No. 24

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Transactions
1974 - 1975

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

I am sorry that the issues of *Transactions* have fallen even further in arrears. I am very grateful to Mr. B. S. Martin who prepared the notes of lectures which follow. Unfortunately owing to the weight of his other commitments he could not see the whole issue through printing. The Committee would be glad to find anyone with the leisure to undertake the editorship or to receive any offers to help in recording notes of lectures particularly when the speaker's own notes may not be available.

The evening party on October 18th, 1975 was again held in the Abbots Hall and was a very successful occasion. Our grateful thanks are again due to Miss Parker, the headmistress of Battle Abbey School, for permitting us to use the Hall which is so attractive a venue for these anniversary celebrations. Our President, Miss Hope Muntz, was unable to be present and to address the members. In her absence Mrs. Palmer bravely stepped into the breach and gave a most interesting summary of the activities of the Society since its founding 25 years earlier, mentioning several persons who had particularly contributed to the successful record of those years. The Commemoration Service was held on the following day and the preacher was the newy appointed Dean of Battle, the Very Rev. Rex Bird.

Unfortunately owing to a clash of dates at the Langton Hall it was not possible to arrange a Commemoration Lecture, only the second time in the history of the Society that this has happened.

In addition to the talks summarised in later pages, Mr. D. C. Devenish spoke on "Archaeology in Museums", the Very Rev. H. R. Darby on Brecon Priory and Dr. Alec Vidler on "Rye through the Centuries".

For economic reasons no list of members is included in this number of *Transactions* but it is hoped to give a list in No. 25.

E. G. CREEK,
Chairman

May 1977

THE LIBERTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF BATTLE ABBEY IN THE MONASTIC PERIOD

Godfrey Webster (November 22nd, 1974)

This story begins with William's vow before the battle that if God gave him the victory he would endow a monastery upon the place of battle. One William Faber reminded him of this vow and was told to take some monks and to start building. As the actual site of the battle had neither stone nor water they began building on lower ground to the west. When William heard of this he angrily insisted that the foundations should rest upon the very spot where he had achieved his victory and promised that he would "so amply provide for this place that wine shall be more abundant here than water is in any other great abbey". During the building, which took a long time, William did provide most generously for the abbey. The first endowment was the "Leuga", a gift of the land more or less within a circle of one league in diameter around the Abbey. This estate was to be held free and quit for ever of all taxes, Scot, hideage, Danegeld and a host of other curious duties and exactions. But, most important of all there was to be complete freedom from any form of papal or episcopal jurisdiction.

The king also bestowed on the Abbey the manor of Wye, comprising twenty-two hundreds, including also the right to wrecks.

Among other gifts was the grant of the right to hold a market at Battle on Sundays. In those days, as on the Continent at the present day, after attending Mass in the morning one was free to engage in worldly affairs such as marketing for the rest of the day. Henry I gave a charter confirming this market and in addition allowing a fair to be held for three days at Martinmas.

The Abbot and monks were free of tolls on all roads. Moreover, if the Abbot throughout the realm of England chanced to meet any condemned thief, robber, or any other criminal he had power to release and pardon him. It is recorded that this remarkable power was actually exercised by Abbot Hamo on his way to London, much to the disgust of the King and nobles.

The Abbots were very proud of St. Martin's (their patron saint's) day. Nobody within their jurisdiction was allowed to do work on that day and one William Bottoner of Exning in Suffolk had to do penance in chapel for ploughing at Martinmas.

The Bishop of Chichester, it is said, wished to appoint the first Abbot. The monks wished it otherwise. They were supported by William who commanded that the consecration should be in the Abbey church.

Later abbots did go to Chichester for their consecration. But in 1157 at a trial held at Colchester before King Henry II between Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, and Walter de Lucy, Abbot of Battle, it was decided that the Bishop could not so much as place a chair in the Abbey without the permission of the Abbot. Abbot Warner even refused to supply the Bishop with food and water when he demanded it as a right and not as a favour.

William Rufus continued the privileges granted by his father to the letter and so did Henry. But court cases continued, so the Abbey suddenly produced documents. These documents had various obvious signs of forgery but nobody at that time seems to have objected.

Sanctuary could be claimed on Abbey land not just in the church.

The abbots had the right of Treasure Trove. This is one of several rights not repealed even now.

The king could not demand service from the Abbot or any of his tenants.

The tenant of Beech Farm had to provide a horse fit for the Abbot to ride, in addition to his ordinary rent.

One celebrated Abbot, Hamo of Offington, famous for his defence of Winchelsea against the French, celebrated Mass with a suit of armour under his habit.

DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF PAROCHIAL HISTORY ESPECIALLY IN BATTLE

Miss J. A. Brent (East Sussex Assistant Archivist) January 10th, 1975

In most communities one would expect to explain their development by their geographical position, e.g. Lewes as a gap town crossing the River Ouse, but with Battle its origin must be assigned to the establishment of the Abbey by William the Conqueror. So from about 1100 onwards the town gradually grew up around the Monastic buildings because large numbers of workmen were needed for the building work and thereafter for servicing the institution. Battle is situated at a junction of several ridgeway routes, the two most important being the London–Hastings route on the one hand, and the route west to Lewes on the other hand.

Because of its position Battle rapidly developed as a communications centre. The development of the turnpike roads and subsequently the railways provided plans, many of which give useful information as they not only show the route of the roads but the names of owners and occupiers of adjoining land.

Battle developed as a marketing town, and the shops which came into being often sold specialist and luxury goods not obtainable in the villages. There were for example shoemakers, tailors, drapers, druggists, saddlers, clockmakers, silversmiths and booksellers. There were also gunpowder mills. Battle had its own House of Correction at least from 1647 until it was finally closed down in 1853. The town also had a local Board of Health whose functions covered sewerage and drainage, supply of water and management of the streets. These functions were ultimately taken over by the Urban District Council in 1894. Battle provided a wide range of professional services for the region, lawyers were attracted there by the Petty Sessions and other professions shown in the records were insurance agents, surveyors and surgeons.

Battle naturally developed as something of a religious centre because of the Abbey in its midst. The privileges granted to the Abbey were extensive and covered the area called the Lowey (a circle of one and a half miles radius round the Abbey). Neither the Bishop nor any Royal Officer could interfere there. The Abbot was Lord of the Manor of Battle, and inspection of the early records enables one to trace the tenants of every house in the town. Most of the mediaeval manorial records are in the Henry Huntington Library in California, but many are now available on microfilm in the Public Records Office. The records from the Sixteenth Century are amongst the Battle Abbey Manuscripts in the Record Office.

Having briefly examined the economy of the town and its institutions the lecturer illustrated the social structure of the town by various slides. These included a picture of the Letters Patent from the King in 1538 after the dissolution of the Abbey when most of its estates were granted to Sir Anthony Browne, Master of the Horse to King Henry VIII. The lecturer then showed further illustrations in connection with the subsequent ownership of the Abbey by Sir Thomas Webster.

It was pointed out that apart from the Manorial Records further sources providing information for a study of the Parish of Battle included two series of Wills from the Archdeaconry of Lewes as well as the Parish Registers from 1609, the Census Returns from 1851 and 1861 and the Land Tax Records from 1780 to 1832.

BATTLE IN WORLD WAR II

Mr. H. G. Seymour (January 24th, 1975)

Great excitement prevailed in Battle on the outbreak of war. The Civil Defence went into action with four posts in Battle, one being at Caldbec House, the home of the Hon. Mrs. Whistler, who with her family was very prominent in helping the war effort. A book still exists with a complete report of incidents for the whole of the War.

Watch Oak, fortified with walls and sandbags, was the centre of operations. There the Civil Defence personnel on duty slept every night.

The Abbey was given one of the military units stationed in Battle: first the Devon Regiment under the command of Capt. Oliver, then the Canadian Engineers and later the Lancasters. Among other duties they were responsible for setting up anti-tank traps and road blocks. Derelict cars and tractors were placed in the fields to discourage the landing of enemy aircraft. Mr. Seymour himself, having failed to rejoin the Navy, was kept busy with the instruction of some of the troops in car engineering and for maintaining army vehicles.

Col. Hume Spry was responsible for the Civil Defence and a detachment of the Home Guard was formed.

1943 saw increased air activity. On February 2nd some tip and run raiders dropped three bombs one of which scored a direct hit on Tickner's Newsagency killing Mr. and Mrs. Giles. This was the only fatality in Battle itself. Another bomb fell on the Green and the blast blew a sentry off his feet but fortunately failed to set off the 500 lbs. of gelignite stored in the Abbey Gate House.

In all these incidents the public came forward to help clear up the streets and get things back to normal as soon as possible. There was a wonderful spirit of help and co-operation.

Nineteen forty-six saw the coming of the flying bombs which fell thick and fast in this part of Sussex and Kent.

With the approach of D-Day thousands of troops were concentrated in the district with their vehicles and armaments hidden in the woods.

After the lecture questions were answered and several members recounted their experiences of the war in Battle.

A vote of thanks was moved by Mr. Beaty-Pownall.

THE DOMESTIC LOGISTICS OF BATTLE ABBEY

Miss Susan Mumford, M.A. (February 14th, 1975)

The meaning of this title was really the examination of the household economics during the existence of the Abbey, and the way in which the Abbey was administered. This exercise is more interesting than one may imagine when considered in the context of the surroundings of an austere dark and prayerful monastery. In examining the domestic logistics there are four main themes which must be borne in mind relating to the Benedictine way of life:—

1. The rules include poverty although this relates to poverty of the individual and there was nothing in the rule which forbade the community as a whole being poor if this was for the greater glory of God.
2. The monastery must include a water mill and garden but does not necessarily have to be self-sufficient and outside provision can be bought.
3. Frugality was suggested but certainly not in any extreme form, and therefore wine and moderate comforts were allowed.
4. The rules provided that the monks should give hospitality to visitors and to the poor and also to travellers whether rich or poor. Battle Abbey also accommodated Bishops and Kings from time to time.

The income of the Abbey came from many sources. The Abbey was richly endowed with lands in the South of England and Wales, much of the lands owned by the Abbey are difficult to identify now, and the lecturer showed a map illustrating the way in which the lands were scattered. In 1066 the Abbey owned about 4,000 acres and by the time of the Dissolution of the monasteries this had increased to some 14,000 acres.

The peasant tenants paid about three shillings a year to the Abbot and also owed him services which were of course of value to the monastery. In time the peasants paid cash and the services gradually died out. The Burgesses also paid the Abbot 7p each a year as well as helping repair the mill and helping mow Bodiam Meadow! A further source of income was from the "Lowey" (a circle of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles radius around the

Abbey). From this area the Abbey obtained tithe income, the proceeds of a market each week, the profits of which were not taxed, the privilege of being able to take and keep venison anywhere around Hastings, and of course the proceeds of the surplus products produced on the Abbey grounds. The monastery did therefore have a complex source of income.

As far as expenditure was concerned, this was largely on food for the monks, the sick and elderly in the infirmary, the guests and visitors, and not forgetting the pint of wine and one pound loaf of bread per day allowed for each monk! From the records it appears that other items of expenditure were for example bell ropes, olive oil, cloths, horse shoes, dogs, utensils for the Rectory, carts, books for choir schoolboys, coffins and incense, and indeed the chain for the Abbot's pet monkey!

With regard to the administration of the monastery the lecturer gave an illustration of the "chain of command". It seems that over the years apart from the sacristan who is in charge of church expenses, and the almoner, the official who assumed the greatest responsibility, apart from the Abbot, was the seneschal or "central treasurer". This particular post assumed greater responsibility from 1430 onwards.

PLANNING FOR CONSERVATION

Mr. Roy Worskett, A.R.I.B.A., M.R.T.P.I. (Senior Planning Officer to Department of the Environment) March 14th, 1975

The lecturer informed his audience that he had visited Battle previously and was very impressed except for "the curious smell of burnt jam"! He went on to say that he had begun his work in architecture on new buildings, but then became horrified at the way in which everything was becoming uniform. To him conservation preserves identity.

Conservation means more than just "preserving", in other words it must be coupled with a need to keep a town, village or community alive and therefore means controlling development as a whole and not merely keeping old buildings as such. There are some two hundred and fifty thousand listed buildings in the U.K. and we probably have the toughest legislation in Europe and the legislation we have is centralised. This provides for a uniform standard of listing and the fine for the destruction of a listed building is now the market value of the site instead of the previous £100.

The recent Civic Amenities Act required local authorities to make conservation areas and advertise planning applications where listed building consent was required.

One of our failures was that we had not really learnt the skill of putting up new buildings amongst old ones so that they blend. One of the problems with architects is that they are not trained to design buildings in the context of other buildings, but merely to design a building on its own without regard to its surroundings.

Local authorities should show that they believe in conservation and strictly enforce the legislation where it applies and it is indeed societies like our own which should keep up the pressure. It is interesting to note that money available from government for conservation has never been cut.

The lecturer then illustrated some of his points in connection with the City of Bath and showed a number of slides. In Bath there are more listed buildings than in any other City other than London as it has 3,000 listed buildings in all. Bath is going to spend two million pounds granted to it from local government in connection with conservation. It has always been the idea that towns must expand. If this belief is carried out then it is almost impossible to conserve. This is a very important issue and the problem must be solved and the solution may lie in making new towns and new villages rather than expanding old ones.

Finally the lecturer stressed the importance of making children interested in conservation and in environment for the sake of the future. He also commented that he had been to our Museum but as was so often the case he noticed that there was very little about buildings and architecture, and hoped that we would be able to do something about this.

THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH PARSONAGE

Rev. A. Chetwynd Talbot (October 3rd, 1975)

The story can really be divided into four periods:—

(a) The Medieval and Pre-Reformation Period.
(b) The Post-Reformation Era up to the end of the 18th Century.
(c) The Victorian Era of the 19th Century.
(d) The 20th Century up to the present day.

The distinction between a Rector and a Vicar was that in the case of a Rector the appointment to a living was made by a lay landowner. A Rector had complete security of tenure

and full rights to all tithes and any other legal emoluments attached to the living. Sometimes the appointment was by monastic establishments. The Rector appointed a "vicarius" (Latin for substitute) and hence the term "Vicar" to look after the Parish on his behalf. The Vicars only received such a fraction of the tithes as payments as the monastic Rectors allowed them. Furthermore the Vicar could be dismissed at will by the monastic Rector and so originally had little or no security of tenure. This distinction was minimised over the centuries and for many years the practical difference between Rectors and Vicars has been nil.

(a) The earliest form of a priest house or parsonage appears to have been a "community house" providing accommodation for a whole group of missionary monks, priests and lay brothers. Such community establishment would in turn later sub-divide the area under their charge into small local areas, one for each inhabited settlement. The priest was often no better off than his peasant parishioners and often as little educated. His lodging would be a simple village house similar to that lived in by a yeoman farmer, basically a wood-framed house with thatched roof, a main hall open to the roof with an open hearth in the middle and perhaps two service rooms at one end with a solar or upper room above them.

(b) The Reformation meant that it became the norm rather than the exception for Anglican clergy to be married men with families. This was often the case in the earlier period as in the country strict celibacy was not the rule from very early days. With the suppression of the monastery some livings became materially much richer and so an attraction to higher social grades and better educated men who looked on the profession of a parish priest with greater favour. Not perhaps a very laudable motive! Thus parsonage houses became family houses second only to the local manor since they were occasionally the homes of wealthy parsons receiving large annual sums in the form of tithe.

(c) In the 18th Century—the age of so-called enlightenment —many of the clergy became closely associated with the local Squirearchy either by their own birth or by marriage and then he spent more time in hunting foxes than fishing for men! Alongside the growing wealth of the upper echelons of society through industrial and commercial enterprises a new religious spirit was beginning to be evident. John Wesley was at work

among the unprivileged classes for much of the 18th Century and Methodism developed when the Church of England disowned him. Undoubtedly John Wesley deserved the title of The Saint Francis of the 18th Century. The evangelical revival in the Church of England towards the end of the century was largely sparked off by the spirit of Wesley and his followers. All this new spiritual energy together with the rapidly growing material wealth of the new middle classes helped to make the 19th Century a time of great activity in the building and re-building of the churches and parsonages. In Victorian times many already large parsonages were enlarged still further by the addition of verandahs, conservatory, additional bedrooms, new windows and so on. A Vicar of Swinehead in Lincolnshire is reliably reported to have made a new bay window in his vicarage after the birth of each of his numerous daughters.

(d) With the coming of the 20th Century all this opulence was destined to come to an end. The First World War saw the beginning of the rise in prices and in wages. Tithes were increasingly difficult to collect and increasingly unfair to those legally expected to pay them. They finally came to an end in 1936. Meanwhile the Church Commissioners who came into being as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1837 had for more than a century been trying to augment the tiny livings and make some sort of income for the parsons. By the end of the last war it was very clear that a parson's income could never again enable him to live in the larger parsonages that remained. Indeed some of the obviously over large parsonages were already coming on to the market well before the last war. There followed the sad procession of parsonage sales and the building of small villas to take their place. So often these small modern parsonages have had little character and resembled slightly superior council houses. The welfare state now provides the loaves and fishes which in past ages were so often and so readily forthcoming from the parsonage kitchen. It might be true to say that today the parson in his humble little parsonage is approaching very close to the situation of his medieval brother who lived in a little wood-framed village house just able to scrape an adequate living with the continuing help of his kind and generous neighbours. Meanwhile, as we think of all the front gates bearing such addresses as "The Old Rectory", "The Old Vicarage", or perhaps just "Glebe House", we are tempted to sigh with Saint Thomas à Kempis "SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI".

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY BATTLE

Mr. D. H. Beaty-Pownall, F.R.I.B.A., November 14th, 1975

The two famous events in Battle history were the Norman victory in 1066 and the dissolution of the monasteries and destruction of the Abbey in 1538. Three hundred years later after the industrial revolution agriculture was still the biggest industry. The roads and the mud around Battle were notorious and the town in consequence was very secluded. One 18th Century writer observed that Battle seemed a fairly unruly and blasphemous place. The women seemed to be more intellectual than the men.

The area of Battle Parish in 1850 was 8,000 acres, of which 6,000 acres belonged to the Abbey Estate of Sir Godfrey Webster. The population in 1851 was 3,900 including migrant railway workers. The average occupancy was six persons per house. Lewinscroft had 48 inhabitants.

The character of the buildings was the result of two periods of building, after the Black Death in the 15th Century and in the Tudor period, and one face-lift in the 18th Century when houses were refaced with hung tiles.

Battle was overpopulated for its resources. There was a lack of decent water supply. Water was obtained from springs behind the George, on Caldbec Hill and at Loose Farm. There was no proper drainage. There were ditches on either side of the ridge of the High Street. The result of the lack of water and of drainage was ill health. The death rate was 48 per thousand.

The opening of the railway in 1852 brought improvements. It allowed people to emigrate. It also introduced a standard time as throughout the country.

Battle was one of the first towns to take action under the Public Health Act. An inspection was carried out and the inspector was horrified by the revolting state of sanitation. Manure was stored behind one house in the High Street. There was a lot of typhus in Mount Street. It is notable how many people in mid-19th Century Battle were employed in the leather industry. The inspector's report recommended a sewerage system with settling tanks. Also there should be only one slaughterhouse in future.

Battle acted very quickly on the report. A Board of Health was constituted and raised a loan of £1,800 from the County Fire Office by advertising in *The Times*. An Inspector of Nuisances was appointed. Numbering of houses was started.

Roads remained in a fairly revolting state. The scrapings from horses and sheep were sold. Drainage was started and houses were connected by 1860. Water supply was never very successful. There was a typhoid outbreak in 1873. But by the end of the 19th Century the death rate had been halved.

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1975

This programme was once again well suported, the number attending on each occasion being given in brackets.

BORDE HILL AND LINDFIELD (38)

On May 14th a party visited Borde Hill garden which had previously been visited in 1969, and after tea they went to Lindfield. Here visits had been arranged to the Parish Church and to The Thatched Cottage.

Lindfield Church, dedicated to All Saints, is perhaps more impressive from the outside with its fine broach spire. The building dates mainly from the 13th and 14th centuries, the list of clergy responsible for the parish beginning with William de Bosco, c. 1230. The interior is quite spacious having north and south transepts as well as aisles. In 1617, a date recorded on the roof of the nave, a necessary restoration took place financed by a tax levied from the local inhabitants. During the 18th and 19th Centuries the church fell into disrepair and was restored between 1848 and 1850 by the priest in charge at his own expense. This restoration, like many others of that period, is considered to have been too drastic, destroying much that remained from earlier times, but it preserved the fabric and there is much of interest and beauty in the church.

"The Thatched Cottage" was formerly known as "Henry VII's Lodge" as it had been used by him as a shooting lodge. It is a fine example of a mediaeval Wealden house, dating from about 1400, when it served as the Manor House of Lindfield. It is so wonderfully preserved and maintained by the present owners that it is possible in it to see not only the original plan of the house and method of construction even to the hazel thatching but also how it was converted to a later style in the early 17th Century with the building of an inglenook fireplace and chimney and provision of a room over the hall.

The many features of unusual interest were shown and explained to our party in a way that made the visit to the house memorable.

EYHORNE MANOR, HOLLINGBOURNE (44)

The June visit was to Eyhorne Manor, Hollingbourne. This is a Kentish yeoman's house dating from the early 15th Century. Originally it was very similar in design to The Thatched Cottage visited at Lindfield in May, and like it converted in the 17th Century to a more comfortable house. The date 1611 is carved on the chimney stack.

Eyhorne is of special interest as having been restored over a period of twenty years by the unaided efforts of the present owners and their family; no builders, plumbers, electricians or other specialists were employed. The result is a charming, intimate home with many examples, specially in the hand-made furniture, of fine craftsmanship. In addition there is a rare example of a 17th Century smoking bay where carcases would be hung and smoked to preserve them for winter use. Another unusual feature is a Laundry Museum containing a large collection of domestic irons and other laundry equipment.

The garden has not only been planted with suitable traditional cottage-garden flowers but also has been planned to provide the many types of herbs that would be used in cooking, or laundry work, for scenting linen and to freshen and sweeten the atmosphere indoors, and bunches of these and of scented roots are to be found in most rooms.

The friendly informality of the welcome given to the party by the owners and their clear explanation of the way the house had developed from its ancient to its contemporary condition added much to the pleasure and interest of the visit.

WALMER AND DEAL CASTLES (44)

These castles which we visited on July 9th were built between 1538 and 1540 as part of the South Eastern England defence system. Walmer Castle then consisted of a low central tower ringed by four semi-circular bastions. It was designed to resist invasion from the continent and it is known that as many as two thousand men were employed in building it. It was never needed for this purpose and since the 18th Century has been used as the official residence of the Lords Warden of the Cinque Ports, rooms being built radiating from the central tower on to the bastions. Among the more famous Lords Warden have been the younger Pitt, the Duke of Wellington, Winston Churchill, and now Sir Robert Menzies. Wellington's was the longest tenure of the office, extending from 1829 to 1852, and there is much to remind visitors of his

residence including his bedroom with the simple camp bed on which he always preferred to sleep and some of his uniforms, and even the original Wellington boot. During his period of office Queen Victoria and Prince Albert stayed at the castle and the rooms they used are shown to visitors.

Our party was taken over the castle before it was closed for the lunch hour and we were permitted to have our lunch in the grounds. These beautiful gardens owe much to the planning of Lady Hester Stanhope who acted as hostess for Pitt when he was in office and to a later Warden, Lord Granville, who also built additional rooms above the gatehouse where there is now a flat for the Lord Warden to use when in residence.

Deal Castle was visited in the afternoon. This is of the same date as Walmer Castle but larger having six bastions round the low central tower. Residential quarters were at one time added but much of them was destroyed in 1940 and the rest has since been cleared away so that it is possible to see the symmetry of the original plan and this gives a better understanding of its military purpose and showed what Walmer Castle, though smaller, would have been like before the conversion. It is not diffcult to imagine Deal Castle manned by troops firing at ships in the Channel, though it, like Walmer Castle, was never needed for the purpose for which it was designed.

CHARLESTON MANOR AND FRISTON CHURCH (52)

Charleston Manor, which was visited in August, is a house of great antiquity and architecture of three different periods can be seen in the different sections of the house. The oldest parts date from the 11th Century when it belonged to Alured, William the Conqueror's cupbearer, and in Domesday Book it is entered under the name of "Cerlestone". During restoration work done for Sir Oswald Birley when he came to Charleston in 1931, in a first floor room, a Norman window was uncovered and what appears to have been a doorway leading to a chapel which was later demolished. During the Tudor period the house was enlarged by a wing built to the south and east and in it is the present drawing-room which is lined with linen-fold panelling. The great Tithe Barn belongs to this period also. Finally in the 18th Century the present front was added and the stables built. [See also *Transactions*, No. 13.]

The exterior of Friston Church is simple and the churchyard is entered by a tapsel gate. The interior at once gives an impression of dignity and peace. The church probably dates from the reign of Edward the Confessor and most of the nave was built then but soon an extension was needed and the original Saxon doorway whose outline can be clearly seen was blocked up and replaced by a plain Norman doorway nearer to the west end of the nave. A small chancel in the Early English style was added about 1300 and the height of the nave was increased by the fine timbering of the roof in the middle of the 15th Century. The addition of a north transept, known as the Selwyn transept, during the 19th Century was made so that it might be possible to move the interesting monuments to the Selwyn family from the chancel where they took up much needed space.

IGHTHAM MOTE AND IGHTHAM CHURCH (42)

The last visit of the season was to Ightham, first to the fortified mediaeval manor house known as Ightham Mote. Previous visits had taken place in 1959 and 1968 but the beauty of the house made a further visit well worthwhile. As soon as the courtyard is entered the remote and peaceful site and the skilful and unobtrusive work of restoration of the exterior give the visitor an appreciation of the antiquity of the building. The parts of the interior that are shown, including the Great Hall, the Solar and the two chapels, are similarly well restored, the aim always being to preserve the original as far as possible.

Ightham Church dates from about 1100, and some Norman work is still visible but rebuilding took place during the 14th and 15th centuries from which time date the fine timber roofs of the nave and south aisles. A north aisle built in brick was added in the 17th Century. In the chancel are memorials to Sir Thomas Cawne who built the original Ightham Mote in the 14th Century and to three members of the Selby family who owned the Mote for nearly 300 years, from the reign of Elizabeth I to the reign of Victoria. Our attention was called to some interesting gravestones in the churchyard which are of a type peculiar to the district round about Maidstone. They date from the end of the 17th Century and are in the shape of a head and shoulders with incised faces presumably intended to portray the features of the person buried beneath.

[See also *Transactions*, Nos. 8 and 17, for accounts of previous visits to Ightham.]

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

held on November 28th, 1975

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

The Chairman's report, which had been previously circulated, was approved. The membership remained at about 350. The committee had regrettably been compelled to raise the annual subscriptions to £1.25 single and £2.00 double. The winter programme of nine lectures and the five summer visits had all been well attended. The summer party on June 21st at Powdermill House had been enjoyed by about 80 members and friends. The committee had made representations with regard to the County Structure Plan and to a planning application affecting the battlefield area.

The Treasurer's report showed a surplus on the year's workings of £99 and a balance of £442 at the bank, but pointed out that this balance included subscriptions paid in advance and £120 required for printing of *Transactions*. The report was approved.

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

President: Serving—Miss I. Hope Muntz, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S. for the period 1975–77. Vice-Presidents: Re-elected—Prof. D. Whitelock, C.B.E., Prof. Eleanor Searle, Mrs. W. N. Palmer 1975–78; serving—the Bishop of Sherwood, Brigadier A. D. Learmont, C.B.E. 1973–76; Mrs. E. Webster, Mr. A. E. Marson 1974–77. Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. A. B. Huntley; Vice-Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. E. G. Creek; Hon. Secretary: Re-elected—Mrs. F. M. Cryer; Hon. Treasurer: Elected —Mr. D. I. Powell; Committee: Mr. F. W. Kempton, Mr. J. E. Sanders, Mrs. E. Bay Tidy, O.B.E. 1973–76, Miss R. Frewer, Mr. K. N. Crowe, Miss C. V. Cane, Mr. B. S. Martin 1974–77, Mr. A. C. G. Mason, Miss J. E. S. Robertson 1975–78.

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM TRUST NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on November 28th, 1975

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

During the year we suffered the loss of one of our original trustees, Sir James Doak. The numbers of visitors declined to 13,596, clearly the result of a long spell of dry weather. The admission charge had remained unchanged since 1971 and the committee proposed to raise it to 10p. The 1975 season opened without any custodians. The Committee is grateful to the volunteers who made opening possible throughout April and also manned the Museum on Sunday afternoons. The Committee wish to record their cordial appreciation of the work done by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Bishop, the Hon. Curator, Mr. Beaty-Pownall, and the Hon. Secretary, Miss Robertson.

The following members were recommended for re-election to the Committee and were duly appointed:— Chairman: Mr. W. N. Palmer; Vice-Chairman and Hon. Curator: Mr. D. H. 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. F. Mason, Mr. K. N. Crowe and Mr. E. J. Tyler.

After the two meetings Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mason showed slides taken during the summer visits with a recorded commentary.

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