 1966 about the Norman Conquest, no writer has examined in detail this small but very important link in the story.

"A Thegn of the country heard the cries of grief and dismay with which the South-Saxon churls heheld the approach of the Norman fleet. He went forth and hid himself in a convenient lurking place . . . The sight was enough . . . he took his weapons . . . he mounted his horse, and rode straight to bear the news to his Lord King Harold. He hastened on with all speed night and day. He rested late and rose early, till he found the victor of Stamfordbridge in the banqueting-hall of York." So wrote Freeman, translating from Wace. A few writers have followed Freeman: thus Dennis Butler sees a rider, weary and travel-stained, spurring his flagging horse to the gates of York in the early evening of Sunday the first of October; but most have passed over the incident in silence.

It has remained for Sten Körner, a Swedish historian, to put his foot down firmly on Wace's story.[1] "It is simply impossible for a messenger to have left Hastings on September 28-29th and cover 250 miles in three or four days, reaching York on October 1st." We can heartily agree with him, and even suspect that he may be a horseman; which Freeman certainly could not have been, or he would have realized that he was translating nonsense.

Unfortunately, Körner, having delivered his dictum, does not follow it up and explain how Harold received the message, but attempts to upset Freeman's generally accepted chronology. Freeman's timetable[2] is well founded, and no adjustment of it helps the question of how the message was conveyed. The message had to be conveyed 256 miles in about three and a half days, a distance of 73 miles per diem. One is forced to the conclusion that it was carried by an organized post service.

In the days of horse-drawn Field Artillery, alternate periods of slow jog-trotting and walking resulted in a speed of six miles

an hour. At that speed 43 hours actual transit time would be required to carry a dispatch from Pevensey to York. At the end of September, day breaks at about 5.30 a.m. and night falls at about 6 p.m., giving 12½ hours of daylight each day, or 46½ hours from 9 a.m. on September 28th, when the Normans landed, till nightfall at York on October 1st. It was therefore possible for a message to be carried from Pevensey to York, at a speed which would exhaust neither horses nor riders, without any hazardous nightriding, and with 3½ hours to spare.

It is true that more than 3½ hours in all would be required for handing over the dispatch at each stage and saddling the fresh post-horses; but the calculation has been made for draught horses, and light riding horses could easily gain extra time by trotting out.

In Britain, as in other parts of the Roman Empire, the Imperial Post was a notable feature. Every 12 miles along the principal roads was a *Mutatio,* a posting station where horses could be changed. It cannot be said whether there was any post system in Saxon times, as there seems to be none on record; but it would, in any case, have been easy to re-establish one quickly if required, as the Roman roads still formed the long-distance communications, and had been given Saxon names. Ruins of many minor Roman buildings remained in the English countryside as late as the 17th century; and, though it is not suggested that the *Mutationes* along the important London-York road were still habitable; yet they would have been sited where there was easy access to water and firewood, and may possibly have afforded some sort of shelter in 1066, as well as marking the stages. If Harold had not already established posting stations between the South Coast and York during the precautionary period, it would have been an easy matter to drop two or three Housecarls with their horses every 12 miles on the march north. Such would have been a wise military precaution against surprise, and taken only 50 or 60 men from the fighting line.

Matters of this kind hardly ever appear in medieval chronicles: only occasionally can we piece together what went on behind the scenes, and are able to appreciate, for example, such things as the brilliant work performed by the Yorkist 'faithfull espials' in their collection of information before the Battle of Tewkesbury. Medieval military operations were not all conducted in the haphazard manner which many historians would have us believe.

In the Roman Itinerary given by Richard of Cirencester, *Iter XVII* is, curiously enough, a route from Anderida (Pevensey) to Eboracum (York).[3] If we ignore some mistaken amendments inserted in 1848, the distance, 276 Roman miles, checks with the measurement along the newly-discovered Lewes Way to London, and thence, as the Itinerary states, via Lincoln and Brough, along roads which appear on the latest issue of the Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain. This would necessitate 23 stages and 22 *Mutationes* in all. The journey of the dispatch from Harold's Thegn at Pevensey to his lord at York divides itself into five stages on the first day, and six on each of the succeeding three days. Time would press on the first day if the fifth *Mutatio* had to be reached before nightfall; but on the York road, if each stage of 12 Roman miles were covered in $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours, as it could well be, there would be nearly 25 minutes available at each posting station to saddle up and take over the vitally important message, which thus, without any night riding, could have been in King Harold's hands at 6 p.m. on October 1st.

The Roman Imperial Post seems to fit Freeman's timetable like a glove.

[1] Sten Körner, *The Battle of Hastings, England and Europe.* Lund, 1964, p. 258.

[2] Freeman, *The Norman Conquest,* Vol. III. Appendix Note FF.

[3] Giles, *Six Old English Chronicles,* 1848, p. 499.

GLYNDE PLACE AND ALCISTON

The meeting was attended by 29 members and the day was fine.

Glynde Place. This house was previously visited by the Society on May 14th 1958; and a full account appeared in No. 7 of *Transactions.*

Alciston. The name of this village means *Aelfsige's Farm*; it appears as *Alsitone* in Domesday; and its traditional local pronunciation is *Ahson.*

The manor was given by the Conqueror to Battle Abbey; and on the surrender of the latter in 1539 was given by the king to Sir John Gage. It has been in the Gage family ever since.

The church, built of flint, consists of a nave and chancel with a dovecote at the end of the roof. It is assigned to the

13th century; though Horsfield hints that it may be older. The old roof beams are still in their places; and two fine old trunks hold up the belfry tower. There is a small Norman window in the chancel. The font is dated 1563. In the days when incumbents had to provide and store arms in their churches, Alciston's quota in 1612 was 'A musquet furnished'.

Alongside the church and overlooked by it is Court House Farm, among the buildings of which are the remains of a 14th century monastery which include a wall and a dovecot. The barn of the farm is an immense L-shaped building, a former tithe barn, which must be one of the largest in the country. The interior is most striking with its forest of roof timbers which support a roof said to be composed of over fifty thousand tiles.

ALLINGTON AND LINTON

The number of members who took part in this meeting was 31; visits were made to:

Allington Castle. Previously visited by the Society in August 1956. The Castle and its history are fully described in *Transactions* for 1955-56; and it now suffices to say that since its acquisition by the Carmelite Order in 1951, it has been preserved as a centre of religious revival. The great barn is being converted into a chapel, and it is proposed to build a hostel with single rooms for 20 persons, in keeping with the barn and the surroundings of the castle.

The Church of St. Nicholas, Linton. In the absence of the Vicar, the party was received by a parishioner, Mr. Seamark. The church was originally built in the 13th century; but has been much rebuilt since. The feature of the church is the Cornwallis Chapel, as the church lies on the edge of Linton Park, seat of the Mann family. In it lie the 5th Earl of Cornwallis, his two wives, two daughters, and only son; all of whom predeceased him before he inherited the earldom.

EASEBOURNE AND PETWORTH

This was an all-day outing, which was attended by 32 members.

Easebourne Priory. Members were welcomed by the Rev. B. R. Beasley, a recently retired Royal Navy chaplain, who is the present incumbent. He invited members to eat their picnic lunches in the delightful Priory gardens, where tables and chairs had been set out in readiness.

The Priory was founded about 1248 by Sir Frank de Bohun for 10 Augustinian nuns and their Prioress—'The White Ladies' —and was endowed with the parish church of Easebourne and its chapel-of-ease at Midhurst, now Midhurst parish church. Provision had to be made for the private worship of the nuns; and this was done by rebuilding the chancel as a square-headed Presbytery and walling off part of the nave. The narrow north aisle was widened to what is now the present nave of the church; leaving the parishioners with an L-shaped building which included the tower and the western part of the south aisle. There were thus two churches side by side under one roof.

Of the Ladies who lived at the Priory little is known; but from the record of the Lord Bishop's visitation of 1441 it is learnt that Elizabeth, the Prioress, was sternly ordered to reduce her trimmings of fur and other adornments, and exception was taken to the lapdogs and pet monkeys with which the ladies beguiled their leisure hours. The Priory was dissolved in 1536; when the nuns, headed by the Sub-prioress, Dame Alicia Hill, were ruthlessly expelled.

Of particular interest to visitors from Battle was the tomb of Anthony, first Viscount Montague, son of that Sir Anthony Brown who lies in Battle parish church. Originally in Midhurst church, the tomb was removed to Easebourne in 1851; but was left lying in a builder's yard for six months, whence it emerged much damaged by the weather and pilfering. The tomb, of marble and alabaster, shows Viscount Montague kneeling between his two wives, Lady Jane Radcliffe, who died in childbirth aged only 20, and Lady Magdalen Dacre, a handsome and high-spirited lady over six feet high. Of Anthony, Viscount Montague, it is recorded that he rode at the head of 200 men to join the army of Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury; and later entertained Her Majesty to such an extent that she 'was marvellously, yea, rather excessively banketted'. Cowdray, originally La Coudraye, was at that time at the height of its glory and Lord Montague's funeral procession from West Horsley, where he died, was conducted with great and stately magnificence.

Petworth House. Very little remains of the original manor house of the Percys except the 13th century chapel. The house was almost wholly rebuilt between 1688 and 1696 by the sixth Duke of Somerset, the 'Proud Duke', who gave it the present magnificent west front, 320 feet long, of local stone, with Portland for the ornamental features. The exterior shows

marked French characteristics; but recent research indicates that the house was probably built by an English architect, who interpreted a French design in his own unorthodox fashion. The Petworth archives show a payment in 1680 of £10-15-0 to a 'Mr. Scarbrow, a surveyor, for 8 days measuring'. It is probably, therefore, that John Scarborough, who was frequently employed by Wren and became Clerk of the Works at Greenwich, was concerned in the building of the house.

One of the state rooms was decorated by Grinling Gibbons. There is a magnificent collection of pictures, including a number of Van Dycks and Turners, and there is also a collection of iron firebacks. The latter are on loan from Mr. W. Slade Mitford of Pitshill, and comprise specimens from France, Germany, and the Low Countries, as well as some of the best examples of Sussex ironwork from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

ETCHINGHAM

Haremere Hall. This 17th century manor house, the home of Lady Killearn, in which there is a date stone 1682, was visited by thirty-four members. It was at one time the only large house in the parish. It has a Jacobean stone facade with two projecting bays. The interesting interior has several imported Jacobean overmantles. The very handsome staircase has been moved to its present position from an older part of the house. There are the remains of a minstrels' gallery. An interesting collection of Eastern treasures was on view, together with personal momentos of the owner and of her late husband Lord Killearn.

The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and St. Nicholas. This was the third visit of the Society to a church which has been described as the finest building in the Decorated Style in Sussex. It has been fully described in No. 1 (1950-51) and No. 6 of *Transactions,* and the Anglo-Norman inscription on the brass of Sir William de Echyngham is dealt with in a lecture in the latter number.

FINDS AND FIELDWORK

Bodiam

Accounts of the excavations at the Romano-British site in 1959 and 1960 appeared in Nos. 8 and 9 of *Transactions,* and a more detailed article has now appeared in Vol. 104 of *Sussex Archaeological Collections.*

Between April 30th and October 29th, 1966 our member Mr. H. Wadsworth, assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Puckle and Mr. Rex Morfey of Bodiam, who took part in the 1959-60 dig, Miss Mendenhall, Mr. G. Brodribb and boys of Hydneye School, Mr. Wilson and the boys of Hurst Court School, and several other members who assisted from time to time, made a further examination of the site. Mr. H. R. Roberts, Managing Director of Guiness Hop Farms Ltd., kindly fenced off a small corner of the Limen hopfield for the purpose. It was about 16 yards north of the east end of the disused railway station, and a few feet only from the main road. The National Grid Reference is TQ 783250.

Four three-foot trenches and one cross trench were dug to a depth of six feet. In the trench nearest to the Roman road at a depth of 5ft. 6in. the footings of a curved fireplace, together with the remains of charred wood, were found. Mr. Manwaring Baines, F.S.A., who visited the site, considered that it might be part of a hearth of a building in the vicinity.

In the course of the excavation many hundreds of small fragments of *Tegulæ* (red roofing tiles) were unearthed, as well as pottery sherds and iron cinders; the latter, presumably, being a 'scatter' from the Roman road 20 yards to the eastward. The tile and pottery fragments were widely distributed at all levels, and had been acted on by water.

Three of the brick or tile fragments bore the imprint CL BR, the mark of the Classis Britannica or (Roman) British fleet. Two imprints were of a type not found in 1959-60, in that the usually horizontal stroke of the L sloped downwards, and there was no 'stop' between CL and BR. They were submitted to Mr. R. P. Wright, F.S.A., editor of *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain,* who reported that they matched a complete example in the British Museum which had been found at Lympne; and also one which had been found on the site of the Westminster Bank, Dover, and which was in the Dover Museum. The third fragment bore an imprint of the Pevensey type; which matched exactly, even to a slight imperfection, that found on a tile picked up about 60 yards away in 1959, so as to suggest that both were impressed with the same stamp.

Eleven pottery sherds were submitted to Mr. N. E. S. Norris, F.S.A., Curator of Barbican House Museum, Lewes, who reported as follows:

No. 62 Part neck of Castor Ware beaker, with roulette decoration. Manufacture of this ware commenced in late 2nd century and went on until end of Roman occupation.

30 Rim of coarse ware jar, blunt everted rim, probably 2nd - 3rd century.

35 Rim of carinated flat-rimmed bowl. This type passes through a series of changes from Claudius [A.D. 41 - 54] to Hadrian [A.D. 121 - 138]. This is a late phase and therefore probably circa A.D. 150.

65 A development of the carinated bowl which lasted until the end of the 2nd century.

68 Coarse ware pie-dish, part of rim, straight side and bead rim usually found after end of 2nd century. Common at Poltross Burn in 4th century.

73 & 103 Samian ware Form 31. Begins with Hadrian and exceedingly common through rest of 2nd century Glaze suggests Lezoux ware.

131 New Forest ware. Late 3rd or 4th century.

114 & 115 Two fragments of imitation Samian ware. Late Romano-British.

59 Pie-dish with flared rim. Carination softened into a curve, and therefore probably Antonine [A.D. 138-161] to well into 3rd century.

Mr. Norris remarked "It seems as though this occupation commenced about mid-2nd century and went on to the 3rd or 4th at least. I can see no evidence of the 1st century here".

This second excavation confirmed the long occupation of the site; but, taken together, the result of both excavations points to the early 2nd century as being the most important period of the settlement. This was the time of occupation of Level 4, on which the remains of a building were found in 1960.

The Society is grateful to all those who helped with the excavation or identified the finds.

Medieval Axehead

In the summer of 1966 Mr. P. Walker, fishing at Darwell reservoir, picked up an antique axehead and handed it to Mr. Holden of the Sussex Archaeological Society, who submitted it to Mr. Ralph Mirrifield of Guildhall Museum, who reported:

"It is a derivation of the 'bearded' Viking type. This form had a long life here throughout the Middle Ages at least. I suspect yours is medieval; though I can't find a close medieval parallel for the socket. The trouble with axes is that there are so many local variants, and forms tend to survive so long that typology doesn't help much with dating".

A similar axehead, which was found in the moat at Bodiam Castle (built 1386) is in the museum there. The finder of the Darwell axehead agreed that it should go to our museum; where it is now on display in the Sussex Iron case.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 900th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

Delivered by Professor David C. Douglas, Emeritus Professor of History at Bristol University

WILLIAM AND THE NORMAN INFLUENCE

The annual commemorative lecture is always, as the Chairman remarked in his introduction, something of an event for the Society; but that for 1966 surpassed all previous standards of achievement.

The lecturer, a prolific writer of history, one of whose most recent works is a biography of William the Conqueror, is a Fellow of the British Academy, and a trustee of the London Museum; and has moreover held appointments in the universities of Glasgow, Leeds and the South-West. The theatre at Langton House, where the lecture was held, was crowded; for, in addition to a large muster of Society members, there attended also a visiting party of the Royal Overseas League, which had toured the battlefield during the afternoon under the guidance of members of the Battle and District Historical Society, and also some parties from schools.

The lecturer showed most convincingly the part William played in the Conquest and how the Conqueror was the cohesive force of Normandy, capable of persuading his barons to risk everything in attempting the Conquest. Explaining how England benefited from the cultural viewpoint of the Conquest, he said that the vivid movements which were to lead to the Renaissance of the 12th century, already evident in Central Europe, were brought closer to England by the Norman Conquest.

He told of the effect of the Conquest on the English themselves, and said that the English identity was not lost, but revived and stimulated. Although William himself had a disagreeable nature and character, he suggested that as a politician he was most capable, with an undoubted mastery of the problems of the secular world. It was a fallacy to regard

the Norman occupation of England as a continual conflict between insubordinate barons and the King. It was the case of a competent and great leader at the head of a capable group of men.

In conclusion he said that the Norman Conquest would have been impossible without William; and, as a result, life in England would have been very different.

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

The commemoration service of the Society on Sunday, October 16th, 1966, became a historical occasion by reason of the presence of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Michael Ramsey), and the Lord Bishop of Chichester. The Very Rev. F. H. Outram, Dean of Battle, with the choir and church officers, welcomed the Archbishop at the church door, and conducted the service. The lessons were read by Mr. B. E. Beechey, Chairman, and Mrs. E. Harbord, a Vice-President of the Society. A feature of the service was the Te Deum, by Vaughan Williams, sung by the massed choirs, conducted by Mr. Ross Anderson, of Hastings Philharmonic Choir, which had taken part in the 'Hastings Remembers' Festival. The prayers after the third Collect were offered by the Bishop of Chichester. The Archbishop then preached a notable sermon, which is here given in full.

HISTORY AND THE HAND OF GOD

"To whom much is given, from him shall much be required".

There are not many dates which recall a picture to almost everyone. But what a picture October 14, 1066 brings to the eye. Duke William has landed at Pevensey. King Harold and his house-carls hurry down from York to London, and from London south towards the coast. They form a shield-wall on the hill, and through the day charge after charge of the Norman cavalry beats in vain upon this solid wall of foot soldiers. But first a sham retreat by the Normans draws some of Harold's men into a rash pursuit. And finally the Normans' other weapon, archery—archery beyond any seen in England before—overwhelms the defenders. The line breaks. King Harold is killed. He falls at the foot of the royal standard. All is over. The Normans have won. The Norman conquest is all but accomplished. The dead king's naked body, wrapped in a robe of purple, is buried amongst the rocks

of the shore he had died in vain to defend, later to be borne to rest in Waltham Abbey.

Now why did not the whole English people rally to go on resisting a foreign invader? Or to put it differently, was this event a disastrous foreign victory and an end to liberty? No, the story is not nearly so simple as that.

For one thing England, whose Anglo-Saxon peoples had themselves come from across the sea, was at the time greatly mixed up with peoples across the seas. There had been four Danish kings, including the great King Canute. There had been many Normans already in posts of influence in Church and State, whom Edward the Confessor had drawn to Westminster. There had been a good deal of mixing up in marriages, and Dane and Saxon and Norman are all seen in a family tree of these royal families. More still, Duke William could make *some* claim to our throne, and he could say that once upon a time Harold had sworn allegiance to him. So it was that, despite resistance here and there, there was no solid core of English unity to resist the Normans. It was not so long before Normans were building their cathedrals as far North as Durham, 'half house of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot'.

Now this history is not just an old, irrelevant story. It tells us much about ourselves. It tells us that we today as a people are Saxon and Dane and Norman, yes, with a dash of Celtic and a dash of Roman too. At first there was the bitter division between Norman overlords and the oppressed English, as there was much ruthlessness and cruelty. But Henry the First was to marry a Saxon lady, and that was a sign of things to come. Next, this history tells us how much we belong to Europe and Europe to us. Go to the Houses of Parliament now on the day when the Royal Assent is given to Acts passed by Parliament and you hear the words after each Act, "La Reine le veult". There were many bonds with Europe. Two great Archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, came from the Abbey of Bec. Our English Church owes much indeed to the North and to the Celts, to Aidan and Cuthbert. How much too it owes to the monks, scholars, rulers, builders, craftsmen who came across the Channel. We must not forget how much we are bound up in a bundle with one another.

Alas, any child knows his 1066. But how few of us, children or grown up, know our 597. And it is *there* that we find the

clue. In 597 St. Augustine and his monks landed in Thanet and walked to Canterbury with the Cross held high in their hands, the Gospel of Christ on their lips and the love of God in their hearts.

It is in the light of this divine Gospel that we understand ourselves and our history. In the long run these great happenings are not accidents. The providential hand of God is at work in them, the hand of a good Creator. Yes, Roman, Celt, Saxon, Dane, Norman are all of God's making, with their character and their gifts. The dignity of the Roman, the otherworldly devotion of the Celt, the home and family life of the Saxon, the adventurous chivalry of the Dane, the practical leadership and statecraft of the Norman—all are of God, God the good Creator, though all could be marred by our human sin and folly. So too all the noble lives of men and women whom we remember in our history are God's gift, and all the great monuments of art and architecture, painting and sculpture and writing. So too is it by God's goodness that there happened the great deliverances of our history, the freedom we enjoy and take so often for granted. So too, coming nearer home, is it of God that we have the joys of our own homes and families and those who love us and whom we love.

"To whom much is given, from him shall much be required." To recall the story of the past is to hear those divine words speaking to our consciences in the present. What does God require of us as a Nation? What does God require of each of us who recall today nine centuries of good things we do not ourselves deserve? Those are the questions which Christ our Lord is putting to us today.

As a nation God requires of us that we should put aside the spirit of getting, getting more money for ourselves, getting more pleasure, getting more comfort, getting more of our own selfish fancies. God requires of us to learn from Christ to forget ourselves in looking to the good of one another within our nation, and as a nation looking to the good of nations where there is great poverty and hunger. And God who has so mixed us up with nations and races in our own history requires us to see to our right relation with people of other races and other colour than our own. God who made Saxon and Norman and Dane made them in His own image, and He made in His own image also every race and every colour; for us to respect and reverence. In all these ways God says to

us as a nation: "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required".

So too the question comes to every one of our consciences. What is it that God requires of *me*? To thank Him with all my heart, to be truly grateful to Him, to be humble before Him, to put Him first, to serve the fellowship of His Church with love and loyalty, to forget myself as I care about God and care about my fellows.

Duke William before the battle made a vow, and he kept it. And on the hill where Harold fell there was built the Abbey of Battle, and its high altar stood on the brow of the Hill. HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTUS EST, says the Bayeux Tapestry, 'here Harold the king was slain'. Where there was death they built the house of God. Where there is strife in our world today may God give reconciliation, justice and peace. May He shew every nation how much He has given, and how much He requires.

The congregation numbered 800, blocks of seats being reserved for our Society, and also for the Souvenir Normand, both British and French sections, which attended with their Presidents, Mr. Roger Frewen and the Marquis de Verdun. Also present was the abbé of St. Valery-sur-Somme, Battle's twin town, and the port from which the Norman fleet sailed.

After the service the clergy, choir and members of the congregation formed a procession which entered the Abbey grounds by the main gateway and proceeded to the Norman Stone; where, after a fanfare of trumpets, prayers for the peace of the world were led by the Bishop of Chichester. Wreaths were laid by the Souvenir Normand. The Archbishop of Canterbury then re-dedicated the stone. Trumpeters sounded Last Post and Reveillé, the Archbishop gave the Benediction, and the ceremony concluded with the singing of the British and French national anthems.

At the Deanery after the ceremony the President and the Chairman of the Society presented a copy of *The Norman Conquest, its Setting and Impact,* suitably inscribed, to His Grace as a momento of his visit.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on November 11th 1966

The Chairman's report, previously circulated, was approved. Paid-up membership at the close of the year numbered 298, of which 27 were junior members, a gratifying increase of 52 over last year.

The balance of the general account was £35 15s. 6d., an increase of £9 19s. 8d.; which was achieved by greater support to the summer outings. The Museum Deposit Account showed a balance of £32 8s. 8d., after paying £400 for the Diorama, and transferring £153 0s. 3d. to the Current Account. Donations to the Museum and Diorama totalled £396 16s. 3d. The Museum Running Account showed a balance of £224 11s. 0d. The fund for financing excavation had £28 1s. 5d. in hand. The Luncheon Account would show a small credit balance on winding up. The Guide Publication Account showed a balance of £172 12s. 0d., after repaying £60 to the guarantors of the publication expenses.

The Chairman in his report dealt, in addition to other matters which are recorded elsewhere in this number, with the publications of the Society and the Museum. The late Mr. Pyke's *Short Guide to Battle* had proved very popular, with financial results as stated. The Commemoration volume *The Norman Conquest: its Setting and Impact,* published early in 1966 had received wide approbation in the national press, and the initial issue of 6,000 was soon followed by a reprint of 6,000. Messrs. Scribners of New York had also published an edition in the U.S.A. In a year when so many books had been published about the Conquest, the Society might feel justifiably proud of this acvhievement; as also that copies, suitably inscribed, had been accepted by Her Majesty the Queen and His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Chairman expressed the congratulations and thanks of the Society to the members who had edited and arranged the distribution of these publications.

Turning to the Museum, a notable addition had been the Diorama of the Battle at its critical stage, which had received much favourable comment; and the member who executed the very fine explanatory fascia board received the Society's thanks. Two valuable objects were kindly lent for display during the season by Mr. J. E. Pocock, F.V.I.—the 'Salt' of Battle Abbey, and a Norman sword of the 11th century. The Chairman referred to the substantial sum (£81 19s. 3d.) which

had been obtained by opening the Museum on Sundays and for periods on weekdays when it was normally closed. On behalf of the Society he thanked individually those members who had voluntarily performed the very valuable service of staffing the Museum during these periods; a service which had resulted in the Museum Account showing a profit on the year.

At the elections which followed, Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Lemmon was re-elected President, and Mr. C. T. Chevallier a Vice-President, each for a further three years. Professor Dorothy Whitelock, C.B.E., D.Litt., F.S.A., and The Very Reverend F. H. Outram, M.A., Dean of Battle were elected Vice-Presidents for three years. The following officers were elected for one year: Chairman, Major L. C. Gates; Vice-Chairman, Brigadier D. A. Learmont; Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Orger; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. R. W. Bishop. Miss J. E. S. Robertson, Mr. H. Wadsworth, and Capt. J. Vickers were re-elected to the Committee for a further three years, i.e. until 1969. Mr. K. Clarke was elected to the Committee until 1967 vice Brigadier Learmont. Mr. B. E. Beechey, the retiring Chairman, was elected an Honorary Member *Honoris Causa*.

Olivers Printing Works (Battle) Ltd