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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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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CONTENTS

List of Officers and Committee 1978–79 1

Contents 2

Editorial Note 4

LECTURES:

"Railways of the Hastings Area", Sir Peter Allen, December 8th, 1978 6

"Uppark", Mr. Martin Drury, February 2nd, 1979 12

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1979:

Lullingstone Roman Villa and Old Soar Manor, May 17th, 1979 14

Uppark (Petersfield), June 13th, 1979 15

Sussex Mills, July 11th, 1979 15

Squerryes Court and Lingfield Church, August 16th, 1979 15

The Royal Pavilion, Brighton, and Bishopstone Church, September 13th, 1979 16

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY 17

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MUSEUM TRUST 17

List of Officers and Committee 1979–80 19

LECTURES:

"Wellington and Others, and their Connection with East Sussex", the Countess of Longford, C.B.E., October 12th, 1979 20

"Langton House", Mrs. B. M. Lucey, November 9th, 1979 22

ARTICLES:

"Crowhurst Before the Normans", the late Mr. C. T. Chevallier 29

"A Famous Ford—Blanquetaque", M. Hubert Quilliot 36

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1980:

Long Barn, Weald and Bayham Abbey, May 15th, 1980 34

Goodwood House and Boxgrove Priory, June 23rd, 1980 35

Romney Marsh, July 17th, 1980 35

Finchcocks, Goudhurst and Cranbrook Museum, August 21st, 1980 35

THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY 42

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MUSEUM TRUST 43

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

This issue of Transactions contains only a handful of reports of talks given to the Society. If any members feel able to record notes of the lectures so that an abstract can be printed when a full text is not available would they please come forward and volunteer to help.

To supplement the four available reports of lectures we are printing with the kind permission of Mrs. Chevallier a paper on "Crowhurst Before the Normans", which the late Mr. C. T. Chevallier prepared for our members but was unable to give at a meeting. We are also printing extracts from an article in the magazine of the Historical Society of St. Valery-sur-Somme, Battle's twin town. The editor is personally responsible for any errors in translation.

Other talks in the two winter programmes were given by Mr. Barry Funnell on Sussex Windmills and Watermills, Mr. David Calvert on Herstmonceux and its Lords, Mrs. Pamela Corbett on Battle House of Correction, Rev. Gordon Diamond on England before and after John Wesley, Dr. P. Brandon on Land and Man in Mediaeval Sussex, Miss Anne Roper on Romney Marsh, Cmdr. G. W. R. Harrison on Heraldry and the Royal Arms, Mr. H. Newbery on Battle in the last 60 years, Mr. Anthony Streeten on the excavations at Garden Hill. Mr. Keith Reader entitled "Muses and Mandarins—light-hearted account of the early Civil Service Commissioners", Mr. John Townsend on the Vikings, Mr. John Cyster on the History of Hop Growing, Mr. Henry Cleere on the Iron Industry of Roman Britain, and Mr. Jonathan Coad on English Castles 1070–1870. In addition as an experiment there was a members' evening at which it was hoped that a number of members would give brief talks. In the event there were only two speakers, Mr. Beaty-Pownall and Mr. Roy Handover. The latter showed slides of Gettysburg comparing the massive organisation for tourism there with the little that is done at Battle. Not all the members who heard him would like Battle to be put on the map in the same style as Gettysburg, but no doubt there are lessons to be learnt from the U.S.A., as my wife and I found also at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, where the Tourist Reception Centre, for example, is larger than Langton House with a staff of at least a dozen and continuous showing of films made by professional actors in period costume.

The Commemoration parties in 1979 and 1980 were again

held in Battle Abbey by kind permission of Miss Parker and were as popular as ever. The summer party was held at Telham Place in 1979 by courtesy of Mrs. Kent and in 1980 at Ninfield at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. T. Simmonds. We are very grateful to both hosts for their generous hospitality. Both occasions were a success and in 1980 we were particularly fortunate to have a fine evening.

The preacher at the Commemoration Service in 1979 was the Right Rev. Bishop Goodwin-Hudson and in 1980 the Rev. Michael Walker, Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds, which like our Parish Church stands just outside but is historically connected with an ancient Abbey.

E. G. CREEK,
Chairman.

March, 1981.

RAILWAYS AT BATTLE
Sir Peter Allen (December 8th, 1978)

To limit our talk to just Battle is too narrow. We must consider also Hastings, the objective of the railways. The talk is best called "Railways of the Hastings area". Three lines concern us: (a) the line along the coast through Bexhill, (b) the line from Ashford via Rye, (c) the line through Tunbridge Wells.

The line along the coast was the first to reach Hastings—or rather St. Leonards. The Parliamentary Act for the construction of a branch of the London, Brighton & South Coast railway from Brighton to Hastings via Lewes was obtained on July 29th, 1844. Construction started and the line from Brighton reached Lewes on June 8th, 1846. Hastings—or rather Bulverhythe—was reached on June 26th, and St. Leonards, West Marina — no longer a station — on November 7th, 1846.

Continuation of the line from Bo-Peep where it met the South-Eastern Railway to Hastings had to await the building of the tunnels by S.E.R. until February 13th, 1851.

Originally Brighton line trains to Hastings had to go into Brighton and then be hauled out again. The Brighton branch to Lewes direct from the main line at Keymer junction, south of Haywards Heath, was opened in October, 1847. Direct trains to Hastings were then possible. This line was electrified by the Southern Railway in 1935 as far as Ore.

The L.B.S.C. "Fasts" — not expresses — to Hastings travelled via the main line and Lewes. The alternative routes to Eastbourne and Hastings—the Bluebell Line (from East Grinstead to Lewes) opened in 1878—and the Cuckoo Line (from Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge and Hailsham to Polegate opened in 1876) were branches and byways. All this was Brighton Line territory though the South Eastern tried for a year, 1884–85, to put on an express to Eastbourne via the Cuckoo Line which failed. In its heyday, just before the 1914 war, the L.B.S.C.'s fastest trains from Victoria or London Bridge took two hours—one hour 58 minutes was the best; more often two hours and a quarter were required.

Today with electric traction, centralised signalling, computerised control and public ownership the best trains take 1 hour 55 minutes. On the other hand a cheap day return was 12/- first class and 6/9 third. Weekend tickets were 14/- and 8/-.

The Brighton line was attractive in many ways. Hamilton Ellis, the artist and author, talked of:

"The old Brighton company's liking for ornate railway stations" and said of it: "Our railway . . . was highly individual—sporting, picturesque and not always predictable. It was seldom execrated in the manner to which its neighbour the South Eastern & Chatham was so sadly accustomed".

It seems to me that the Brighton line and the South Eastern had a love-hate relationship. They clashed over the Hastings traffic but the odds were always on the shorter though hillier South Eastern route. They also attacked briefly with a "fast" train for a time to Tunbridge Wells with their line via Oxted.

The locomotives of the L.B.S.C. were an attractive lot. William Stroudley, their C.M.E. from 1870 to 1890 painted his passenger engines a rich golden yellow. His successor, R. J. Billinton until 1904 continued the practice. After that D. Earle Marsh, 1904–11 and Billinton's son, C.M.E. from 1911 until the amalgamation of January 1st, 1923, painted the engines a rich warm brown.

The fast trains on the Brighton line up to electrification were usually hauled by R. Billinton's class B4 4-4-0's though some Eastbourne expresses used Marsh "Atlantics" and big tank engines.

When I remember this line in Brighton days—1915–19—the local trains were hauled by Billinton D3 0-4-4 tank engines. In these two pictures the brown one of a train on Pevensey levels in 1917 is hauled by D3 No. 368 ex "Newport" the other picture shows a D3 in 1910 at Dorking when still in Billinton yellow livery. These little engines date from 1892; they weighed 48 tons.

During the war on 28th November, 1942, one of these engines—No. 365, formerly "Victoria", was attacked by a German plane on Romney Marsh. The plane flew too low, hit the engine and crashed. The boiler exploded but the crew survived. For years this class, the D3, was used for the copper cap badge of the L.B.S.C. enginemen.

Although the Brighton line got to Hastings first, it was by a roundabout route, even when the Wivelsfield–Lewes line was opened. The South Eastern railway first reached Hastings via Rye on 13th February, 1851. The Board of Trade map of 1845 showed a proposed line from Hastings

to Battle. The line south from Tunbridge Wells which had been reached from Tunbridge Junction, as it was then spelt, in 1845 reached Robertsbridge on 1.9.1851, Battle on 1.1.1852 and Hastings on February 13th, 1852.

The South Eastern railway started with its London terminus at London Bridge where it shared the station with the Brighton line. It also shared the track as far as Redhill with the Brighton line before turning east towards the Channel ports via Penshurst, Tonbridge and Ashford. When the branch to Hastings was opened in 1852 the S.E. route was thus still a long one.

By the 1860's the South Eastern besides being in ruinous competition with the London, Chatham and Dover Railway for the Channel traffic and London suburban made three major moves. It felt the need for a terminus in London of its own. It therefore spent large sums to bridge the Thames twice and opened Cannon Street on Dowgate Hill in 1862 and Charing Cross on the site of Hungerford Market in 1864.

Next came the Redhill cut-off from New Cross to Tonbridge which saved 13 miles but involved heavy engineering works. It was opened in 1868. Until this date the whole train service of the L.B.S.C. and the S.E.R. worked over two lines between London Bridge and Redhill. So the line as we know it today was completed, 62½ miles from Charing Cross to Hastings, 55½ to Battle. O. S. Nock writes: "As a piece of civil engineering the new line can rank with the best in the country."

The new Redhill cut-off was not only heavily graded—there is a 6½ mile stretch uphill at 1/100 to 1/132 going towards London—and a long climb going south as far as Knockholt—it also involved two considerable tunnels, Polhill north of Sevenoaks 2,609 yards, and Sevenoaks, south of Tubs Hill station which is 3,459 yards.

"Our line" is notable for its tunnels between London and Hastings. There are 12 altogether. The tunnels on the Tonbridge–Hastings section have been troublesome from the start. The original Bo-Peep tunnels were so narrow that they could only allow single line working.

The Wadhurst tunnel after only 11 years showed signs of collapse and it was found that the contractor had cheated, only putting in one course of lining bricks instead of four. The tunnel was therefore put right by adding courses of bricks *inside*. As a result special non-standard rolling stock

has had to be used and still carries us today. A product of this was the very fine "Schools" class—of which more in a moment. Mountfield tunnel—also too small for standard rolling stock—has just been put right but only by singling the tracks through the tunnel.

The two new London Termini of the S.E.R. cost them £4m. including a sting by St. Thomas's Hospital. Kidner writes: "The area round the Borough Market through which the new line passed was the most sordid in London—mostly owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Winchester. In summer people slept in the streets because of the ferocity of the bugs in the houses; the stench of ordure in the streets was unbearable except by the natives."

Cannon Street for a time accepted Brighton trains from London Bridge and South Western trains from Waterloo, also North Western from Euston via Clapham Junction. For about 40 years trains from Charing Cross were worked by a light tank engine into Cannon Street where the express engine was put on the train.

By the end of the century ruinous competition and duplication had brought the S.E.R. and the L.C. & D. to the edge of disaster. They were brought together and operated as one under the name of the South Eastern & Chatham Railway from 1.1.1899.

With the formation of the S.E. & C.R. things which had been terrible began to improve. Down here rivalry with the Brighton line increased with the building of Crowhurst Station and the Bexhill branch in 1902. This involved a considerable viaduct over the marshes and streams which sadly was knocked down in 1970. Most of the Bexhill service was by coaches detached at Crowhurst Junction though there was a through train each way once daily to and from Cannon Street stopping only at Tunbridge Wells and Sidley.

The Hastings branch is hilly starting with a tough climb out of Tonbridge with gradients between 1/53 and 1/100. It might be noted that Stonegate Station was called Witherenden in 1851, then Ticehurst Road until 1947. High Brooms started out as Southborough until 1925.

The stations on our line have been described as mock Elizabethan with Battle "in view of its associations in Gothic style".

The cross of Queen Eleanor at Charing Cross Station is a replica put there by the railway company as the original in

what is now Trafalgar Square was destroyed in the 17th century.

At 3.45 p.m. on December 5th, 1905, a tie rod in one of the roof trusses of Charing Cross Station broke owing to a flaw in the metal and 70ft. of roof collapsed. The 3.50 p.m. Hastings train was in the station and loading but the roof subsided so slowly that the Hastings train was allowed to leave and did so before the final collapse. Five workmen on the roof and a bookstall attendant were killed. Charing Cross was out of service for three months.

Sixty years ago the South Eastern line to Hastings was worked almost entirely by Mr. Wainwright's inside cylinder 4-4-0's classes D of 1900, E of 1907 and L of 1915. Then in 1930 under the S.R. came Mr. Maunsell's splendid 3-cylinder 4-4-0's, the "Schools" class, built to work within the restricted limits of the Hastings line. Dr. Ransome-Wallis said of them: "They were the most powerful European 4-4-0's ever built and were among the most beautiful steam locomotives ever seen". He goes on to say: "Maunsell's greatest design was superlative; they were an outstanding success mechanically and aesthetically from their first appearance. They worked trains to Hastings, to Bournemouth, to the Kent Coast and the Channel Ports and everywhere the men loved them. There is no need to say more. Once again the choice of names was a happy one for those days. Britain was unashamedly proud of her Public Schools and their great achievements".

The Hastings expresses even carried Pullman cars. Rather different from the sad D.M.U.'s of today.

The branch from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings has been free from serious accidents.

The main line suffered a bad one on 27th August, 1927, a Folkestone express was derailed and crashed at Shoreham Lane bridge Sevenoaks. This was caused by the express tank engine No. 800 "River Cray" of the "River" class developing a rolling motion on rough track and the water in the side tanks surging. Thirteen people were killed. The condition of the track was held to blame but the "River" class was withdrawn and rebuilt.

There was a disaster at Lewisham on what might be regarded as part of our line in December, 1957, when a Cannon Street–Ramsgate train crashed into the back of a stationary train at St. John's killing 90 people.

There was a shocking accident to an up train from Hastings at Hither Green on the evening of Sunday, 5th November, 1967. A twelve-coach multiple-unit diesel train, crowded with weekenders, was derailed when running at speed between Grove Park and Hither Green stations. 49 people were killed. The cause was a broken rail which had itself been caused by the track being in poor condition arising from poor maintenance.

The South Eastern also suffered a Great Train Robbery on the 15th May, 1855 when £20,000 worth of gold was cunningly replaced by lead on board the night mail. An ex-clerk at London Bridge, a guard and a clerk at Folkestone were involved. Train services on this line have not altered much. In 1894 a non-stop run from Cannon Street to West St. Leonards was booked at 88 minutes and in 1921/22 80 minutes non-stop was allowed from Charing Cross to Crowhurst and 90 minutes to Hastings.

Today the best trains take over 90 minutes from Charing Cross to Hastings and 89 minutes from Cannon Street.

The Brighton line along the coast has been electrified for over 40 years. Our South Eastern line has not been electrified yet though I believe it is planned. The line to Dover via Tonbridge was electrified in 1961.

The railways forming the Southern had their finest hours in two world wars.

In World War I the S.E. & C.R. ran 101,872 special trains or 66 a day on an average and that with inadequate rolling stock. In the first fortnight of the 1914 war the railways in the south carried 334,500 troops, with guns and horses in 1,408 special trains The B.E.F. was carried to France without incident, over 120,000 men with stores and horses in 16 days.

In World War II the Dunkirk crisis was handled with admirable dispatch. The "Lift" began on May 27th, 1940, when 186 sets of coaches were mustered on the Southern. As Hamilton Ellis, the historian and artist writes: "In those days while Dunkirk lay under the inky pall of its oil fires and Stukas divebombed the beaches, while Calais had its last desperate siege, the British Railways quietly moved away from the coast 620 trains carrying more than 319,000 exhaused soldiers. Then in the South-East routine wartime triffic resumed."

Air raids in these parts were a major problem: while Central London had 414 "red" alerts in 1940 in East Kent there were far more. On August 24th the railways had 13 "reds" in 3½ hours.

From D. Day to the end of 1944 14,763 special freight trains were run throughout Britain and for the whole war 538,559 specials were run about half of them troop trains and the rest freight.

Britain's railways deserved well of the nation.

UPPARK

Mr. Martin Drury (February 2nd, 1979)

The speaker asked us to imagine that we were descending at a spot on the crest of the Sussex Downs some time in 1893. We should see below us a neat, rectangular, red-brick building and we should be surprised to find so domestic and friendly a building in such a commanding situation within sight of the sea. In one of the rooms beside the entrance we would find an old lady in 1890s dress in a fashion copied from Queen Victoria. The room is furnished in 18th century style and on the walls are pictures by Canaletto. In a basement room we would see another old lady wrestling with accounts which are wrongly added up. The two old ladies have again been quarrelling. Both are stone deaf. The housekeeper has been discharged and is about to leave next day. The mistress has a problem. To whom should she leave her properties.

Uppark was built in 1688 by Lord Grey, a worse time-server than the Vicar of Bray. There were two flanking pavilions which have disappeared, but the building itself was much as it is now. Lord Grey became Lord Tankerville. Elaborate gardens were laid out.

The house was sold in 1746 when we meet the Featherstonehaughs for the first time. Matthew Featherstonehaugh was a very rich man and acquired a baronetcy. He was an F.R.S., interested in mathematics and astronomy, a governor of the Middlesex and the Westminster hospitals. He spent three years on the Grand Tour, in the course of which he acquired a lot of pictures which still exist. He had a very large house in Whitehall. In his time the flanking stable block and kitchens were built, the kitchens connected to the house by a tunnel so that the food might be lukewarm when

it reached the table.

While Matthew and his wife Sarah (née Letellier) were away the interior was rebuilt. On the staircase there is a group of eight portraits of Sarah's relatives.

Visitors are greatly impressed by the fine doll's house from which one can learn how people lived at that time. A noticeable feature are the cowls over the candles. These disappeared from the house itself when electric light was installed, but one example remains above a candelabra at the top of the staircase.

The pictures (e.g. a series of the story of the Prodigal Son) were obviously bought for the decoration of the rooms where they hang.

Sir Matthew was a Whig politician in the Newcastle party. He died in 1774.

The principal room, the saloon, in white and gold, has probably never been redecorated.

Sir Matthew had one child, Harry, a very spoilt child, who was educated by his uncle, the vicar of Harting. He also went on the Grand Tour and acquired French furniture.

In the little parlour there are four Canalettos, smaller versions of pictures in the Queen's collection. These were procured by Joseph Smith, the British consul in Venice.

Sir Harry kept bad company. He was a member of the Prince Regent's circle. In 1781 he brought down to Uppark Emma Ward. Sir Charles Greville set her up in London and then passed her on to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, in exchange for payment of his debts.

In 1810 Sir Harry wrote to Humphrey Repton to ask him what should be done about the estate. Humphrey Repton left one of his "red books". There was a great bond between him and Sir Harry as they had both been insulted by the Prince. The two crotchety old men sent Gilray cartoons to one another.

In 1825 Sir Harry heard a girl singing on the terrace. It was the dairymaid. He sent her to France to be educated and married her. He lived to 92 and died in 1846. He also brought his wife's younger sister Frances Bullock into the house.

Lady Feathersonehaugh died in 1874. Her younger sister

lived till 1893 with her companion. Everything was kept "as Sir 'Arry 'ad it".

Mrs. Wells was called back (with her young son H.G.) to be housekeeper, a disastrous period as housekeeper.

The succession problem was settled. No relations of Sir Harry being found the estate was left to the son of Lord Winterton (one of the few people who had befriended the two old ladies). It then passed to Lord Mead. Lady Mead was responsible for restoring the old curtains by washing them all with an extract of Saponaria.

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1979

The five visits arranged for the summer months were well supported. Now that the Society has been in existence for more than 25 years inevitably much of the ground has been covered before, but not only does the membership change but members of long standing, after a lapse of time, are pleased to renew acquaintance with sites and buildings visited previously. This fact was clearly evident on the occasion of our visits to Lullingstone Roman Villa, Squerryes Court, Westerham, and the Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

LULLINGSTONE ROMAN VILLA AND OLD SOAR MANOR (May 17th)

Lullingstone Roman Villa was visited in 1958 and again in 1963 (Transactions nos. 8 and 12). Further excavations have continued and a protective building has been erected by the Department of the Environment over the main part of the villa. This not only protects the excavations but facilitates inspection of them and of the display of pottery, etc., found on the site.

We were fortunate to have as our guide Lt.-Col. G. W. Meates who has been director of the excavations since they were begun systematically in 1949.

Old Soar Manor of which only a small portion remains is an early mediaeval building now under the care of the Department of the Environment. It is notable as few domestic buildings survive from as early as the 18th century. An 18th century house has been built on the site of the

mediaeval hall, and what visitors can see is an undercroft and two smaller rooms at ground level from which a spiral staircase leads to the solar, chapel and garderobe. The house probably belonged originally to a branch of the Culpepper family, well known as land-owners in Kent and Sussex.

UPPARK, PETERSFIELD (June 13th)

The visit to Uppark, the first by a party from the Society was the sequel to a lecture on Uppark given by Mr. Martin Drury of the National Trust and reported elsewhere on this number of the Transactions.

SUSSEX MILLS (July 11th)

As the result of a lecture on the subject by Mr. Barry Funnell it was proposed that we should visit some Sussex mills. Bateman's was the obvious choice for a watermill. Even though the mill may not be working it is quite possible to get an idea of the way the wheel sets the machinery in motion, and there is flour to be bought to prove its efficiency.

Owing to difficulty of access and some unfortunate delays it was not possible to inspect the post mill on Argos Hill. Mayfield, as had been hoped, but Polegate Mill was easily accessible. This tower mill dating from 1817 has been carefully restored by a group of enthusiasts who will arrange to take parties over it and explain the mechanism and communicate their undoubted enthusiasm for an admirable project. In buildings adjoining the mill there is a collection of models and milling bygones.

SQUERRYES COURT AND LINGFIELD CHURCH

(August 16th)

This beautiful 17th century house was visited also in 1961 and 1970. It is still in the possession of a member of the Warde family whose ancestor, John Warde, bought it in 1731 and the gardens have retained their bright well-ordered appearance.

The Collegiate Church of St. Peter and Paul at Lingfield in its present form was built in the 15th century in the Perpendicular style together with a college and endowed by

the third Lord Cobham. Few traces are left of earlier buildings though it is known that a church did exist in the 11th century and the tower and S.W. corner of the church belong to this period. The college was surrendered to Henry VIII in 1544 and eventually demolished. At the time of our visit restoration work was in progress but did not prevent us from appreciating the fine interior with its double nave and barrel roof. Among the notable features are the four Cobham tombs, the chained bible, the misericords and several fine brasses.

THE ROYAL PAVILION, BRIGHTON AND BISHOPSTONE CHURCH (September 13th)

This proved to be the most popular of the season's visits, the Royal Pavilion being the main attraction. It had not been visited by the Society since 1959. Our enjoyment on this occasion owed much to the excellence of our guide.

On our way to Brighton we had visited Bishopstone Church. This beautiful little church is situated at the foot of the South Downs, north of Seaford. The porch and nave are Saxon and may date from as early as the 9th century. There is a fine sundial on the gable of the porch. A tower was added at the West end in the 12th century and the Saxon chancel was rebuilt in the Norman style. Finally, a sanctuary was added in the period of transition from the Norman to Early English style and round-headed windows changed to lancets. Since then any restoration has been done with great care and feeling for the original.

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

held on November 23rd, 1979

The Chairman reported that the Society had prospered over the past year. The paid-up membership had risen to 284 at the end of the year and 12 new members were recruited at the Commemoration Lecture. The attendance at lectures had been excellent and the summer visits organised by Miss Frewer had been as great an attraction as ever. It was remarkable that Miss Frewer found fresh places to visit, fixed up coaches and teas and nearly always provided good weather.

The Honorary Treasurer reported an excess of expenditure over income of £88 mainly due to the heavy cost of printing, but hoped that with the increase in subscriptions the financial position would improve in the coming year.

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

President: Miss I. Hope Muntz. Vice-Presidents: Re-elected—Miss J. E. S. Robertson, the Bishop of Sherwood, 1979-82; serving—Mrs. E. Webster, Mr. A. E. Marson, 1977-80, Prof. D. Whitelock, Prof. Eleanor Searle, Prof. H. R. Loyn, 1978-81. Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. E. G. Creek. Vice-Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. K. N. Crowe. Hon. Secretary: Re-elected—Mrs. F. M. Cryer. Hon. Treasurer: Re-elected—Mrs. L. Sanders.

Mr. F. W. Kempton, Mrs. E. Bay Tidy and Mr. J. E. Sanders retired by rotation from the Committee and being willing to continue were re-elected. There were two vacancies owing to the resignation of Mrs. Chapman and to a resignation in the previous year. Mr. J. A. Cleland and Dr. R. H. Clark were elected to fill these vacancies without contest.

MUSEUM TRUST
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on November 23rd, 1979

The Chairman, Mr. D. H. Beaty-Pownall presided. The Chairman reported a record number of visitors to the Museum, 17,381, an increase of 3,097 over the previous year

and 2,059 more than the previous record. The total included 24 schools and other organised parties.

This year the Museum was host to a meeting of the Sussex Curators' Group. The Group met in the library of Battle Abbey School by kind permission of Miss Parker, who subsequently conducted the party round the Abbey.

A considerable number of books were presented to the library or were acquired, including new papers available for sale.

The Museum acquired on loan a model stationary steam engine made by Mr. W. A. Jenner in Battle about 1892.

The Committee agreed to the transfer of certain documents to the care of the Sussex Record Office. These related mainly to Turnpike Roads and also papers and maps concerning the Fullers of Brightling.

The Committee recommended re-election of all the following members: Mr. D. H. Beaty-Pownall, Mr. E. J. Tyler, Mr. R. W. Bishop, Miss C. V. Cane, Mr. K. N. Crowe, Mrs. M. Kempton, Mrs. F. Mason and Miss J. E. S. Robertson. Subsequently, the following officers were appointed: Chairman, Mr. Beaty-Pownall; Vice-Chairman, Mr. Tyler; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Bishop; Hon. Secretary and Librarian, Miss Robertson.

At the conclusion of the two meetings slides taken by members during the summer visits were presented by Mr. L. Shaw.

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1979-80

President:

MISS I. HOPE MUNTZ, F.S.A., F.R.HIST.S.

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WELLINGTON AND OTHERS AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH EAST SUSSEX

Countess of Longford, C.B.E. (October 12th, 1979)

Wellington at Hastings, 1806. Wellington was posted on his return from India to the command of the 33rd Foot "a few troops at Hastings—the old landing place of William the Conqueror". The site of the 33rd officers' stables may have been what is now the Stables Theatre. But it was not the landing place of Napoleon. Wellington had maybe seen the unfinished obelisk at Boulogne. Cf Napoleon's celebration uniforms in the Guards' knapsacks ready for entry into Brussels.

"Why stay at Hastings?" asked a friend. "Service", replied Wellington. "I am a nimakwallah, as we say in the East. I have eaten the King's salt and therefore I conceive it to be my duty to serve with unhesitating zeal and cheerfulness, when and wherever the king and his government may think proper to employ me."

He takes a week off from Hastings to marry Kitty Pakenham. The marriage in Dublin was performed by the Rev. Gerald Wellesley. "She has grown ugly, by Jove." This was not due to the ravages of smallpox, but she was 34 and pale. She had refused him once but he had promised to marry her if she changed her mind. Kitty was installed at no. 11 Harley Street. Here is a letter to Wellington from an agent who offered to let him a better house at a higher rent. But Wellington who had a good business head was not going to pay more rent unless convinced that he would get value for it.

He was granted leave by the Army to contest the election at Rye and was elected M.P. His motive was to be able to defend his brother, Marquess Wellesley, former Governor-General in India, against charges of corruption. His election expenses were £269.16 for a supper, tea and cold collation for the citizens and £50 for the poor of Rye, instead of the bunting in the streets of Rye which the citizens expected.

Lady Longford exhibited a letter which she treasures, written by Wellington on the eve of Waterloo to the British Consul in Brussels, asking him to see that the British in Brussels don't get frightened and to look after his horses and not to let anyone have them without Wellington's authority.

Byron at Hastings. Byron was at Hastings in the summer of 1814, between July 19th and August 11th.

He had two anxieties, about business (a sale of properties) and that Annabella Milbanke was getting a little too forthcoming.

He hoped to have a seaside holiday with Augusta. His friend, Rev. William Hodgson holidaying in Hastings to be near his financée took Hastings House for Byron, for a month at 10 guineas a week. It had a garden with statues of eight muses. Hodgson recommended it for retirement and picturesqueness.

Several little Byronic dramas were enacted at Hastings. Mrs. Chaworth-Musters and children chased him to London. He escaped to Hastings. She followed. He had fled. She went mad at Hastings House (but recovered).

Annabella wrote an equivocal letter on August 1st. Byron asked for a firm answer, even if harsh. Annabella again prevaricates but asks for his portrait.

Augusta and Byron take fright as Augusta has her own candidate, Lady Charlotte Leveson Gower, pretty but insipid.

Byron preferred Augusta herself, but they agreed he must get married. His friends badgered him too. "I met a son of Lord Erskine's who says he has been married a year and is the happiest of men, so it is worthwhile being here, if only to witness the felicity of these foxes, who have cut off their tails and would persuade the rest to part with their brushes to keep them in countenance."

Nevertheless he passed a really happy three weeks at Hastings. "I have been swimming and eating turbot and smuggling neat brandies and silk handkerchiefs and listening to my friend Hodgson's raptures about a pretty wife-elect of his—and walking on cliffs and tumbling down hills and making the most of the dolce far niente for the last fortnight."

His poem, Lara, was published while he was at Hastings. Byron took £700 for it—the first time he had taken payment —perhaps to cover the expenses at Hastings House.

Queen Victoria in Hastings and St. Leonards—1834.

She was 15 and all agog for adventure. She had come over from Tunbridge Wells which she found rather prim.

Almost too exciting an adventure in St. Leonards. The carriage overturned, one horse broke loose and chased the royal party down the road. Victoria with Dash in her arms displayed her usual presence of mind telling the royal party to take cover behind a wall. Mr. Micklethwaite of Iridge, Hurst Green stopped the runaway, sat on its head and was knighted.

Mrs. Pakenham of Bernhurst also gave the Queen two small oil paintings on her 16th birthday. She probably happened to be a neighbour of Mr. Micklethwaite.

In Queen Victoria's sketch book is a picture of "six fishermen in rough blue jackets, red capes and coarse white aprons, preceded by a band, bore a basket ornamented with flowers, full of fish as a present for us".

Wilfred Scawen Blunt knew all this area well. His mother died of tuberculosis at St. Leonards.

He had an affair with a Miss Lamb of Beauport Park who wrote novels under the name of Violet Fane. Beauport Park have a leaflet about this romance.

His love of Sussex was deeper than for any one woman.

"Dear checker-work of woods, the Sussex Weald,
If a name thrills me yet of things of earth,
That name is thine. How often I have fled,
Eachley, each pasture—fields which gave me birth
And saw my youth, and which must hold me dead."

LANGTON HOUSE

Mrs. B. M. Lucey (November 9th, 1979)

There is of course no picture of Langton House when it was newly built in 1569. As you know that was a time of great prosperity in this part of the country because of the ever-growing Wealden Iron Industry; it was prosperous for the landowners on whose land iron was found; for the owners of vast woodlands whose timber was cut for the furnaces; for the merchants who financed the industry; for the lesser gentry and craftsmen in whose hands management lay; and also for the tradesmen who supplied all those flourishing people. And so houses were being built or improved. For example, the Sackvilles of Sedlescombe were enlarging Hancox.

Langton House was an important one, of considerable size, probably replacing an earlier one. A two-storied timber-framed rectangular house it was built round a court-yard at the very hub of Battle, beside the high road, close to the Abbey and opposite the market-place with the hubbub of the weekly market and the bullring where the sport of bullbaiting took place. On the south side of the house was a cart-track from the market-place to the Bore and cottages and houses were built beside it. From the Bore it had led on to the Plessis or Pleasure Garden of the Abbot where pear trees and cherry trees grew from the fruit of which the monks had been used to make perry and cherry wine. But the monks were gone now.

The layout of the house today with its several occupiers is very confusing indeed and I am indebted to David Martin for making slides for me.

This was clearly an important house but I have not yet discovered for whom it was built. One of the earliest owners was a man called Millward. He was followed by Richard Wykes who held the freehold property in 1569 at an annual quit-rent of 3/9d. He also held the copyhold house next door on the south side. In 1642 Samuel Gott brought his bride Joan to live here. Samuel was born in 1613, the son and heir of Samuel Gott, citizen and ironmonger of London. He was educated at Merchant Taylors School and St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. He then went to Gray's Inn and was called to the Bar in 1640 when he was 27. The following year his father died and two years later he married in Sedlescombe Church, Joan, third daughter of the iron-master Peter Farnden by his first wife, Mary Waters of Brede. You may remember that Peter owned Beckley Furnace and lived at Brickwall, Sedlescombe and begot by his two wives, five sons, none of whom survived childhood, and 11 daughters, eight of whom grew up and married into well-known Sussex families.

After their marriage Samuel and Joan made their home in this house and the next year their daughter, Martha, was born. But it was not until nine years later that their son, Peter, after his maternal grandfather, was born.

Samuel quickly began to make his mark and to take a leading position in the area. Two years after his marriage he became M.P. for Winchelsea and so was a member of the Long Parliament for ten years. To the Parliament of 1656 he was elected member for his County and in Richard

Cromwell's parliament of 1659 he was member for Hastings. He was also during the Commonwealth Commissioner for ejecting scandalous and insufficient ministers.

Like all Peter Farnden's sons-in-law his sympathies had been with Parliament during the Civil War, but he was no fanatic, but a man of some wisdom and wit. He spoke in defence of the new and very unpopular Lords created by Cromwell. He pleaded for them, it is recorded, as a lame man would for a wooden leg. "I am as little pleased with these Lords as any man," he said, "yet we, Parliament, are now on but one leg and so cannot go forward but hop up and down. Though they be not to our content, I have seen a man walk very well with a wooden leg."

By the time of Charles II's first parliament the member for Rye had died and Samuel hoped to represent that town where he had much influence. From a request of the Mayor and Jurats to Samuel that the parsonage and chancel be repaired it would seem that he had some ownership of them. However, something went wrong, confusion was made as correspondence between him and Samuel Jeaks which you can read in S.A.C. Vol. 9 shows. And Sir John Robinson, Lieutenant of the Tower was returned and Gott became once again member for Winchelsea.

Two years later came the strange incident when Samuel was assaulted and wounded by two Horsham men. The King himself took a personal interest and wrote to the Lord Chief Justice Hyde and other J.P.s of the King's Bench wishing them for the sake of example to levy the full rigour of the fines, of £1,000 and £500 imposed for assaulting and wounding Samuel Gott of Battle. Samuel recovered from the attack and lived for nine years longer. He died here in 1671 and was buried in Battle. Joan survived him by nine years and for the last part of them moved to Wadhurst where she died and was buried. Samuel was in all a man of wide interests, he continued an active member of Gray's Inn and a merchant in the City and was a J.P. for Sussex.

Both his children had married and Martha had a daughter, Martha. Peter, of Gray's Inn like his father, had married another Martha from a well-known family of Streat, near Lewes. Among their sons was one, also Peter, who married his cousin Martha. As Baron of the Cinque Port of Winchelsea Peter helped to carry the Queen's canopy at the

coronation of James II. An account written in 1685 describes the occasion thus:—

"All were habited alike in scarlet hose with crimson satin waistcoats and velvet caps and shoes. The frames of the King's canopy broke in the return from the Abbey, it was so slightly made, therefore it is convenient that the Gentlemen sometime before a Coronation in the future to view the canopies and see that they be substantially made to prevent so great a mischief in times to come."

Peter became M.P. for Hastings and later for Lewes and it would seem that by then he had left Battle and made his home at Streat near his in-laws. There were Gotts living there till 1768 and there is a reference to "Gotts House" there being pulled down in 1732. However, a Miss Gott still owned Beckley furnace in 1787.

About 30 years after Samuel died there was again a spate of house building and house improvement at a time of great industrial activity. The house that used to be Tills was built by Thomas Hammond who started his ironmongery three and this house, too, was enlarged. The roof was removed and replaced by an additional storey, the centre of which was recessed. Thus two projections were formed which were joined by a length of balustrading with turned balusters, giving the attractive appearance so familiar to us. At the same time the ground floor was underbuilt in brick and the first floor tile hung like many another house at this date.

It was perhaps in these days known as Gott House. In a deed of 1699 Thomas Western, obviously of the family into which Peter Gott married, and Robert Benson conveyed the house in Battle formerly of S. Gott, late of Gray's, abutting on the street to Maximilian Western, charged with the payment of £5.4s. by weekly payments of 2s. to be laid out in bread to be distributed to 12 poor men and 12 poor women of the town every Sunday after service.

The enlarged house was now Battle's poorhouse. In his will made in the first days of 1718 Maxmilian, described as "a merchant of London" (who may be a son of Samuel Gott who took his mother's surname) left the property, with the same charge concerning money to be laid out in bread, in trust to the Dean of Battle, William Symonds and R. Fuller of Battle. Other profits from the premises to be used also for the poor of Battle. It was still the poorhouse in 1724.

We now come to the next family connected with the house. From very early days the name of Hammond was a familiar one in Battle. The family owned land and property all around. They owned also the rich pasture land on the edge of the parish along the river from Stream Lane to the Brooks in Sedlescombe; in fact one of the Brooks was known for years as Hammondsland. The family gave Battle Abbey, as you know, its last Abbot. In 1719 when the Rate Books start Battle was still full of Hammonds. In 1720 onwards there were John H., Samuel H., Thomas H., who had opened the shop, now Tills, 19 years earlier and William who later took over Tills from Thomas. In 1742 there was Dr. H., widow H. and the late John in the Rate Books. At some time during those 20 years this house possibly passed into the ownership of members of the family. William Hammond and his wife Elizabeth had a daughter, also named Elizabeth. When she was 25 (in 1742) she married David Langton from Surrey and so we come at last to that well-known name. Whether or not she had lived here as a child with her parents; certainly she lived here with her husband and thus it received their name, it would seem, for all time. By the time she was 65 Elizabeth was a widow with one son, called David after his father. Nine years later she made her famous will in which she left £1,500 to pay a man and his wife, of a sober, honest, well disposed and good disposition, Christian people fit for the government of a school and capable of instructing youth in the art and science of reading to the number of 15 boys and the like number of 15 girls in the art and mystery of reading, sewing and knitting in the very best manner possible that lies in their power and not to follow any other vocation or calling whatsoever nor any night school but to instruct the said children in the way and manners of Sunday School as now practised at Brighthelmstone or Lewes, etc., which the Dean, Churchwardens and Overseers shall think best. Their lessons shall be entirely out of Holy Scripture and my will and mind is that the man and his wife aforesaid so chosen shall receive the full interest of the sum of £1,500. The interest of £200 now standing in my name for ever in Trust shall be expended in Spelling Books, Bibles, Testaments and Prayer Books, etc. And my will and mind is that each child receive and carry home with them their own respective books at the time of leaving school.

Two years later Elizabeth Langton died and the school was duly established. David, her son, continued to live in Langton House until 1805 and then the Overseers of the

Workhouse paid the rates. So it would seem that once again it housed the poor of Battle.

In 1806 William Ticehurst, aged 39, was appointed schoolmaster of Langton School. He must have been a man of immense energy and ability for he was already High Constable of Battle and billeting officer for soldiers in the neighbourhood while Napoleon was threatening invasion and he made arrangements for the evacuation of the people should it become necessary. He became Parish Clerk, Land Surveyor and one of the earliest insurance agents in the town. In 1822 be became postmaster and in 1837 chairman of the Board of Guardians. By and large it would seem that Elizabeth Langton's stipulation that her schoolmaster should not follow any other vocation was ignored or forgotten. He married twice and had a large family and in 1829 he bought Langton House where the family lived till his grandson died in 1922. One of William's sons became a lawyer, one a doctor (and surely that strain still continues to the present day) and one Francis William, known as Frank, who was the most notable as far as Battle was concerned like his father took a great part in local government. He, too, was postmaster for 47 years, Superintendent Registrar and Clerk to the Board of Guardians. Besides this he was one of the founders of the company which first mined Mountfield Gypsum Mines and for 25 years he was a member of Court Baron of the Abbey. But first and foremost he was a printer and in 1833 he set up his press close to his home in Langton House in the shop which is now Springfields. There it remained till the last war. His name can be seen on numbers of engravings of the Abbey. He printed and published in 1851 the first guide book to the town and illustrated it with photographs taken by his son. Not long before he died in 1902 he divided Langton House into two and for many years the northern end where the family lived was known as Ticehurst House, the southern half remaining Langton House.

Frederick was 52 when his father died and followed his father and grandfather into local government, being superintendent registrar and clerk to the Board of Guardians and clerk to the R.D.C. from its foundation, its offices being in Langton House, next door to his home.

But above all he was what Lewis Pyke described as an "adventurous amateur". When he was only 20 he described

himself as an artist photographer and practical electrician and his printing works were lit by electricity and about the first to be connected by telephone, for he was a founder member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers and Electricians.

He was churchwarden for many years and the seventh church bell recast in 1890 bears his name. His father, too, has a memorial in Battle Church in the window in the west end of the north aisle. When he died in 1922, aged 72, this unique family had served Battle for at least 120 years and had lived in this house for just under 100 years.

In 1935 the R.D.C. moved to Watch Oak and the following year a Mr. Rowe bought the whole building. (When the Victoria County History of Sussex was published in 1937 it still identified the northern end of Langton House as Ticehurst House.) He used it as an antique shop and built the extension over the cart-track which led from the market place to the Bore. After the war the scheme to build a Hall as a War Memorial was held up for lack of a suitable site. In 1958 Mr. R. D. Shepherd of Wyland Farm, Catsfield, or was it Marlpits Farm, Ninfield, a Battle Rotarian, acquired the property with the object of offering part or all of it as a Memorial Hall and the Trustees bought the part on which the Hall is now built.

In 1960 it was opened ceremoniously by the Marquis of Exeter who as Lord Burghley had lived for many years at Catsfield; and it was dedicated by Dean Naylor. This was followed by a gala week with festivities of all kinds, dances, whist drives, concerts, amateur boxing, a production of Caste by the Battle Players and a lecture to the Battle Historical Society by C. H. Gibb Smith of the Victoria and Albert Museum on the Bayeux Tapestry.

Right from its beginning the Hall proved its worth for it was used and enjoyed by nearly everyone in Battle for one purpose or another. And so it has gone on ever since.

There can be few more entirely satisfactory War Memorials than this fine house whose windows have looked out on Battle's old market place for more than 400 years; and which has housed at least three families whose members have served the town exceptionally over the centuries and has twice for some years sheltered the poor of Battle. I will close with a few slides of its still attractive exterior.

CROWHURST BEFORE THE NORMANS

Our earliest knowledge of the area in which Crowhurst was later to be established is derived from the fragments of pottery found in two "bloomeries"—the spoil heaps from the iron workings at Park Farm and Bynes Farm in the parish. Both of these sites produce fragments of four kinds of pots and dishes—(a) very rough utensils of a type brought in by settlers possibly from the Marne, which may date back to about 300 B.C., but may equally have still been produced locally alongside (b) and (c); (b) the so-called "South-Eastern B" type which is found in many places between the Adur and the Brede; (c) the "Belgic" type and (d) Samian ware, the common good-class pottery of the Roman world. We find here some produced at Graufesenque in southern Gaul.

The following facts appear established. (i) The "South-eastern B" type was brought in by refugees escaping from the destruction by Julius Caesar in 56 B.C. of the seafaring Veneti, of the Vendée in southern Brittany. This expedition occupied all of modern Sussex east of the Adur. (ii) The "Belgic" type was first brought to England by a tribe who occupied Kent and Essex in 75 B.C. and withstood Caesar's invasions of 55 and 54 B.C.; and by another Belgic tribe from Northern Gaul, the Atrebates from around Arras who, fleeing before Caesar under their king Commius, occupied Hampshire and extended over West Sussex. Later they spread their influence further east, into our area.

Now it takes an indefinite time for pottery to have had a useful life and then pass to the scrap heap, but the inference is drawn that our two bloomeries were possibly worked before the Roman conquest, which began in 43 A.D. and was soon completed in Sussex, and certainly during the period 70-100 A.D. and well into the 2nd century. The pre-Crowhurstians were therefore Bretons from the Vendée mingled with a remnant of the older inhabitants (also probably of Gallic origin) and later with Belgic folk from Kent and West Sussex. It is surmised that the oldest element spoke in Gaelic, in which sounds in "q" are most common, whereas the Belgics and probably the Vendée folk replaced "q" by "p" as the commoner form, as in Welsh and Cornish today.

The authority for most of what has been said so far lies in papers by Mr. Barry Lucas of Bexhill, whose finds in 1936 and 1949 have been examined by Professor Hawkes and

other experts; and in Dr. E. Cecil Curwen's book *The Archaeology of Sussex* 1954.

Before dealing with the village name we should discuss the stream which passes through it. It has been called the Asten at Battle, the Avon (with a short "a") at Crowhurst while from its junction with the Watermill stream just south of Adams Farm on the Bexhill boundary, where it combines with the Watermill Stream coming from Catsfield, also with the small stream passing Acton's Farm, the embanked river down to Bulverhythe is called "Combe Haven". Not unreasonably with powdermills alongside the Battle and Crowhurst section, the Ordnance Survey names the higher part the "Powdermill Stream", though that name cannot be more than three centuries old.

Asten: This name is used by the poet Drayton with reference to the Senlac battle in his poem "Polyolbion" of 1612. Drayton was not above inventing a name, as when he successfully imposed upon the "water of Bramber" the name "Adur", wrongly thinking that Shoreham was the "Portus Adurni" of the Romans which in fact was Portchester. However, the stream at Battle may have drawn its name earlier from "La Stene"—the stonefield—which is recorded in 1115 as lying west of Battle, where in fact one of its sources starts. The change from "La Stene" to L'Asten is readily acceptable.

Avon: This name, with its short "a", was given me in 1936 I believe by Mr. Goodsell, and its use was certainly confirmed by Mr. George Bramley. The short "a" follows the ancient pronunciation which continues in the Welsh "*Afon*" today. This suggests that it was the extremely common name for a running river or stream which the Saxons took over from the Britons, as they so often did with rivers, when they adopted little else.

Combe Haven: This presumably ancient name combines the British word for a valley—"cwm"— particularly a valley shaped like a bowl (as where several streams meet). Seemingly the Britons and Romans brought their smelted iron from Park Farm (in Breadsell Lane) via Green Street down to a jetty at this "haven", as the Saxons later called it, lying at the head of an estuary which flowed past Bulverhythe (the jetty of the Bulwara—? folk from Boulogne—) into the Channel off St. Leonards. The ground for this strong belief is that any rural road called a street by the Saxons was

Roman, while the term "Green Street" was very common for a Roman road which had fallen into disuse.

If we ask where the haven is now, we can only say that the oldest Ordnance Survey (1813) shows the road passing Adams Farm for 150 yards to the edge of the marsh, as it then was; and recall that where an estuary has been canalised and its outlet rigidly controlled, the level of the land has been constantly raised by fresh layers of mud and silt brought down by the streams. This has meant that since the Saxons came the level of the marshes and of the stream they carry is today probably at least eight feet higher than then. Therefore the Roman jetty, if any of it survives, lies buried deep beneath the marsh.

Some have suggested that the estuary once reached as far north as Crowhurst cricket ground. The raising of the level of the marshes downstream must constantly have increased the risk of flooding, but in the absence of contrary evidence it is most unlikely that the small Powdermill and Watermill streams separately carried enough water to allow of traffic by boat above Combe Haven. Further, with the marsh level eight or ten feet lower in Saxon times, the stream would then have some distance of further normal downward run before reaching the area then affected by the marsh. Again, if the stream had been navigable up to the village, one would expect the village name to contain some coastal element, but both its syllables are simply rural.

Croghyrst was the name given by the Saxon settlers. It is first found in a charter dated 772. *Hyrst* or *Herst* is one of the common names for a wood, and in the Lower Saxon area around the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, from which our Saxon forebears came, it often has the special meaning of a hillside covered with bushes or trees which it was (then) uneconomical to clear. As to "Crog", The *Place Names of Sussex* suggests a word meaning *mud* as most probable; but does not mention "krog", which in that German area means crook or bend, and could relate to the bend of the hillside above the Plough Inn.

The whole coast of East Sussex appears to have been settled by small parties from various points on the continent. The original kingdom of Sussex, founded off Selsey in 477 reached as far east as Pevensey in 491, and probably to the Hastings area soon after, for Crowhurst and Bexhill appear

to be Saxon names. It seems possible, however, from such names as *Watland*, Senlac and other places north of Hastings that by 550 or 580 this area had become independent of Sussex under a Frankish tribe of new settlers called the Hastingas, with a culture more similar to that of the Frankish-influenced Kent; but in that case this independence had been lost by 689 and 692 when *Wattus* rex (on whose name the suggestion largely depends) witnessed as an under king charters of the King of Sussex, which dealt with land in West Sussex.

The charter of 772 in which the name of Croghyrst is first found was that in which King Offa of Mercia, who had earlier taken Sussex from Wessex and in 771 had "conquered the Hastinga tribe", conferred on the Bishop of Selsey eight hides in Bexhill (960 acres) with Crowhurst (also eight hides) and other outliers seemingly surrounding Hastings, including Icklesham which stretched "as far as the boundary of Kent". By placing this wedge in the Bishop's friendly charge Offa perhaps intended to restrain Hastings from giving aid to his next victim, Kent.

Though thereafter Sussex as a county had its present extent, it is noteworthy that in listing 18 areas, all the rest of which were counties, as ravaged in 1011 by the Danes, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle includes Hastings as if it were a separate county. Tradition had lived long.

The prevailing unit of land measurement was the *hide* of 120 acres of farmed land (excluding woods). In most counties the hide was divided into four *virgates* of 30 acres, but in Sussex and several other counties where ploughing was originally difficult the standard was eight virgates of 15 acres each in every hide. Two factors explain the difference. Firstly, the clay soil was so hard that, originally at least, 15 acres was as much as a man could work. Secondly, the tribal settlements which were grouped were originally so small that for defence the population had to be as large as the land could support. Overland communication was so meagre that the peasantry had no disturbing knowledge of the wealthier conditions in the Midlands and elsewhere. Again, the small, hilly farms of our part of East Sussex were unsuitable for the provision of large common fields which allowed each farmer to have a strip in each, with an organised rotation of crops covering two years—to become three much later—as was common practice in the Midlands.

Also, in our neighbourhood the Kentish custom of succession was commonly followed, of Jutish or possibly Frankish origin, whereby the claim to succeed to a farm tenancy fell to the *youngest* son. This being the case, it was the elder sons who needed to go to the adjoining woodland, to clear a new holding, or even to the remoter weald to carve out for their lord, and for themselves as tenants, a new branch of the parent manor.

By 1065 the eight hides of the Crowhurst of 772 A.D. had fallen to six, very possibly because Wilting had been detached meanwhile. The two manors together formed in 1065 ten hides—i.e. 80 virgates containing 1,200 acres. This equals about nine tenths of the land farmed in fields, or parks, in the parish in the 19th century. Nothing like this density applied north of Crowhurst in early times.

Domesday Book shows that through the ravages of William's army in early October, 1066, Crowhurst had been totally laid waste, but by 1086 had recovered three-fifths of its taxable value. Wilting, too, had been laid waste, but had recovered four-fifths. Both manors had lost a virgate or two when an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles around Battle Abbey was provided for its newly created estate.

Either by the Normans or before they came, many of the 15-acre virgates had been merged to form farms averaging twice that size. Crowhurst had 15 tenant farmers—villeins as they were called from 1086—and six cottagers on the (say) 30 virgates brought back into production by then, Wilting had nine villeins and five cottagers. Adding, perhaps, six living on the demesnes or home farms of the manors, we have some 41 families which, at the rate of five per family generally applied for those days, would give Crowhurst-plus-Wilting a population of about 200.

Crowhurst and Whatlington were, apart from Ripe, the only manors in Sussex which Harold held east of Lewes in his own right as Earl, before he succeeded to the many belonging to his father Godwin in 1053; so he presumably had some familiarity with the area in which he chose his admirable defensive position on Senlac hill. After the Conquest William's cousin, Robert Count of Eu, the lord of the Rape of Hastings, granted Crowhurst to Lambert of Etocquigny (a name later corrupted into Scotney) who also held Lamberhurst. Wilting fell chiefly to Ingelran, perhaps a

brother of Lambert, but partly to Reinbert, the founder of the Norman family "de Etchingham", prominent for three centuries in the district. Reinbert appears to have been the first sheriff of the Rape and Ingelran his successor. It can be imagined that Lambert built his manor house and had his demesne farm where Court Lodge now is, in a fairly defensible position a little way from the village by the Plough. The church is not mentioned, as some are, in the Domesday Book. We may assume that Harold had one, alongside the ancient yew, but that it had been destroyed in 1066 and not yet rebuilt by 1086.

C. T. CHEVALLIER.

January, 1969.

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1980

There are so many places of historical interest within this South Eastern area that in our summer programme we seldom cover exactly the same ground until after an interval of at least seven years and each year we usually succeed in finding a few fresh places to visit. In this way the interest of members old and new is maintained as can be seen from the steady support given to the programme.

Some short notes follow on any places not previously visited by the Society; otherwise reference is made to the relevant number of Transactions.

LONG BARN, WEALD AND BAYHAM ABBEY
(May 15th)

This was our first visit to Long Barn, Weald, Sevenoaks. It is a small manor house dating from the 14th century and the tradition is that Caxton was born there c. 1420. In fact, until recently the house was known locally as Caxton's House. In the 16th century a galleried hall open to the roof in the Wealden style was added. The house was bought in 1915 by Harold Nicolson and Victoria Sackville-West and the following year a 16th century barn from an adjoining

field was moved up to the house and linked with the 14th century buildings to form the Big Room on the ground-floor and additional bedrooms above.

The beautiful garden was designed and planted by the Nicolsons who lived at Long Barn for 15 years before moving to Sissinghurst.

Bayham Abbey to which our party went after tea had been visited by the Society in 1958 and again in 1969 (Transactions nos. 7 and 18).

GOODWOOD HOUSE AND BOXGROVE PRIORY (June 23rd)

These had not been visited since 1961 (Transactions no. 10) and this whole-day event proved very popular.

ROMNEY MARSH (July 17th)

This visit was planned as a sequel to the lecture on Romney Marsh given by Miss Anne Roper in 1979. It was a great privilege to have her as our guide at the churches in New Romney and Old Romney previously visited in 1959 and 1968 (Transactions nos. 8 and 17). In addition we visited New Hall, Dymchurch. This is the headquarters of The Corporation of the Lords, Bailiffs and Jurats of the Marsh, constituted by Royal Charter in 1252. The old hall was burnt down during the reign of Elizabeth I and New Hall was built the next year. An 18th century tile-hung front conceals the original Tudor exterior but the courtroom remains unchanged. Though responsibility for the drainage of the marshes and sea defences has been transferred elsewhere the Lords of the 23 Manors (Miss Roper being one of them) still attend their annual meeting in the Court House as their predecessors did for over 700 years.

FINCHCOCKS, GOUDHURST AND CRANBROOK MUSEUM (August 21st)

Finchcocks is an 18th century house and is notable for

the high quality of its brickwork. Its appearance is impressive as it is built with a wide, strictly symmetrical, façade so that is rises almost like a cliff from the slightly rising ground of an open field. The interior is less pretentious but of great interest for its contents. Since 1971 it has housed the collection of early keyboard instruments made by Mr. Richard Burnett. Visitors not only see the instruments but can hear them played, Mr. Burnett being a professional musician. During our visit we heard music of appropriate character and period played on a chamber organ, a square piano and a Viennese fortepiano—a rare and delightful experience.

Our visit to Cranbrook was at the invitation of the Cranbrook and District Local History Society who are justifiably proud of their collection of bygones which is housed in a building composed of two old cottages.

MICHELHAM PRIORY AND BERWICK CHURCH
(September 11th)

Michelham Priory had been visited in 1955 and 1969 (Transactions nos. 4 and 18) and Berwick Church in 1953, 1963 and 1971 (Transactions nos. 2, 12 and 20).

A FAMOUS FORD—BLANQUETAQUE

Only a few initiates know where to find this famous ford, lost in the lower valley of the Somme between Port-le-Grand and Saigneville, an important strategic point where over the centuries fierce and bloody battles have taken place.

The name of the ford means simply a white mark. The tides which reached here, or even higher, eroded the chalky slopes on the right bank of the river. It was pieces of chalk mixed with the silt brought down in the water which, forming a compact and homogenous bottom, provided a crossing about 40 yards wide.

To understand the importance of this ford one must remember that the Somme, a rushing river several kilometres wide, was impassable between the sea and Abbeville,

so that the ford was a strategic crossing of the greatest importance, a short cut saving many leagues. It allowed one to cross from Port-le-Grand and Noyelles-sur-Mer situated on the right bank of the Somme to Saigneville and Boismont on the opposite side of the river.

At that period the Somme as far as Cambron was an arm of the sea subject to the influence of the tides, that is to say it could be crossed only twice a day at low tide between May and August. For the rest of the year floods prevented a crossing.

Moreover it had no fixed points and could vary by several hundreds of yards according to the tides.

The Romans who were great road-builders had constructed an access road to the ford from Estrees-les-Crecy which continues in the direction of Eu.

We are going to try with care and from the documents which we have consulted to indicate the principal invasions which have made use of the ford.

First of all we owe it to ourselves to be acquainted with the very beautiful legend which tells of the return from Montreuil of the relics of Saint Valery whose body had been delivered by Abbot Hercembold to Arnould, Count of Flanders, in exchange for a sum of money. The story is told by Florentin le Fils.

"When in 981 Hugh Capet had recovered the relics of Saint Valery from the Count of Flanders he came to Noyelles to cross the bay. The sea was high say the records of the Benedictines but Count Bouchard who was carrying the body of Saint Valery offered a prayer to Jesus Christ and immediately the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites was repeated. The waters of the river were divided and the whole procession passed over to the other bank." The pious author attributed to divine intervention the entirely natural passage of the ford, which without any miracle at low tide gives a free passage to pedestrians and even to carriages.

The 12th and 13th centuries were periods of relative peace and we think that the approaches to the ford saw few skirmishes apart from one in 1192 when Matthew, Count

of Boulogne, an ally of the King of England crossed the ford in the direction of Vimeu where he set fire to about 40 villages.

In 1346, the King of England, Edward III, landed in Normandy at Saint Vaast-la-Hogue, travelled 350 kilometres in a month, crossed the Seine on August 16th and headed towards the Somme. The English troops attacking Saint Valery were twice repulsed by the garrison. The pressure of the French army of Philip VI of Valois was such that Edward found himself with his back to the Somme, a veritable arm of the sea, which would oblige him to go upstream as far as Abbeville. Did he know of the existence of the ford?

There is some evidence that Edward, who was, let us not forget, Count of Ponthieu, and had spent part of his childhood at Abbeville, could not be ignorant of the crossing.

But the most generally accepted theory nowadays is that a man of Mons-Boubert, Gobin Agache, taken prisoner by the English at Oisemont, offered for a horse and one hundred gold pieces to guide the king to the ford.

The crossing place, where Froissart says 12 men abreast could pass by day or night, was still covered by the high tide and the English soldiers cried out that they were betrayed and wanted to ill-treat the guide. Edward explained to his men the mechanism of the tides and made them wait patiently. Surprised by the appearance of this army spread out along the left bank the French on the north of the ford commanded by Godemar Dufay raised the alarm. Reinforcements arrived, among them a company of Genoese crossbowmen. According to Lefils "there were about 12,000 men there, including three notable lords . . ."

Edward had to make a rapid decision. Philippe de Valois' men were approaching behind him, in front of him Dufay's reinforcements lined the river bank. To escape the blows of an enemy who outnumbered him and to maintain the military reputation of the English it is said that he was the first to jump into the water of the ford and his troops followed him.

The French, always impatient, on this occasion committed a monumental error. Instead of waiting quietly on the river bank which they were defending to prevent the enemy from

coming up out of the ford they had the unfortunate idea of taking to the water themselves to get at their adversaries quicker. Although many were killed on either side the French troops were routed and Edward's soldiers established themselves firmly on the Noyelles bank. Froissart says that "they that were there a foot could not flee, so that there were slain a great number of them of Abbeville, Montreuil, Rue and of Saint-Riquier, the pursuit covered more than a great league". As he could no longer out-distance the troops who were pursuing him from Abbeville to Blanquetaque Edward resolved to await them on the defensive near to Crecy.

Thereafter being masters of the region the English fortified the neighbourhood of the ford, building defences at Boismont, the Donjon, and at Saigneville, the Bastille. It is evident that for those who held the fortress of Crotoy the ford was very convenient for sallies from Ponthieu into Normandy.

In 1369 after capturing the castle of Noyelles the Duke of Lancaster crossed the ford to go campaigning in Vimeu and Normandy. On his return when he wished to cross the ford his vanguard was attacked by the Lord of Rambouillet, the seneschal of Ponthieu, who is said to have caused him the loss of 400 men killed or drowned.

In 1385 the French retook the ford. They built palisades and strengthened the approaches with cannon. The defences were so strong that Henry V who had taken Harfleur on September 23rd, 1415, and wanted to proceed towards Calais could not force a passage when he arrived there on October 13th. A prisoner having informed him that the ford was defended by 6,000 men commanded by the Constable d'Albreu he found himself obliged to push upstream to look for a bridge. He was less fortunate than his grandfather, Edward III, in 1346. That did not prevent him, after he had thrown two bridges across the Somme near Ham, from advancing northwards and inflicting on the French nobility the terrible defeat of Agincourt on October 25th, 1415.

The Treaty of Troyes, signed on May 21st, 1420, united in military alliance the English and the Burgundians whose empire extended into the north of France, but the supporters of the Dauphin, the future King Charles VII, retained a

certain number of fortresses in Picardy. As governor of Crotoy and lord of the manor of Noyelles-sur-Mer he probably disposed of 1,200 men. Almost all of Ponthieu obeyed him.

On June 10th, Henry V—him again—landed at Calais this time, wanting to finish off Charles. He occupied Abbeville, retook St. Valery, passed through Paris and set up his headquarters at Mantes. It was from there that having heard of the uprising of the nobility of Ponthieu he sent Philip of Burgundy to put them down.

The latter, after attacking Saint Riquier was on his way to Abbeville when he learnt from a messenger that the Dauphin's men coming from Vimeu were on their way to the ford at Blanquetaque and that Jacques d'Harcourt sallying from Crotoy was ready to join up with them. The latter when he saw the thousands of armed men of the cavalry of Philip of Burgundy and John of Luxembourg emerging from the woods of Quesnoy le Montant decided to beat a retreat and return to the fortress of Crotoy. The Dauphin's troops made a half turn and according to the chronicler Monstrelet:

"When they saw the said Duke coming after them with all his battle array, they changed their intentions and returned to the open fields to come against him, riding in good order, appearing bent on attacking the said Duke and his force although they were few in number." So turning their back on Blanquetaque they climbed the ancient cliffs of the left bank of the Somme, using the paths by which the flocks were brought down to the salt marshes of Saigneville and Boismont.

The Hundred Years War having ended without any treaty to confirm its ending the ford of Blanquetaque appears less in history.

Although the digging of the canal of the Duke of Angouleme by altering the course of the Somme has practically obliterated the traces of the site of the celebrated crossing, nevertheless, the place where the chalky waters of the ford of Blanquetaque once flowed had contributed numerous pages to the history of Vimeu and Ponthieu, but also to the history of France . . . and of England.

What remains of that glorious past?

Only a handful of tourists and of amateur historians try to locate the sites, to imagine the hostile armies, the sound of their war-horses, the clash of arms in hand to hand fighting in the middle of the ford.

The above translation of extracts from an article in Bulletin No. 8 of the Archaelogical and Historical Society of St. Valery-sur-Somme is printed with the permission of that Society.

THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE SOCIETY

held on November 21st, 1980

The Chairman, Mr. E. G. Creek, presided. The Chairman's report which had previously been circulated was approved. It showed that membership of the Society, including honorary members had been maintained at slightly in excess of 300. There was a surplus of £280 for the year shown by the Treasurer's report, due mainly to the decision to print Transactions in alternate years.

The attendance at lectures in the winter had not been quite as good as in 1978-79, but continued to fill the Shephard room on most evenings. The Summer Visits were as usual very popular and interesting. It was a matter of great regret that Miss Frewer had decided that she was no longer able to carry on the heavy task of organising the visits and the Chairman expressed the gratitude of the members for all Miss Frewer's efforts over a number of years mentioning particularly the mouth-watering teas she arranged and how she found new places to visit each year.

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

President: Miss I. Hope Muntz. Vice-Presidents: Re-elected—Mrs. E. Webster, Mr. A. E. Marson, 1980-83, Serving—Prof. D. Whitelock, Prof. Eleanor Searle, Prof. H. R. Loyn 1978-81, Miss J. E. S. Robertson, Right Rev. H. R. Darby, Bishop of Sherwood 1979-82. Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. E. G. Creek. Vice-Chairman: Re-elected—Mr. K. N. Crowe. Hon. Secretary: Re-elected—Mrs. F. M. Cryer. Hon. Treasurer: Re-elected—Mrs. L. Sanders.

Miss Frewer, Miss Thomson and Dr. Clark retired from the Committee by rotation. Miss Thomson and Dr. Clark who were willing to stand again were re-elected. Miss Frewer did not wish to continue.

Mr. R. S. Langrish who was co-opted during the year retired under the rules, but being willing to stand again was re-elected for a further term of three years.

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MUSEUM TRUST

held on November 21st, 1980

The Chairman, Mr. D. H. Beaty-Pownall, presided. He reported that the number of visitors was 15,158, significantly less than the previous year's record but comparing favourably with other years. The total included 800 schoolchildren and their teachers. Four hundred of these came between October and Easter when the Museum is normally closed for the winter. Other organised groups included three parties of French executives from I.B.M. as part of their English-speaking course at International House, Hastings.

"Bricks to Build a House," a history of brickmaking, including a section on brickmaking at Ashburnham, had been presented by Mr. Beaty-Pownall.

An important acqusition was an edition of the 12th century "Chronicle of Battle Abbey" edited and translated by Prof. Eleanor Searle.

There was a loss of £57.72 on the year due to ever increasing costs and fewer visitors' fees. But this was more than offset by £193.83 interest on investments. Sales of books, postcards, etc., were satisfactory.

The Trust paid for the word "Museum" to be painted on the side of the new portico.

Mr. Beaty-Pownall did not seek re-election to the Committee. In his place Dr. R. H. Clark was elected without contest. The remainder of the committee, Mr. Tyler, Mr. Bishop, Miss Cane, Mr. Crowe, Mrs. Kempton, Mrs. Mason and Miss Robertson were willing to stand again and were re-elected.

Subsequently the following officers were elected: Chairman, Mr. Tyler; Vice-Chairman, Mr. Crowe; Hon. Curator, Dr. R. H. P. Clark; Hon. Secretary, Miss Robertson; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Bishop; Hon. Auditor, Mr. J. C. D'O. Shearing.

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