No. 22

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Transactions
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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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Full notes or scripts of the above lectures are available in the Society's library for the reference of Members.

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

Regretfully the publication of this edition (No. 22) of the *Transactions* is very late because of many unfortunate circumstances. I anxiously look forward to a member coming forward who will undertake the Editorship of the *Transactions.* The Society would be greatly indebted to such a member.

It has been impossible to include all the lectures and we regret the omission of the following:— (a) "Little Park Farm —Past and Present", by Mr. L. Woodhams, 24/11/72; (b) "The History of the Book of Common Prayer", by Mrs. D. Porter, 26/1/73; (c) "The History of Local Government in Battle", by Mrs. H. J. Wilson, 9/3/73; (d) "Romney Marsh", by Mr. Walter J. Murray, 23/3/73. We are grateful to these authors.

We wish to apologise to other authors for the brevity of the reviews, caused by the limited resources available and the escalating costs of printing, etc. Members are referred to the full texts or notes, of the six reviews, which are available in the library.

Notes of Professor Searle's Commemoration Lecture, 16th October, 1971, were not received in time for earlier publication but it is thought worthwhile to include a review in this edition.

A list of Members, now numbering more than 350, is included as we think that it will be of interest.

I wish to thank Mrs. Kempton and her sub-committee for the work they did in the preparation of this edition and am only too sorry that Mrs. Kempton found it impossible to complete, because of the intricate work involved. I also wish to thank Mr. Creek and Mr. Sanders who have assisted me greatly to complete the task. I ask members' indulgence for any shortcomings in the finished *Transactions.*

ALFRED B. HUNTLEY,
Chairman.

Dec. 1974

OBITUARY

Professor A. E. Bate, M.Sc., Ph.D., F.Inst.P.

It is with deep sorrow that we record the death of Professor A. E. Bate on 22nd July, 1973. From 1967 until his death he played a prominent part in the affairs of the Society, as a Committee Member, and gave unstintingly of his time and expertise. He took an active part as a member of the Museum Committee and accomplished a great deal of work as Curator of the Museum. His passing was a sad loss to the Society.

Lieut.-Col. J. Darrell Hill

We record with regret the death of Lt.-Col. J. Darrell Hill, M.C. on 16th June, 1973. He undertook excavations with other members of the Society and local residents of Romano-British and Mediaeval sites at Bodiam, 1959–62, and placed many of the finds in the Museum. See B. & D.H.S. *Transactions* numbers 8, 9 and 10. With Lt.-Col. Lemmon as co-author an article on the Romano-British finds was published in Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. 104, 1966. He was elected an Honorary Life Member Honoris Causa in 1963, when he left to live abroad.

COMMEMORATION LECTURE, 15th OCT., 1971
LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR'S ABBEY AT BATTLE

Prof. Eleanor Searle, Ph.D., Vice-President

[Unfortunately there are no notes available of Dr. Searle's commemoration lecture on this subject, but Dr. Searle has kindly permitted the Society to use and adapt the Epilogue to her book, "Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu, 1066–1538". The book was published in 1974 by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Press. The Epilogue was written after the Commemoration Lecture was delivered and covers the same period in the history of the Abbey.]

In the late summer of 1535 Dr. Richard Layton rode through Sussex, visiting monasteries with the authority of the King's Vicar-General, Thomas Cromwell. His interrogations of the priors and abbots were directed towards acquiring a statement of the financial and economic position of the houses and eliciting statistics of sexual immorality and "superstitious" practices in vogue in the houses.

Power was given to the interrogations by the threat of an accusation of treason. The terror inspired in the prior of Lewes is related in a letter that is famous. The same letter reports that the abbot of Battle and his convent were found guilty of unnatural crimes and traitors. The abbot was described as a low clod and a stupid numbskull. The abbot was John Hamond, elected in 1529, a member of a family prominent in the locality, although rather a country family than of the town of Battle. The stupidity was probably a mask adopted by Abbot John Hamond on hearing of the fate of the Prior of Lewes. The financial statement that John Hamond prepared was businesslike and detailed. It showed that the Abbey's income was substantial. He appeared at Court as ordered but returned without having been formally accused of treason.

By the spring of 1538 only Battle and Robertsbridge Abbeys remained in Sussex. In May of that year Richard Layton was again in Battle, accompanied this time by Sir John Gage, an influential Sussex knight. On 27th May they had completed their inventory of the Abbey's moveables and their audit of the accounts. On that day they received the charter of voluntary dissolution of the Abbey signed by the Abbot and 18 monks.

However, little profit was to be made from the sale of the Abbey's furnishing. The Commissioners described the implements as the worst they had ever seen in abbey or priory and the vestments as old, ragged and torn. Undoubtedly the abbey had been allowed to run down from 1535.

By July the monks' pensions were granted and it was all over. In early August the site, buildings and some abbey lands were granted to the King's great friend, Sir Anthony Browne, son-in-law of Sir John Gage. He used the abbot's

house as one country seat, but evidently preferred Cowdray. He razed the church, cloisters and chapter house, helping by their sale to finance the new houses he was building at Cowdray and Southwark.

Abbot Hamond, pensioned with the considerable yearly sum of £100, left the Abbey in the summer to live just across the street from its walls. He died in Battle in 1546 and left the last of his abbey's possessions to the parish church in his will which is quoted at length in the Epilogue.

THE WORLD'S GREAT MORAL RELIGIONS

The Rev. Francis Coveney, Th.L., 8th Dec., 1972

The lecturer's thesis was that in Britain's multi-racial society we should strive to understand the religious hopes and fears of the immigrant community. He spoke, not only as a Christian, but as a member of the world congress of faiths, a Christian sponsored organisation which has held inter-faith services in Westminster Abbey. As a Christian he believed his faith was the stronger as a result of his examination of other faiths and his contact with their adherents: there was much for Christians to learn, for it was the Rev. Coveney's belief that the light that shone in these other faiths came from the same source as the light that shone in Christ.

In his lecture he confined his examination of other faiths to the major religions of the world, though he did begin with references to the more primitive expressions of faith. Common to all man has been the instinct to worship and the codes of morality which have certain ethical demands in common—a condemnation of murder and adultery for example. The harmony in which early man lived with God and his fellows has long since disappeared, the result, so the lecturer believed, of the devil's work, but ever since, man has been struggling to make contact with a transcendent being on whom he feels dependent.

From animism where man sees spirits dwelling in trees, stones and streams, to totemism where the tribe identified the totem with its god, to ancestor worship—all reflect man's instinct for and search for a god, and these early religious practices have certain characteristics found in the great moral religions of today—sacred meals and preliminary washings for example. Then in the 18th Century B.C. a moral element was introduced, though Judaism was not to contain this

element until about the 13th Century B.C. The moral element was common in certain respects to all, but the lecturer made the interesting point that as far as Judaism is concerned, the prohibitions were made not so much to protect the victim of theft, murder, adultery, but rather to save men from sinning.

Between the 8th Century B.C. and the 3rd Century A.D. there took place through the work of certain gifted individuals an intellectual and spiritual revolution which has had a lasting influence, a period which gave birth to Christianity, Prophetic Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism. Rev. Coveney devoted some time to a description of the last four since less was known about these, highlighting the dominant features, especially those similar to Christianity. Zoroastrianism for example contained an account of the miraculous conception of its founder, it was monotheistic and incorporated some lofty teaching together with teaching of judgment and a future life. Hinduism was much more complex and varied in its practices, yet there were similarities in belief to Christianity. Behind all the images of Hinduism there is a belief in a supreme being and a general tendency to monotheism. (Jainism with its emphasis on non-violence or harmlessness holds attractions for non-adherents.)

Gautama Buddha disagreed with the caste system of Hinduism, but took from the latter the belief in re-incarnation. The re-incarnation to a higher or lower life depends on the quality of life in the previous existence, and this quality is measured by the degree to which one subjects one's physical desires. Release from the cycle of rebirth attained wih final enlightenment, the state termed Nirvana, the region "where there are neither ideas nor is there the absence of ideas". Chastity or non-violence to all forms of life are binding on Buddhist monks. The Buddhist emphasis on peace-making has an important part to play in the modern world.

Islam is the most recent of the great major religions but shares a common background with Judaism and Christianity, sharing Abraham as a common ancestor. Like these it is a religion of a book, and Muhammad believed the Koran was recited to him by the Angel Gabriel. Like these too it is monotheistic, it has similar passages of scripture or language though it has some beliefs that Christians would regard as heretical—a heretic view of the crucifixion for example. Again there are some moral injunctions in common. The similarities

lead the Rev. Coveney to ask whether certain Christians were justified in believing they were the only ones to be cured by the Holy Spirit.

European laws and rules have been influenced by Judeo-Christian ideas, and the lecturer asserted that these ideas have also influenced the other great moral religions. Such is the light that is shared by all adherents of the world religions, and with this belief we should try to understand them. He closed with a quotation of Dr. Parrinder—"Some of the lamps have become obscure and give little light: others shine with varying radiance. But there is one true light which lighteth every man (repeat *every* man) which cometh into the world".

THE CRIMINAL COURTS AND THEIR WORK

Mr. F. W. Kempton, 9th Feb., 1973

In tracing the history of the Law and the Courts in relation to criminal matters emphasis will be placed particularly on developments in the early stages which are of most importance.

In the 10th century the King's Council passed the Laws, acted as the Executive and also acted in a Judicial capacity. There was no distinction between the Legislature, the Civil Service and the Judiciary and no distinction between the various kinds of wrongs. The universal remedy was personal vengeance.

Wiser members of the community saw that indiscriminate vengeance or feud was often misdirected and was, therefore, intolerable. Thus certain restrictions were placed on the operation of the feud. It had to be restricted to the wrong-doer or those who harboured him, the right of sanctuary had to be respected and hostilities had to cease on Saints' days.

From these beginnings the Hundred Moot Courts and the Shire Moot Courts developed. Here local citizens in thousands of neighbourhoods ran their own machinery for the redress of wrongs. Accused persons who failed to prove their innocence had their penalties and punishments fixed by democratically taken decisions.

After the conquest the basic characteristics of Feudalism brought about the creation of another type of court. Every man had a Landlord, Landlords were pledged to higher Lords and so on up to the King who was at the top. Most Landlords claimed the right to hold Manorial Courts to maintain law and order among their tenants.

Again at this time the King, as agent of the community, began to identify himself with the administration of justice in connection with certain crimes such as murders, robberies, treasons, arsons and forgeries which were seen to threaten the security of the community as a whole. This was the true beginning of Criminal Law.

During this same period, of some hundred years after the Conquest, Royal Tribunals were established with a primary function of collecting money in the form of taxes but they were also concerned with administering the Law. In the first place they dealt with the affairs of the King and those of his great tenants in chief and also with those crimes against the community previously mentioned.

Because they were more efficient, more expeditious and provided more reliable remedies the King's Courts were used to an ever increasing extent.

The assizes of Clarendon and Northampton defined those serious criminal offences—now known as felonies—for which forfeiture of goods, banishment or mutilation were the penalties and which were distinguished from minor offences which continued to be dealt with by Moot Courts until 1361 when Justices of the Peace were first formally established by statute.

Aggrieved parties soon came to realise that whereas procedural objections or defiance often hampered the operation of the Local Courts it was unlikely that a summons to court by the King's writ issued by the Sheriff would be resisted. Furthermore the establishment of a central register of writs brought formality and uniformity of procedure throughout the country.

At the beginning of the 12th Century steps were taken to make changes in the administration of the Law, particularly in respect of the method of trial, which resulted in a more civilised system of justice.

The position at this time was that where there was no suspicion against a defendant he could get his friends to swear he was innocent. If there was a presumption of guilt the defendant had to either fight his accuser or resort to the ordeal, i.e. invoke a miracle. Thirdly there was trial by battle, a survival of the old blood feud.

The assizes of Clarendon and Northampton laid down that a Jury of Accusation composed of 12 men from the hundred and four men from the township should hold a preliminary enquiry into robberies, murders, thieves, treasons, arson and forgery and then make formal presentation to the King's Justices. This Jury of Accusation developed into the Grand Jury which was abolished in 1933.

There was an implied pre-judgement with a Jury of Accusation and so judges got into the habit of asking the accused whether he would submit to a trial by a second jury chosen from neighbours present. This was known as the Jury of Indictment or the Petty Jury and in 1352 an Act of Parliament was passed clearly recognising the difference between these two types of jury.

The obvious improvement in these procedures further hastened the transfer of business from the Local Courts to the King's Courts, although some feudal lords tried to compete by offering trial by jury in their own courts.

Mention must be made of the rise and fall of the Court of the Star Chamber which was created by the Tudor Kings as a sub-committee of the Curia Regis, now known as the Privy Council. The purpose of this court was to back up or question decisions arrived at in the Common Law Courts particularly where local vested interests were too powerful to enable local juries to act properly. At first this court strengthened the proceedings of the Common Law Courts but eventually its arbitrary activities caused it to be abolished in 1641. Since then there has been no rival to the Common Law Courts.

This brief talk has traced the development of justice from the time when it was produced in the villages by custom out of common sense to a state when it has become a centrally controlled system based on precedent and administered by experts and it must be remembered that if, at times, the Law appears to be complicated it only reflects the generally increasing complications of life.

THE EVENTS AND INFLUENCES OF 17th CENTURY ENGLAND (23rd Feb., 1973)

(Note kindly contributed by the author, the Rev. R. Burns Cox)

This is a key century in our history. It saw the advent and demise of the Stuart Kings, with one losing his head. It saw the Divine Right of Kings theory replaced by Parliamentary government, issuing from Civil War and a John Hampden.

Monarchical rule was also broken by the Commonwealth and Cromwellian rule, with its destruction of much architectural beauty. Roman Catholics and Puritans (the parents of Non-conformity) were persecuted by the Established Church, resulting in the colonising of the eastern seaboard of America. It reflected the "Golden Age" of our mother tongue associated with the Authorised Version of the Holy Bible and the 1662 Prayer Book and names such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Herrick, etc. The great sea lanes were opened to our ships and commerce grew apace. Socially there were Lords, Yeomen (peculiar to England) and Peasants. Nomads were Tinkers, Highwaymen, Ballad Mongers. Ireland suffered cruel depression under Cromwell, for which we pay today. It ended with a Dutchman on the throne of England.

THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION OF BATTLE

Col. H. J. Wilson, C.B.E., T.D. (Member)
28th Sept., 1973

From the Reform Act of 1832 until 1885 Battle was in the East Sussex Parliamentary Division, which returned two members. Hastings and Rye were not included in the division, Hastings returning two members and Rye one.

The ballot was first used in the General Election of 1874 after the abolition of the Hustings by the Act of 1872, but in this election two Conservatives were returned unopposed.

In 1880 the Liberal star was in the ascendancy as the result of defeats in the Zulu wars and Gladstone's Midlothian campaign. Two Conservatives were again returned but had Liberal opponents.

In this period Disraeli organised the Conservative Central Office, the beginning of the centralised party system.

In 1884 Gladstone brought in a Reform Bill to give the vote to industrial and agricultural workers. By the Redistribution Act of 1885 Rye lost its borough member and the Rye Division was formed which lasted until after the Second World War. (At the same time Hastings lost one of its two members.)

The Rye Division seat was won by Arthur Brookfield (later Colonel Brookfield) for the Conservatives. He was opposed by a Liberal, George Ball of Rye "who sprang from the ranks of the agricultural labourers among whom he had worked for his daily bread, and had been associated with

Joseph Arch" (the pioneer of Agricultural Unions). Ball increased the Liberal vote by 900 and came close to victory. Brookfield's win began the Conservative allegiance, with one sensational departure, unbroken up to the present day.

Col. Brookfield on active service in South Africa had to hurry home to contest the khaki election of 1900. He resigned in 1903 to become consul in Montevideo. The Conservative candidate in his place was Edward Boyle (father of the present Sir Edward Boyle) whose mother was a Gurney. The wealth of the Gurney family is celebrated in the Judge's song in Trial by Jury—"at length I became as rich as the Gurneys". Boyle was surprisingly defeated by the Liberal, Dr. Hutchinson, by 4,910 votes to 4,376.

From 1906, for a period of 39 years, the division was represented by Mr. Courthope (later to become Baron Whiligh). He came from a family of brewers and inherited the large Whiligh Estates. Timbers for the roof of St. Stephen's Hall, Westminster, were cut from oaks grown on the Whiligh Estates, which again supplied timber for renovation between the wars and reconstruction of those parts of Westminster damaged by bombing. Mr. Courthope was particularly interested in forestry and always attended at the House when agriculture, forestry or matters affecting his constituents were discussed. His attendance record on other occasions left something to be desired.

In 1944 the Conservative candidate was Mr. W. N. Cuthbert who had been mayor of Bexhill from 1936 to 1942. He was adopted after a contest with Captain A. J. Holmes, a former Sussex County cricket captain. He won the seat with a majority of 12,000 against Labour and Liberal opponents.

Rye Division came to an end after the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1948 which made Hastings a county constituency including Rye and transferred Bexhill to Eastbourne. In 1955 the Rye Division once again came into being consisting of the boroughs of Bexhill and Rye, the Rural District of Battle and part of Hailsham. At the 1955 election Mr. Godman Irvine, a barrister and farmer, who had served during the war as a liaison officer with the American Navy in the Pacific, was returned with a majority of 18,000 and he has continued to represent the division with an increased majority.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 907th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

The Commemoration Lecture was given in Langton Hall on 12th October, 1973 by Miss Jean Adamson (Member), who is a Member of the Richard III Society, and her subject was "Richard III: The Truth and the Fiction".

RICHARD III — THE TRUTH AND THE FICTION

The lecturer began by saying that the subject seemed to her not inappropriate for the Commemoration Lecture. The Battle of Bosworth Field where Richard fell fighting an invader marked the end of what we call the Middle Ages which began with the Battle of Hastings.

Her friends said to her "Are you one of those people who are trying to whitewash Richard Crookback?" Her reply was that they were trying to remove the Tudor-applied mud so that people might see the real man beneath.

Much of the contents of our history books is propaganda, that is deliberate perversion of the truth. The longer that perversion goes unchallenged the harder it is to dislodge. It is doubly unlucky for the memory of Richard III that the Tudors had two such formidable supporters of their propaganda line as Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More. There is not much to be done about Shakespeare. Actors will continue to enjoy themselves hugely in the character he created for them. We can only go on repeating that while doubtless great fun for Lord Olivier and his audience, it is also a load of nonsense.

The source of most of More's information was Cardinal Morton, former Bishop of Ely and Henry's Chancellor, the inventor of the ingenious financial system known as Morton's Fork. Morton owed his survival to Richard's clemency and was Richard's implacable enemy.

With the end of the Tudor dynasty voices were raised to challenge the accepted story. The lecturer mentioned Sir George Buc's "History of the Life and Reign of King Richard III", Horace Walpole's "Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III" and Josephine Tey's novel "Daughter of Time" (not a work of historical scholarship but successful in making people look at facts and think again).

Two of the Tudor fictions could be disposed of quickly, the nonsense about Richard's monstrous appearance and the inclination to villainy, the twisted mind in the twisted body. Of the two earliest portraits one shows no unevenness of his shoulders at all. A recent X-ray examination of the other which has been in the royal collection at least since 1542 reveals an alteration to the outline of the right shoulder to make it higher than originally drawn.

There is no evidence at all to back the charge of a general inclination to villainy. Dates have been manipulated to make it appear that Henry VI died on the one night when Richard (then 19) was in London. There is no contemporary suggestion of anything to his discredit in his earlier career. Rather the reverse. He was his brother Edward IV's trusted lieutenant and the well loved governor for ten years of the northern part of his kingdom.

We then came to the two accusations against Richard that everybody remembers—that he usurped the throne and that he murdered his brother's children.

Edward in a last minute codicil to his will had appointed his brother Protector of the Realm and sole guardian of his sons, then about 12 and 10. The young Edward V was installed in the Tower, which the lecturer reminded us was a royal palace as well as a prison and the place from which, traditionally, every king set forth for his coronation at Westminster. A date was set for his coronation and preparations were begun.

It was at this point, with only two weeks to the coronation, that a certain Dr. Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, told Richard and the Council that Edward IV at the time of his secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville had already contracted marriage to another lady. A contract to marry being held as binding as an actual marriage, it followed that Elizabeth had never been Edward's wife and her children were illegitimate and could not succeed to the throne.

A representative assembly of the Lords and Commons took the decision to accept the Bishop's declaration, exclude Edward's sons and offer the throne to Richard. The decision

was embodied in an Act, Titulus Regius, which Henry repealed and ordered to be destroyed. The original draft, however, was overlooked and came to light in the 17th Century.

If this can be called usurpation the lecturer had mistaken the meaning of the word.

What happened to the Princes in the Tower was one of history's most impenetrable secrets. To discuss it fully would need a lecture to itself. The lecturer asked us to accept her belief that Richard's responsibility for the deaths of these two children was the biggest fiction of the lot.

There were two other suspects, either of whom was a far more likely guilty party. There was also an interesting and quite reasonable possibility that there was in fact no murder at all!

When Henry after Bosworth Field drew up his list of Richard's alleged crimes the murder of the Princes was not explicitly mentioned at all—only a vague reference to "shedding of infants' blood".

Thomas More says that the Princes' fate "hath so far come in question that some yet remain in doubt whether they were in his (i.e. Richard's) days destroyed or no".

If you were simply to reverse almost everything the Tudor writers said, you might come reasonably near the truth of what manner of man Richard really was.

The lecturer then referred to Richard's generosity, a record of large and small sums dispensed to all kinds of mostly unimportant people, and to the long list of measures passed by his one Parliament reflecting his concern for the rights and liberties of the ordinary citizen.

The one fatal defect in his character was that he was insufficiently ruthless. His leniency towards traitors was both remarkable and fatal. It cost him his crown, his life and his reputation.

When Richard set forth on that last, magnificent, desperate charge to seek his enemy face to face, she wondered if he cared very greatly what the outcome might be. Near enough to Henry to have slain his standard-bearer, he fell by the final treason of the Stanleys. Even the chroniclers of his enemies pay their tributes to his valour.

When the news of Bosworth Field reached York, they inscribed in the city records, for all to see, a fitting epitaph for this King, who has no honoured tomb and has been unjustly judged too long:

> King Richard late mercifully reigning upon us was through great treason . . . piteously slain and murdered, to the great heaviness of this city—
> the great heaviness of this city.

(The above article has been extracted from Miss Adamson's complete lecture which has been deposited in the Society's library.—Ed.)

VISITS—THE SUMMER PROGRAMME, 1973

Five visits were arranged, one in each month from May to September. They were well attended and favoured with good weather.

1. NYMANS GARDENS AND ARDINGLY

On May 15th a party of 45 members and friends went first to Nymans Gardens (last visited in 1962, see *Transactions* (i.e. No. 11) for that year) and after tea at Ardingly to Ardingly church. This was our first visit to the church which, though a Norman foundation, is built mainly in the Decorated style. It has many features of interest and beauty, such as the 15th century chancel screen, recently restored to its right position, the brasses of the Wakehurst and Culpeper families, the unique wooden hood moulds to two of the windows, and the ancient staircase leading to the tower. We were most grateful to the rector for acting as our guide.

2. FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE AND BOSHAM CHURCH

On June 13th a party of 45 went to visit the Roman Palace Museum which was last visited in 1968 (see *Transactions* No. 17) but additional work has been done there since then. One of the staff gave an introductory talk to our party and we then explored at will until it was time to leave for Bosham to visit the church built by Canute and whose chancel arch is depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry. A fuller description of this too is given in *Transactions* No. 17.

3. GLYNDE PLACE AND CHURCH

On July 19th a party of 43 members much enjoyed visiting Glynde Place. This had been previously visited by the society in 1957 and again in 1965, and a full account appears in the *Transactions* for 1957 (i.e. No. 7). After tea in the former coach-house we visited the church, an unusual building dating from the 18th century about whose qualities our opinions were much divided.

4. SMALLHYTHE (ELLEN TERRY MUSEUM) AND TENTERDEN CHURCH

At Smallhythe the main purpose of our party was to visit the Ellen Terry Museum where we were able to wander at our leisure but most of us in addition walked along to Smallhythe Church, a Tudor building, and one of the earliest red brick parish churches in England, built to replace an older church destroyed by fire in the early 16th century. After tea in Tenterden we went across to the parish church, dedicated to St. Mildred. (*Transactions* No. 10 contains an account of a visit to the museum and to Tenterden Church in 1961), 27 members attended this visit which took place on August 15th.

5. LYMPNE CASTLE AND BROOKLAND CHURCH

The last visit of the season, on September 5th, attended by 37 members, was to Lympne Castle of which a full description is to be found in *Transactions* No. 16 as a previous visit was made in 1967. The beautiful little church at Brookland had not been visited since 1959, and while we enjoyed seeing what our predecessors had seen then (there is a description of the church in *Transactions* No. 8) we were able to admire, in addition, the remarkable mediaeval wall painting of the martyrdom of Becket which was discovered during repairs to the wall in 1964 and treated to ensure conservation as recently as 1972.

COMMEMORATION EVENING PARTY

This was held in the Abbots Hall of Battle Abbey on October 13th, 1973 by kind permission of Mrs. Evelyn Webster and Miss J. R. Parker the Headmistress of Battle Abbey School. Sixty-three members and their guests attended and the Chairman, Brig. D. A. Learmont exchanged greetings by 'phone with the President, Lieut.-Col. C. H. Lemmon, who was not well enough to attend.

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

The Commemoration Service on Sunday, October 14th, 1973, was conducted by the Dean of Battle, the Very Rev. H. R. Darby. The lessons were read by Mrs. E. Webster, the Senior Vice-President of the Society and Brigadier D. A. Learmont, the Chairman, and the sermon was preached by the Dean of Brecon, the Very Rev. W. V. Jacobs. The following is an extract of the Dean's sermon:

"Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people"

—Psalm 77, v. 14

It is a great honour and privilege for me to have been asked to come to preach to you here in Battle on the occasion of your commemoration service today, and I bring you greetings from the church of *St. John the Evangelist in Brecon* which this year is keeping its Jubilee as a cathedral. In many ways I feel like a grown-up child returning home to visit its parents because the greetings I bring you are *filial greetings*. Brecon Cathedral today is the spiritual centre of a diocese whose life is as strong and vigorous as any and it has fifty years of honourable history behind it in a Church which has had to make its own way since it was severed from the Church of England in 1920. Nevertheless, the history of the building itself goes back much longer than that and it is closely connected with you here in Battle. As I look round the nave of your church, I can see at once the architectural likeness between it and the nave of my cathedral, if only because in both churches the clerestory windows are to be found above the pillars and not between them as is more usual. *The Church of St. John the Evangelist in Brecon in origin, of course, was a daughter church, a cell of Battle Abbey.* I understand that there were three such daughter churches, one at Exeter, one at Carmarthen, and one in Brecon. In the Middle Ages there must have been constant journeyings between Brecon and Battle and in coming here today I have only done what my predecessors of long ago used to do. On two occasions at least the Priors of Brecon were elected Abbots of Battle. Those were in *1261* and *1502* and the monks must have travelled to attend the other elections as

well. Some very valuable medieval Mss. concerning the lives of some of the saints of Wales may have been written by scribes of Battle Abbey. There are so many other connections between us. It was a monk of Battle, Roger by name, who was given permission to build the first Norman Church of St. John in Brecon and that is why, in this year of special rejoicing at the cathedral, it gives me such pleasure to be here today—if only to acknowledge the debt.

I also bring you greetings from our *own Battle near Brecon.* About three miles outside Brecon, some of you will be interested to know, there is a little parish called Battle. How it got the name is not quite clear but there *was* a battle there, between the Normans under Bernard Newmarch and Rhys ap Tewdwr, the last king of South Wales. This was in *1093.* Rhys was killed, as Harold was killed here in the so-called Battle of Hastings, and this led to the consolidation of the Normans in Brecon and the establishment of the Priory. It may well have been the monks of the Priory who gave to the battlefield the name that had been given to the Abbey Church which commemorated the battlefield of Hastings.

So we come to *the actual event* which we are commemorating today, the Battle of Hastings or Senlac, fought on this very day nine hundred and seven years ago. It was a remarkable event in every way—remarkable in the way in which it was fought and remarkable that a battle that was to change so radically the whole future shape of our history should have been fought with comparatively so few men on either side and should have been decided with (for a long time) so little margin between success and failure. From the point of view of *Harold* there was an element of Greek tragedy in the event —why did he have to be away in the north when William landed? Why did he have to fight another foreign invader at the same time and lose so many of his best trained troops in the process? Why did he have to meet the Normans after a long exhausting forced march south? We could shed a tear for Harold—this son of an earl, who had all the natural qualities of a leader, vigour, resourcefulness, skill, but once he was made king, nothing seemed to go right for him and nemesis overtook him. As for *William* there was surely some element of luck on his side—the arrow that wounded Harold (if we accept the story) made all the difference—and yet that arrow would not have flown in the air had not William had the good military sense to combine the artillery of his archers

with his cavalry, a revolutionary step which other commanders of English armies were to remember later on. Undoubtedly there was great courage on both sides—nobody will ever forget the stand which Harold and his housecarles made on this hill, but when courage is supplemented by superior military equipment and superior military technique, then, for all one's sense of right and wrong and for all one's sympathies, there can only be one outcome.

This question of right and wrong; it is difficult for us to assess the position today. Because William won, I suppose it could be argued by some that God was with him but God doesn't always side with the winner. Certainly William had a slightly better hereditary claim to the throne than Harold and he certainly did come to England with the Pope's blessing behind him. These things mattered in those days, as also did the keeping of an oath (which Harold had broken). Today perhaps we would be more inclined to think of the battle as a battle for English freedom against a foreign invader but how strong was English nationality in those days? Was there an English nationality? *What matters for us now is not on whose side God was during the battle—there were rights and wrongs on both sides. What matters is what use He made of the battle*—how He overruled it to suit His purpose, how good came out of evil, how He made even the wrath of man turn to His praise. In my text this morning I said that God is a God who does wonders. He declares His strength among the people. I suggest that God does wonders and declared His strength not because one man wins a battle and another loses but because the outcome of that battle becomes an opportunity for God to disclose His power and reveal His glory in a new and wonderful way.

In his very valuable history of *England under the Normans and Angevins*, published many years ago, H. W. C. Davis described the Norman Conquest of England as "the outcome of a struggle, short and spasmodic in character, between a handful of adventurers and a decadent nation lying on the fringe of European politics". True, there was a great deal of the adventurer in the Norman—it wasn't so long since they had been Vikings and it wasn't long before there was a Norman conquest of Sicily as well as of England. True also that the lack of cohesion and unity in Harold's time and the ease with which the people gave way to the invader showed

that there was something radically wrong with the state of England. Nevertheless, as Davis said, *the battle was a turning point in history, a boundary mark between one stage of civilisation and another.* For one thing, it meant that the period of the so-called Dark Ages was over. In other words the period of barbarian invasions, when Europe had been overrun by one northern migrating people after another, and the lamps or order, culture, and enlightened government had seemed to be going out everywhere. The Norman conquest meant the final re-establishment of the standards and traditions of imperial Rome by a people which had been acclimatised to them in their own country and now applied them elsewhere. This was the real significance of the fact that William came to England with the blessing of the Pope. Both in church and state there was a process of adaptation to a new order which did England good, as it was to do good to Wales later on. No doubt there was much resentment because the Norman was thorough and ruthless but the important thing to notice is how the English character and the English genius took on a new lease of life after the conquest. It wasn't so much a conquest as a marriage which ultimately led to a rebirth and the flowering of English political life and the English spirit, typified by Parliament on one hand (House of Lords and House of Commons), and Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and the rest on the other. Harold lost the Battle of Hastings but what he fought for was not lost. It simply went underground and emerged again—enriched, refreshed and purified. William won the battle but in the long run it was God who was the winner, by taking the good which both sides had to offer and working His wonders with it, declaring His strength among the people.

If I may end with a word about my own native land. The Normans never really conquered Wales. What they did was to penetrate along the valleys as far as they could and plant their castles there (Brecon was such a castle). Edward I, two hundred years after the Normans, put some more royal castles there but even he never really subdued the people. What really made Wales a part of the larger world of Britain was the elevation of one of their own number to be King of England in the person of Henry VII. The old language survives (although only spoken now by one fifth of the Nation) and the old independent spirit survives. Like Harold, Rhys ap Tewdwr did not die in vain but, thanks to the overruling providence of God, so much that is rich and valuable and

worthwhile followed ultimately in the wake of the Normans that we too, like you, have learnt to appreciate the significance of the struggle at Hastings although we like to stand on our own feet to say so.

And so to the only true God who holds all things in His power and disposes them as He wills, to Him be honour and glory in His Church, world without end. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

held on November 9th, 1973

The Chairman, Brigadier D. A. Learmont, C.B.E., presided.

The Chairman's report, previously circulated, was approved. The Membership has now passed the 350 mark but he was looking forward to an even higher figure.

There had been ten lectures during the Winter Programme and these as well as the Summer Visits had been well attended.

The Treasurer's Report was submitted and approved showed that the Balance was £192.43½ which included £46.50 for subscriptions paid in advance for the year 1973-74.

The Chairman who was not seeking re-election, expressed his sincere thanks to the Officers, Committee and Members for their help and support during the past eventful year.

The Committee's recommendations for the elections of officers, etc., were approved.

Serving Officers:— President:— Lt. Col. C. H. Lemmon, D.S.O., for period 1972-75. *Vice-Presidents:—* Prof. D. Whitelock, C.B.E., Major L. C. Gates, M.B.E., M.C., Prof. E. Searle, 1972-75, Mrs. E. Webster, Mr. A. E. Marson, 1971-74. *Elected Officers:— Vice Presidents:—* Mr. A. R. Clough (re-elected), Brig. D. A. Learmont, C.B.E., The Very Rev. H. R. Darby, Dean of Battle, Miss I. Hope Muntz, F.R.H.S., F.S.A., *Chairman:* Mr. A. B. Huntley, *Vice-Chairman:* Mrs. W. H. Palmer, *Joint Hon. Secretaries:* Mrs. Bay Tidy and Mrs. F. M. Cryer, *Hon. Treasurer:* Mr. P. A. S. Livett, *Membership Secretary:* Mr. J. E. Sanders, 1973-76, *Elected Committee:—* Miss R. Frewer, Mr. J. Carpenter, Miss C. V. Cane, Miss R. H. Chiverton, 1971-74, Mr. A. C. G. Mason, Mr. E. G. Creek, Miss J. E. S. Robertson, 1972-75, Mr. F. W. Kempton, Mr. J. E. Sanders (Vacant), 1973-76.

BATTLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM TRUST

Seventh Annual General Meeting held on November 9th, 1973

The Chairman Mr. W. M. Palmer presided.

The year was overshadowed by the death on July 22nd, 1973 of Professor A. E. Bates. He had been an enthusiastic member of the Committee since 1969 and had been Treasurer and Curator and contributed greatly to the well-being of the Museum. His loss is deeply felt. Mr. E. H. Mayer resigned as Curator and Chairman because of ill-health and Mrs. Kempton and Mrs. Mason joined the Committee in place of Miss Ireland and Mrs. Upton. The number of visitors during the year has been 13,603. A handful of volunteers staff the Museum during Sunday afternoons but additional help is urgently invited to take part in this interesting and rewarding work. Members willing to help should contact Miss J. E. S. Robertson. A delegation from St. Valery-sur-Somme was shown round the Museum on July 28th, 1973 and we are grateful to Mrs. Mason for her assistance on this occasion.

In conclusion, we would especially wish to express thanks to Miss J. E. S. Robertson for her devoted service as Hon. Secretary and to others who maintain the operation of the Museum. The Hon. Treasurer reported another successful year with income exceeding expenditure by £131.85.

The following members were recommended for election to the Committee and subsequently appointed to the following posts: — *Chairman:* Mr. W. N. Palmer, *Hon. Curator:* Mr. Beatty-Pownall, *Committee:*— Mrs. M. Kempton, Mrs. A. C. G. Mason, *Hon. Treasurer:*— Mr. R. W. Bishop, *Hon. Secretary:*— Miss J. E. S. Robertson.

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