No. 23

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Transactions
1973 - 1974

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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EDITORAL NOTE

I am sorry that I have not found it possible to issue this edition (No. 23) at an earlier date, but hope that as the *Transactions* are now up to date, that they will be issued annually under the Editorship of Mr. B. S. M. Martin who has so kindly undertaken the task.

We had a most successful party in the Abbots Hall attended by 80 members and friends on Saturday, 12th October and the Abbot of Worth gave us an enlightening and interesting sermon on the occasion of the Commemoration Service on 13th October, 1974, but unfortunately we have no notes to quote from. Professor E. M. Carus Wilson gave us a most excellent and interesting lecture on the "Mediaeval Wool Industry on 27th September, 1974, and Mr. E. C. R. Fawcett gave us a splendid talk with very good slides on the "National Trust today" 23rd November, 1973. Sir Beresford Craddock, M.A., B.SC., gave us a most interesting talk on "How Parliament Works" of which he had many years experience as a Member of Parliament, 8th February, 1974.

As a matter of interest to members, a translation of extracts from Bulletin No. 4 of the Archaeological and Historical Society of Saint-Valery-Sur-Somme is included in this Edition of the *Transactions.*

I wish to thank members who have helped me in producing this issue, particularly Mr. Creek who has been a great support. I am sure that future issues of the *Transactions* will benefit from having a separate Editor and go on from strength to strength.

ALFRED B. HUNTLEY,
Chairman.

October 1975

OBITUARIES

President, 1963–1973

The Society suffered a very grievous loss on 23rd December, 1973 by the sudden death of our President, Charles Lemmon.

Born on 25th January, 1887, Charles Lemmon was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Regiment of Artillery on 20th December 1906, eventually retiring from the Active List on 31st January, 1935.

He saw Active Service during the 1914–1918 war, being awarded the Distinguished Service Order, the 1914–15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He was Mentioned in Despatches in the *London Gazette* of 4th January, 1917.

A distinguished Service career by any standard, but it is of his unequalled service to this Society that we will best remember him. A Founder Member of 1950, he served on the Committee of the Society from 1950–1960. He was elected a Vice-President in 1960 and served as such until 1963, when he was elected as our President—an office he filled with obvious distinction until his death at the very end of 1973.

But even that does not end the debt we owe him. For not only was he virtually the creator, and the Curator for many years, of our Museum but he was Chairman of the Museum Committee from 1960 to 1963, and, further, was Editor of our Transactions from 1960–1972.

No one has devoted more thought and energy to the well-being of the Society than Col. Lemmon. A frequent lecturer and writer, his contributions appear regularly in the Transactions. He was an authority on the battle of 14th October, 1066, though not all historians—professional or amateur—agree entirely with his conclusions. But as there was no eye-witness who recorded all that did happen on that day, most of us, I think, are prepared to accept Colonel Lemmon's account.

His funeral service was held in St. John's Church, St. Leonards, on 31st December, 1973 followed by interment in the family grave at Whatlington. Members would like to know that the Society was represented by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, three Vice-Presidents (a fourth being prevented from attending at the last moment by indisposition), the Chairman of the Museum Committee, and seven Members.

The heartfelt sympathy of us all goes out to his widow, Margaret, and to his daughter Jacqueline. Their loss is great.

Mr. A. R. Clough

Members regret the death on 27th March, 1974 of Mr. A. R. Clough of Crowhurst who was for many years a very influential member of the Society and a Vice-President from

1964 until his death. He was Chairman of the Museum Committee when it first opened in Old Church House in 1956 and took an active part in the negotiations for the re-establishment of the Museum in Langton House. His services to the Society are greatly appreciated.

Major L. C. Gates, M.B.E., M.C.

We were all sad to receive the news of the death of Major L. C. Gates on 2nd May, 1974—a valued friend and loyal officer of the Society. He had a distinguished military career in both World Wars, retiring in 1947. He was Chairman of the Society from 1966 to 1969 and a Vice-President until his death, and had also been Secretary and Treasurer. The Society suffered a grievous loss by his death and offer the greatest sympathy to his widow and son.

SUSSEX—ESCAPE ROUTE TO THE CONTINENT

Miss Weiner (7th December, 1973)

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars were the longest in our history, lasting from 1793 to 1815, with only a short break in 1802, but until the outbreak in 1808 of the Peninsular War, British and French met only at sea and in the colonies, so that the majority of prisoners taken were seamen. Given our naval supremacy the balance was considerably in our favour—some 70,000 French to about 10,000 English.

Accommodating and guarding a continuous inflow of French prisoners created great problems. At first they were housed in existing fortresses, hastily fitted out for their reception. When these proved to be inadequate, recourse was made to prison ships—the hulks—and to purpose-built prisons or depots, Norman Cross in Northamptonshire, Dartmoor, Perth, Stapleton near Bristol and Chatham.

To cope with the number of prisoners, the precedent of exchange was revived. Officers were sent home on their honour to return to the country of their imprisonment if, by a given date, they had not been exchanged for an officer of equivalent rank. For a time this system worked reasonably well but as war continued it gave rise to mutual recrimination, especially as too many French officers echoed Falstaff's "What is honour? A word."

Discontent with the operation of the exchange or "cartel" system was a prime factor in inducing many officers to escape, especially from parole towns. An officer prisoner who had given his parole not to escape was released from the prisons, which in any case were overcrowded. These men were sent to parole towns up and down the country, generally well inland. No parole towns existed in Kent or Sussex because of their proximity to France. Civilians in the parole towns were almost universally kind to the prisoners. Romantic young ladies often succumbed to Gallic charm and gallantry.

Not a few novels have treated of officers in parole towns but no fiction deals with life on the hulks—although life is a word too vivid for the mere existence of men condemned to these floating hells—a prison ship system unique to England and a stain upon our national record.

The hulks were ancient third rate men-of-war stripped of their masts and rigging, mere carcasses of ships, their decks surrounded by galleries of pierced iron gratings patrolled by sentries, the ships themselves protected by guard boats. There were some two dozen of them, anchored chiefly at Chatham, at Plymouth and three or four miles from shore at Portsmouth, where mud banks added to their impregnability.

Anyone addicted to the sea stories of C. S. Forrester and his successors in the genre is familiar with the rigours of life at sea for the Royal Navy, but their horrific living conditions were luxurious when compared with those of prisoners in the hulks.

Many prisoners occupied themselves with making articles for which they gladly accepted shillings where now we would willingly pay hundreds of pounds. Ship models are the most familiar objects.

Yet, when hours stretched to infinity, even producing work so intricate was not sufficient to occupy a man of resource and energy, intrepid enough to brave all the risks involved in winning back the liberty he had lost.

For sheer effrontery nothing equalled the escape in 1812 of General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, commander of one of the crack regiments of the Imperial Army. On parole at Cheltenham he enjoyed exceptional privileges. He was given two

Imperial guardsmen as servants and his wife was permitted to join him from France. He calmly hired a carriage and drove to London disguised as a German count. Arrived in London he coolly rested at a hotel much patronized by French emigres. With the same sang-froid as before he hired a post-chaise and drove by way of Robertsbridge and Battle to Dover where he took ship for France.

Other escapers first made contact with an "escape agent", who arranged for "conductors" to meet the prisoners at the limits of their parole towns after curfew. The conductors generally travelled with their charges by post-chaise at night to the coast where they handed them over to smugglers who hid them until a boat was ready for a night crossing.

Although escaping from the hulks was virtually impossible, one remarkable man, Tom Souville succeeded in doing so not once but three times. (Lack of space prevents us from including details of the fascinating stories of his escapes in the Transactions.)

PEVENSEY MARSHES
(With regard to Sea Defences and Land Drainage Works)
J. F. Lewis, B.Sc.(Eng) 25th January, 1974

Mr. Lewis traced the history of the Marsh from Roman times, when the marshes were an inland sea, and showed how the early attempts at reclamation were of an unco-ordinated nature and that in Norman times the Marsh was still largely inundated by the sea. With the forming of the Commissioners of the Herds by Edward I, rates were levied on the landowners and improvement schemes began, which continued until 1930 when the River Catchment Boards were formed. Mr. Lewis showed that major works had been undertaken and continue today under the Sussex River Authority. Considerable improvement has been achieved in the Marsh by reducing flooding and improving drainage such that land is now suitable for corn growing which was previously only suitable for pasture. Some of the enlarged drainage channels are also used for water conservation.

THE COMETS OF HISTORY
R. H. Tucker, M.Sc., F.R.A.S., 22nd February, 1974

Comets are so called because they are "hairy" stars, usually surrounded by a hazy glow and accompanied by a luminous "tail". The unexpected appearance of a bright comet often caused general alarm and fear, as in the case of

eclipses of the Sun, because of the relative rarity of the occurrence. The available records show that the number of comets bright enough to be seen prominently and to be noted in detail is only three of four per century in classical and medieval times. The number of reports per century shows a slow increase, corresponding to the increase in world literate population, until the invention of the telescope in the early seventeenth century. The numbers grew rapidly as the periodic comets were discovered (eighteenth century), photography was brought into use (nineteenth century), and modern telescopes were brought into service. The present rate of comet announcements is just over ten per year.

The nature of comets was the subject of much speculation, and even today is not settled beyond dispute. The orbits, or paths, followed by comets were also a matter of controversy, but from about 1700 is has been agreed that the cometary orbits are nearly parabolic. Newton showed that parabolic orbits were consistent with his law of gravitation, and Halley calculated the parabolic paths of 24 bright comets seen in the period from 1337 to 1698. He found that the orbits of the comets of 1531, 1607 and 1682 were very similar, and suggested that these were in fact successive returns of a single comet traversing a very long elliptical orbit which would appear nearly parabolic over the part near the Sun actually observed from the Earth. He predicted that the comet would return in 1759, and the success of this prediction (the comet was re-discovered on Christmas Day, 1758) took much of the superstitious dread away from comets. About 50 periodic comets of similar type are now known, but Halley's Comet is by far the brightest. The other bright comets have periods so long that they cannot be expected to make more than one return in thousands of years.

Surprisingly few historical events are associated with cometary appearances. The death of Julius Caesar (44 B.C.) came 25 years after the appropriate comet (69 B.C.). The destruction of Jerusalem (69 A.D.) followed more closely on the heels of its heralding comet (66 A.D.), which Josephus described as "a star resembling a sword which stood over the city", and "a comet that continued a whole year". There was a comet in 451 A.D., coinciding with the defeat of Attila the Hun at the Battle of Chalons, but the most famous comet of history is undoubtedly the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1066 which is the subject of a vivid portrayal in the Bayeux Tapestry. The comets said to presage the Black

Death, appeared in 1337, 1351, 1362 and 1366, giving a moderately close coincidence with the major outbreaks of 1348, 1361 and 1368. The comet of 1456 came when Europe was in fear of the Turks, and Pope Calixtus III ordered prayers that the evil influence of the comet should pass on to the Turks.

The comet discovered by Kohoutek in March, 1973, gave promise of being very bright, as it would pass close to the Sun at the end of the year. This gave astronomers an unusually long time in which to prepare to observe it, and much publicity was given to over-optimistic predictions of the spectacle. The comet failed to come up to expectations, and there was much disappointment.

The most recent spectacular comet was Comet Arend-Roland which appeared in 1956. It is not possible to say how long we shall wait for the next bright comet. Some in the audience can remember Halley's Comet of 1910, and others can look forward to seeing it return in 1986.

In view of the great local interest in the apparition of 1066, some details of the visibility of that comet are given in an Appendix.

APPENDIX. The Apparition of Halley's Comet in 1066, A.D.

In "Observations of Comets . . . from the Chinese Annals" (1871), J. Williams gives the record contained in the Encyclopaedia of Ma Twa Lin. The comet was seen in the East in the morning of 2nd April, extending from Aquarius to Scorpio. It passed the Sun on 24th April, and was seen in the North-West in the evening, appearing like a star, without a luminous envelope. The next day the envelope reappeared. The tail appeared divided as the comet passed through Taurus. The comet moved rapidly through Gemini, where it was closest to the Earth. In May the comet passed into Hydra, and became nearly stationary as it faded from sight during June.

The Greek historian Zonares describes it as having been as large as the Full Moon, and at first without a tail, on the appearance of which it diminished in size. This corroborates the Chinese account quoted above, and the note in Tung Keen Kang Moo, which states that the comet resembled the planet Venus when seen in the evening sky, and was like the Moon when it reached Taurus.

CIVILIZATIONS OF ANCIENT GREECE

Miss M. E. Holland, M.A., J.P., 8th March, 1974

Miss Holland divided her subject into three parts, taking first the island of Crete, then Delphi and lastly Olympia. About the year B.C. 1470 the Palace of King Minos at Knossos on Crete was overwhelmed by volcanic ash from a mighty eruption on the neighbouring island of Santorin (in ancient days called Thera). This eruption, accompanied as is usual by tidal waves, did much damage. To recall a few of the results of the tidal wave, we think of Deucalion's flood, recorded in Classical Story, of Noah's flood described in the Old Testament, also of the wave which ebbed while the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, then came back in a mighty wall, overwhelming the pursuing Egyptians. Knossos has also been identified with the lost city of Atlantis.

The Greeks of classical times knew something of the Palace at Knossos from legend—for instance the story of Theseus and the monster, the Minotaur, with the sacrifice of young men and maidens as tribute from Athens to this horrific monster, but it was not until 1894 when Arthur Evans got permission to dig into the mighty mound of ash and debris that the details of this wonderfully advanced civilization of Ancient Crete were revealed. Evans' work showed that the Palace had not only been the residence of the King, it had in fact a self-contained community like a small city, containing work-shops, store-rooms as well as rooms for the officials who kept archives and ran the administration of the Palace. Many clay tablets were found baked in the fire and so preserved. These contained lists of craftsmen and their trades and give much information about the daily life of the period. The Bull was a sacred animal to the Cretains, bull-sports in which both boys and girls took part, were held in the precincts of the Palace and these are depicted on frescoes still visible on the walls.

The slides shown included various aspects of the Palace, showing the corridors with frescoes depicting Cretain youths bearing vessels containing wine or oil as tribute to Egypt, pictures of the Queen's apartments with dolphins on the walls, a special room containing the ancient throne of the King with pictures of griffins on the wall behind, elegant Cretain ladies presumably gazing at the Bull-Sports, and perhaps especially significant, a frescoe of a bull with a

young man leaping across its back and a girl awaiting her turn behind. Other slides showed the huge jars, taller than a man, made of terra-cotta to hold stores of oil and grain.

DELPHI

Delphi may be described as the spiritual centre of the Greek World in classical times. Appollo was worshipped here and his temple occupies a prominent place in one site. The shrine is most appropriately situated on one side of Mount Parnuassus, the home of the Muses. Pilgrims used to come from all over the known world to lay their problems before the Sibyl whose cave was situated within the lower part of the Temple. A priest was always in attendance to interpret the replies.

Other features of the site are the Stadium and the Castalian spring which flows down from Parnassus in a cleft of the rock above which eagles soar. It was said that if one tasted the water from this spring one would possess purity of heart and receive the gift of poetry.

On the stones of the Temple of Apollo are inscribed two mottoes, typical of Greek thought—Know thyself and Nothing in excess—that is everything in moderation.

The slides of Delphi showed, besides the buildings referred to, general views of Delphi, ancient and modern and several of the most famous statues of the period, recovered from the site and now preserved in the museum.

Olympia, where the Greek Games were instituted B.C. 776 was the subject of the third talk. Every fourth year competitors came from all over the civilized world to take part in this festival, for, as the time approached a sacred truce was proclaimed and all wars ceased. But all competitors had to be of Greek descent and all were amateurs.

The first day of the Games was taken up by religious observances, then followed the Pentathlon (five events to test all-round ability), official sacrifices and boys' competitions, while the last day was occupied with feasting and rejoicing.

This festival came to an end in A.D. 393 when the Christian Emperor, Theodosius, closed the Sanctuary. The Games were revived in 1896 and have continued at intervals ever since.

The slides showed the stadium, wrestling ground, gymnasium, remains of the temples of Zeus and Hera, and again statues from the local museum.

EAST SUSSEX WEALD IN THE 16th AND 17th CENTURY
by Dr. Colin Brent, 22nd March, 1974

The County can be divided into two distinct regions contrasting with each other. The Downland and the Weald. The Downland consists of the chalk downs together with the adjacent arable fields, the crops being corn together with the grazing of sheep and cattle on the Downs, sheep and cattle being brought on to the stubble after the grain was harvested.

By the 16th century the sheep corn husbandry no longer produced only for local consumption. The population of England doubled between 1500 and 1600 and by the time of the civil war, London was the largest city in the world. The increasing demand for food was met by the Elizabethan farmers of the Downland region, food being shipped from the Sussex Ports to London and to a lesser extent to ports in Europe. Due to the type of farming, large fields were more economical than small ones, hence size of farms tended to increase and small farms to disappear. Social structure very simple, with large tenant farmers and comparatively few farm workers leading to a stagnating or falling population.

The area of the Weald was very much more broken country, having considerable areas of timber. Farms were mostly small to medium in size and centred around dairying and breeding of cattle with a small amount of arable. Most farmers had substantial dairy herds, others produced beef and mutton. Battle cattle fair was very important by the 17th century. Animals raised on the farms were frequently fattened on the marshlands at Pevensey and Romney, before being taken to market, many being driven up to Smithfield market. Wool from the sheep was sold to the weavers in Kent. Timber was used for shipbuilding and for the manufacture of many wooden articles. Timber was also exported from Hastings and Rye. Timber was the raw material for the production of charcoal used for the manufacture of gunpowder and for iron smelting. The Weald was a thriving area having both farming and industry. Many farmers being craftsmen as well so that when there was little to do on the farm in the winter they were gainfully employed with one of the other industries.

HAROLD AFTER HASTINGS

Professor H. R. Loyn, D.Litt., 11th October, 1974

Professor Loyn explained that he had decided to concentrate on the person of Harold rather than to attempt to fit in a background of historiography or interpretation concerning the Norman Conquest. He confessed that this was not the first time he had lectured on Harold and referred specifically to a paper given in 1966 at Hastings on Harold's career, the successes as well as the failures, his character, his relationship with Edward and with William, the reasons for his accession and the reasons for his defeat. He promised a different approach for the Battle Memorial lecture, a concentration on his religious life, his burial and on legends of his survival. It would be enough just to state that it was natural and straightforward that Harold should succeed to the England throne in January 1066 because of his own pre-eminence in war and in counsel and experience, and that it was natural also that the Normans should regard Harold as an usurper and oath-breaker.

For an adequate discussion of his chosen three problems Professor Loyn looked not to Battle but to Waltham, Harold's great foundation in Essex. There had been a church there before Harold's day. The Waltham historians told of a miraculous discovery of a crucifix at Montecute in Somerset in the days of Cnut. The owner of Montacute, Tofi the Proud, staller and standard-bearer to Cnut, first in the kingdom of the king, ordered the crucifix to be moved to one of his estates. But the cart on which it was loaded could not be shifted although he promised to send it to all manner of places, London, Winchester, Glastonbury, Reading — especially Reading. Then Tofi remembered a poor hutment he had begun to build in a wooded place now known as Waltham. The mention of Waltham was enough. There was not more difficulty in moving the crucifix, and Tofi established the first church at Waltham in its honour.

Harold succeeded to Tofi lands and also to his ambitions. He was a much-travelled man, urbane, knowledgeable in the affairs of the world. He therefore established at Waltham not an ordinary Benedictine monastery but a community of canons, endowing the church generously. At a great ceremony 3rd May, 1060, Cynesige, archbishop of York, in the presence of the king, queen and a multitude of the great men of the kingdom, lay and ecclesiastical, dedicated the

Church. Harold's part was clearcut. He transformed a modest church into a great one, different from the normal Anglo-Saxon ministers, a potential powerful influence on the religious life of the community. Waltham was undoubtedly the central ecclesiastical interest in Harold's life.

Professor Loyn then discussed the arguments for and against Waltham as the burial place of Harold. William of Malmesbury, a good historian and impartial to Waltham believed that Harold's body was buried there after requests from his mother Gytha and offers of gold to William I — which he is said to have refused. Authorities nearer to the event say that he was buried at the sea-shore, possibly by William Malet. The orthodox Wiltham story is very circumstantial (no proof of veracity) involving requests for the body by two canons of Waltham Osgod Cnappa and Ailric Childemaster. Duke William agreed that Harold should be given proper burial, but added that he himself intended to build Battle Abbey in honour of the slain. The canons offered ten marks of gold for permission to bury at Waltham: William granted permission but refused the money. However, Osgod and Ailric could not then identify the body, and so back they went to fetch Edith, *cognomento Swannehals, collum cigni Gallice.* The were blunt and open about this. She, of sagacious mind, was most suitable because she had loved him exceedingly and had frequently been present in the secret places of his chamber. She pointed out the body which was thereupon carried off to Waltham, the insignia of royalty gone, a trampled and almost unrecognisable corpse. There are obvious mysteries here, coupled with doubts over the slayers. It is likely that a body was taken from the battlefield and it is possible that this was the body of Harold Godwinson.

Lastly Professor Loyn discussed the survival stories after Hastings, paying due acknowledgement to the lively and interesting essay on the subject by Miss Ashdown in the Festschrift to Professor Bruce Dickins *(The Anglo-Saxons,* London, 1959). Survival stories accrete around a variety of people, some likely, some unlikely. Two common categories are the conspicuously successful, the Golden-Age heroes, and the disastrously unsuccessful, the end-of-an-Age heroes. James IV of Scotland, to some extent Richard II of England, and Harold Godwinson fit into this latter category. Arthur demands a place of his own in British history, both the end-of-an-Age and the hope for the future. Olaf Haroldson, St. Olaf, in the North, was also held to be ready and waiting his country's need.

There is an important contrast here between Arthur and Harold. There is little mystical element in Harold's survival. The stories are matter-of-fact, circumstantial, nostalgic—the stuff of political disaster but not particularly hopeful. The Welsh came in time to hope for a resurrected Arthur who would lead them against the English. There is little hint of such sentiment in the Harold stories, perhaps a sign of the success of the Anglo-Norman experiment. Harold was passive in his survival, matter for a moral tale not an epic poem.

Professor Loyn then read several of the survival stories associated with the Waltham historians, suggesting Harold's survival, though grievously wounded, at Hastings. In one version Harold is said to have been hidden in Winchester and tended by a woman, a Saracen, skilled in surgery. On recovery his first instincts were those of an epic hero, to perish with his people or to bring them help. When hopes faded he accepted the inevitable, and retired from the world to live as a hermit near Chester. Harold's brother Gyrth is also said to have survived to a vast age. Professor Loyn concluded with one of the Old Norse versions of the legend which has Harold retire to a hermitage built in Canterbury where, as often as possible, Harold could watch William in church. The skill of the Old Norse story teller transmutes the final scene. The loyal Heming who had concealed Harold was at king William's court.

And one day when king William was sitting at table a pealing of bells was heard all over the town. The king asked for whom the bells were ringing so sweetly. Heming replied:

"I take it that a certain monk has died whose name was Harold."

"What Harold is this?", said the king.

"Godwinson," said Heming.

"Who has been looking after him?"

"I have."

"If this is true it shall be your death. But I want to see the body."

In fact it was not his death. Heming became a hermit in Harold's own cell, and William had Harold buried with great honour, but it does not say where.

SUMMER PROGRAMME, 1974

Five visits were arranged, one each month from May to September and they were attended by an average of over 40 members. The weather, though less settled than last year, was on the whole favourable to these occasions.

EAST GRINSTEAD AND WITHYHAM

On Thursday, 23rd May, a party visited Sackville College, East Grinstead. These beautiful and interesting almshouses which date from 1609 were last visited by the Society in 1964 (see *Transactions* No. 13). After being shown round by excellent guides the party had tea at Felbridge and then visited the parish church of St. Michael and All Angels, Withyham where there are the monuments to the Sackville family one of whose members, Robert Sackville, 2nd Earl of Dorset founded the College. The Rector, the Rev. P. Scott kindly welcomed us to the church and told us something of its history (attendance 44).

ASHFORD AND GREAT CHART

Our visit to Godinton Park, Ashford, took place on 19th June. The party enjoyed greatly the tour of this beautiful house with its abundance of decorative carving and splendid collection of furniture and porcelain. Godinton had not been visited by the Society since 1962 (see *Transactions* No. 11). Again we owed much to the able and friendly guides. After tea at Charing the party went to the parish church at Great Chart, which has close links with the Toke family, for so long owners of Godinton Park. We are most grateful to the Rector, the Rev. E. H. Gordon for meeting us there and giving us a talk about the church (attendance 37).

SINGLETON AND PARHAM

The visit to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton near Chichester, which we had not previously visited, took place on 10th July and it seems likely that a further visit will be called for before very long as the Museum is enlarged. We set off at 10 o'clock and reached Singleton in time for a picnic lunch.

The Museum, which is still in its early stages, is already a fascinating place with its collection of ancient buildings all of which have been preserved from utter destruction only by

being acquired and re-erected at this site. In addition to the buildings there are areas given up to the demonstration and practice of various crafts connected with forestry and timber working.

Leaving Singleton in the early afternoon the party drove to Parham Park. It was twelve years since this lovely house had been visited by the Society and there is an account of the visit in the *Transactions* for 1962. The visit on this occasion, too, was greatly enjoyed and ended with tea in the old kitchen (attendance 44).

SALTWOOD AND LYDD

A large party of our members visited Saltwood Castle on Thursday, 22nd August, a beautiful afternoon. A special opening was arranged for us and it was a great delight to wander freely about the grounds and the remains of the towers, the Knights' Hall and other buildings and to have tea in the open-air tea room. A previous visit had been made in 1959 (see *Transactions* No. 8).

The return journey took us over Romney Marsh to Lydd to visit the ancient and beautiful parish church. The Rector, Canon Wilmsworth, acted as our guide, so making the visit the more interesting and enjoyable (attendance 53).

BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA PLACE

The last visit of the season, on 11th September, was to Boughton Monchelsea, previously visited by the Society in 1960 (see *Transactions* No. 9). The afternoon was one of poor visibility so that the wonderful views obtainable from the grounds on clear days could not be enjoyed but the tour round the house was full of interest and conducted by an excellent guide. Many of the members found time to fit in a visit to the church as well and to admire its very ancient lychgate.

Tea for our party was served in the old kitchen of the house (attendance 43).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAINT-VALERY-SUR-SOMME

The following extracts from an article in Bulletin No. 4 of the Archaeological and Historical Society of Saint-Valery-Sur-Somme, somewhat freely translated, may be of interest to readers of *Transactions* as showing how the events of the year 1066 might have been to some extent repeated in 1803.

On 22nd June, 1803 General Dejean, the Minister of War, sent a note to the First Consul at Saint-Cloud or at Paris regarding the advantages offered by the Bay of the Somme as a base where an invasion of England could be prepared, if not as the actual starting point of the expedition.

It was from Saint-Valery that William the Conqueror set out in 1066 and in 1779 this port had been one of those where another, but abortive, expedition was prepared.

The peace which had been concluded with England at Amiens on 27th March, 1802 by Joseph Bonaparte, brother of the First Consul had just been broken by England in May, 1803 and hostilities had begun immediately.

From the beginning of June, 1803 the First Consul had received offers from Abbeville and Saint-Valery-Sur-Somme to construct boats for the flotilla planned for the landing in England. Napoleon was preparing to visit Saint-Valery and Boulogne.

The note which we print below and which was presented to the First Consul on 23rd June originated from Citizen Ricot.

"Note on the advantages which the Bay of Somme offers for an expedition against England.

At least 200 flat-bottomed boats can be collected in the bay or anchorage of Saint-Valery.

This bay, sheltered from attack by the enemy, within reach of an encampment of troops, has every facility for practising landings and every kind of manoeuvre.

An important advantage would be to familiarise the troops, most of whom live inland, with the motion of the sea.

A second, not less important advantage, would be to economise in the numbers of sailors needed for the expedition. Four days' practice with the oars would give the soldiers the necessary skill and two or three sailors would then be a sufficient crew to sail a boat.

This bay is two leagues long and one league wide. The entry to the bay faces North 5° East, about ten leagues from Boulogne and eight leagues from Dieppe.

From Cape Hourdel south of the bay to the nearest point on the English coast is 16 leagues. The most favourable winds for sailing out of the bay on a northerly course vary from S. to S.E. or even E.

With a favourable wind from one of these directions there is no doubt that 200 boats can be ready to sail on a single tide.

In summer there are no dangers. Later in the year gales from the north and north-west are easily foreseen and can be avoided by taking refuge in the harbour.

Difficulties may appear to ordinary people, but should present no obstacle to a leader of experience and ability, controlling forces which execute his commands as fast as he can give them.

Three days before new moon and full moon there is sufficient water in the bay to permit fifty ships to tack and practise landings and other manoeuvres necessary to the fleet. There will be no risk in such landings and the troops could be exercised in the most useful manner.

A great many benefits would be derived from this training and it seems that if the bay of the Somme did not exist one would pray that it did for the sake of an expedition to England.

A visit to the locality would reveal a thousand other advantages."

General Dejean noted when forwarding this letter to the First Consul:—

"I think that I should add to the observations of Citizen Ricot, merchant of Saint-Valery-Sur-Somme, that the forest of Crecy, on the banks of the Somme, offers a great quantity of timber for naval construction and that boats could be built quickly and economically in the yards of the port adjoining the forest."

Napoleon no doubt took notice of this letter because everything that concerned the preparation of the great expedition which he was planning interested him very keenly. In fact, on 24th June he left Saint-Cloud for his brother Joseph's chateau of Mortefontaine. Next day he reached Amiens in the evening. He stayed there until the 28th morning and left that same day for Saint-Valery, where he spent six hours on horseback visiting the most important points on the coast, as he wrote next day to Cambaceres, expressing his satisfaction at the spirit he found at Amiens, Abbeville and Saint-Valery.

Napoleon visited Hourdel Point and decided to construct a battery of two guns there at the mouth of the Somme—the "Battery Napoleon". One can picture the First Consul there on horseback surrounded by his staff, viewing the bay from the point probably in the afternoon of 28th June, 1803. We do not always realise that in places which are familiar to us giants of history may once have stood.

But Napoleon had certainly already chosen to establish the base for his expedition at Boulogne in order to benefit from the shortest Channel crossing and he created complementary harbours nearby at Wimereux and Anbleteuse. His plan would be to be master of the Straits of Dover for twenty-four hours and to cross them avoiding the British fleet, as his strength lay in his army, while the British strength on the contrary lay in its fleet. Saint-Valery served during the period of the camp at Boulogne to shelter from time to time vessels proceeding to Boulogne to be incorporated in the flotilla.

FERNAND BEAUCOUR.

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

held on November 8th, 1974

The Chairman, Mr. A. B. Huntley, presided.

The Chairman's report, previously circulated, was approved. The Membership has been maintained at about 350 and now stands at 353. The new programme cards for 1974/75, issued instead of leaflets, have met with general approval. There had been ten lectures during the Winter Programme and these as well as the Summer Visits have been very well attended.

The Treasurer's Report was submitted and approved, showed that the Balance was £149.83 which has to provide for printing the *Transactions*.

The Committee's recommendations for the election of officers, etc., were approved as follows: —

President Elected: Miss I. Hope Muntz, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., for the period 1974/77.

Vice-Presidents: Serving—Prof. D. Whitelock, C.B.E., Prof. Eleanor Searle 1972–75; The Very Rev. H. R. Darby, Dean of Battle; Brig. D. A. Learmont, C.B.E. 1973–76; Re-elected—Mrs. E. Webster, Mr. A. E. Marson 1974–77. *Chairman*—re-elected: Mr. A. B. Huntley; *Vice-Chairman*—elected: Mr. E. G. Creek; *Hon. Secretary*—re-elected: Mrs. F. M. Cryer; *Hon. Treasurer*—re-elected: Mr. P. A. S. Livett; *Membership Secretary*—re-elected: Mr. J. E. Sanders. *Committee:* Mr. A. C. G. Mason; Mrs. W. H. Palmer; Miss J. E. S. Robertson, 1972–75; Mr. F. W. Kempton; Mr. J. E. Sanders; Mrs. Bay Tidy, 1973–76; Miss R. Frewer; Mr. A. N. Crowe; Miss C. V. Cane; Mr. B. S. Martin, 1974–77.

BATTLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM TRUST

Eighth Annual General Meeting held on November 8th, 1974

The Chairman, Mr. W. M. Palmer, presided.

During the year we suffered the sad loss of two members who did much vital work for the Museum—first, the President of the Society, Lieut-Col. C. H. Lemmon on December 23rd, 1973, who was largely responsible for the establishment of the Museum, and secondly Mr. A. R. Clough, who did so much in establishing the Museum in Langton House. For both men, it can be gratefully said that the work they did lives after them. The number of visitors during the year has risen by almost one thousand to 14,696.

The effective conduct of the Museum depends on the devoted efforts of its officers, so the Committee records its lively gratitude to the Hon. Curator Mr. D. Beaty-Pownall, to the Hon. Treasurer Mr. R. W. Bishop and to the Hon. Secretary Miss J. E. S. Robertson.

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