

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Transactions 1950 - 1951

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NOTE. The Society is in no way responsible for the opinions
of contributors as set out in the above-mentioned articles.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On July 5th, 1950, the Battle "Festival of Britain" Committee elected a sub-committee

1. To prepare material for a Festival Booklet, and
2. To arrange an exhibition of objects of historical interest as part of the festival celebrations.

Messrs. W. C. Allwork, J. P. Woodhams, J.P. (Chairman), L. H. Pyke (Convenor) and R. R. Day were elected. Mr. Day was unable to serve and his place was taken by Mr. A. H. Sinden. Later, Mr. R. H. D'Elboux, M.C. and the Rev. F. Vere-Hodge were co-opted.

Offers to lend things for the proposed exhibition in 1951 were forthcoming and enquiry soon showed that masses of material existed in private hands. Much of this is historically of great interest and well worth saving, but being of little commercial value is regularly thrown away when old people give up their homes or die.

In order to encourage interest and show people what was wanted, a trial exhibition was held on October 4th, 1950, at the Autumn Flower Show at the Drill Hall, Battle, thanks to the co-operation of the Horticultural Society. There were many loans from private sources and also from Hastings Museum, whose Curator, Mr. J. Manwaring Baines, was very helpful. An account of this show appeared in the January, 1951, issue of the Sussex County Magazine.

The interest aroused by this effort was so evident that the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. R. W. Fovargue, was invited to call a public meeting. On November 9th he presided over a well-attended meeting at the Church Hall, when it was decided unanimously to start an historical society, and a temporary Committee was appointed to frame a constitution.

The members of this Committee were Mr. J. P. Woodhams, J. P. (Chairman), Miss F. M. G. Gausden (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. E. Harbord, Mrs. C. Pantlin, Miss C. A. Kirk, Messrs. W. C. Allwork, B. E. Beechey, C. T. Chevallier, R. H. D'Elboux, M.C., Lt.-Col. C. H. Lemmon, D.S.O., Sir Alan Moore, Bart. and Mr. L. H. Pyke.

The temporary Committee met twice and produced the Constitution and Rules adopted at the inaugural meeting of the Historical Society on December 13th, 1950.

L. H. PYKE.

Lecture by Dr. L. F. Salzman at the Pilgrim's Rest, Battle
On Thursday, January 19th, 1951.

"WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN ARCHÆOLOGY"

The opening lecture of the Society took place at the Pilgrim's Rest on January 19th, 1951, when Dr. L. F. Salzman of the Sussex Archæological Society spoke on "What to look for in Archæology."

Dr. Salzman suggested that members of a young society with plenty of enthusiasm and perhaps not so much knowledge might start by reading the Acts of Parliament of past days, and see how they affected the people in local history; they might then consult old Tithe Maps and note local records of the holding of "Customary" Acres. All these things would help them towards deciding where further study and excavation might be profitable.

In addition, there were always many indications to be seen locally of former activity—roads, lanes, footpaths and tracks all threw a light on the settlement of a district in early times; the materials used in buildings, perhaps incorporated from earlier ones; the details of old houses; the position and style of the buildings themselves—all these were valuable in reflecting something of former history, and should be noted and recorded.

When chosen, the area to be covered should be clearly defined and should not be too large. When the work was undertaken, there might be a sub-division of members, the more active ones being put onto field-work, the less active on recording the results of their work. It would be useful to have a set of six-inch maps, perhaps in some cases even 25-inch, on which to record, by reference numbers, all objects found.

Although members might, during their activities, make lucky finds, they would be unlikely to make a discovery comparable with the finding of gold at Mountfield nearly 100 years ago. On January 12th, 1863, a man named Butcher, while ploughing at Mountfield, unearthed a piece of metal about three feet long and some rings. He sold them to a Hastings man as old brass for 5/6d., but they were eventually disposed of in London—when found to be gold—for £529 13s. 7d., a considerable sum in those days. When a few more fragments were ploughed up and the matter became generally known, Mr. E. C. Egerton, M.P., the Lord of the Manor, notified the Treasury, and subsequently, at John's Cross, an Inquiry was held, because under an Act, all concealed treasure belongs to the Crown. The gold was reckoned to be worth £580, and three bars which had not been melted down were thought by leading antiquaries of the day to have been in the ground for 2,000 years.

The buyer of the gold from the finder and the man who disposed of it were later tried at Lewes and imprisoned. The case was the first of its kind placed on record. The pity of the whole affair was, however, that priceless relics of a bygone age should have been melted down for their metal value.

On the subject of paper work, lost registers might often be found by such a society as this. The Parish Chest could prove a great field, with Rate Books revealing the owners of various houses, so that one could add to the history of the houses a history, too, of the owners. A study of old parish documents, accounts, letters and diaries is always rewarding in bringing a personal element into the history of a place. It is interesting too, to discover the back-history of the clergy associated with one's local church; they may have been graduates of Oxford or Cambridge; their previous preferments would probably be recorded; they possibly published volumes of sermons, and these could be traced.

Local traditions, too, should be considered, their origins looked up, and care taken to check the accuracy of the references. All such things combine to make one's knowledge of local history full and vivid.

Much could be gleaned from tombstones, and these were architecturally as well as historically interesting. Here was an instance where a photographic group would be of value; there was a great field in taking pictures of 18th century tombstones, with their carved tops, allegorical cherubs and so on.

Another interesting form of research was that of studying the fashion of names, particularly Christian names, which changed considerably according to date and place.

Neither should more recent history be forgotten; persons of suitable personality should make contact with old inhabitants, and make a record of their "Memories." A session of "Memories" sometimes produced interesting recollections.

Dr. Salzman stressed the importance of accuracy; and he suggested that all records should be made in triplicate, so that if one copy was lost, there were always others in safe keeping. He was not in favour of the formation of a permanent museum, although Battle was perhaps a more favourable centre than many places, owing to its historical associations and the large number of visitors. A local museum, he said, tended to last only as long as one enthusiastic member chose to look after it.

BATTLE CHURCH

Conducted Tours of Battle Church by Mr. W. C. Allwork
On January 24th and 31st and February 24th, 1951

The building of Battle Abbey in pursuance of William the Conqueror's vow at the Battle of Hastings, necessitated the construction of a number of houses to accommodate the builders and their families, and shops to provide them with all their requirements. This was the beginning of the town of Battle.

As soon as the Abbey Church could be used for Divine Services, the townspeople were allowed to attend. As the town grew a greater number of people attended the services. The monks objected to this, as they preferred seclusion ; therefore, Abbot Ralph (Abbot of the Abbey from 1107 to 1124) decided to build a church outside the Abbey walls for the townspeople. This naturally would be built in the pure Norman style ; and was probably very similar to the church at Mountfield, which is nearly of the same period and has not been altered.

About the year 1200, owing to the growth of the town, the first church became inadequate and was pulled down, with the exception of the South wall of the chancel and a tower adjoining, and it was rebuilt on a much larger scale. The only remaining Norman arch can be seen from inside the vestry.

There is no actual record of the building of the new church, but the style of architecture explains itself ; for instance, the heavy pillars, alternate octagonal and round, was a feature peculiar to the Transitional Norman period, which was from 1180 to 1230 A.D. Also the clerestory windows are above the pillars ; if it had been built at an earlier date there would have been no clerestory windows, or if at a later, the windows would have been above the points of the arches ; also, if built prior to 1180 the arches would have been round, the pure Norman style ; these have a blunt pointed arch, which was peculiar to the Transitional period.

All the abaci (the flat stones on top of the capitals) have square-cut edges, with the exception of the two at the West end, which have rounded edges. This almost unnoticeable feature is never found in Transitional work. It shows that the nave was extended by one bay, not less than 100 years later.

The chancel, no doubt, was built at the same time as the nave, but owing to its superior workmanship, it is quite likely that the monks employed expert masons brought over from Normandy, while the nave would have been built by local workmen. The very graceful arches and the string-course on that part of the South wall which is a continuation of the only re-

maining part of Abbot Ralph's Church, are particularly worthy of notice. They resemble those in the choir of Rochester Cathedral. There are traces of similar arches in the North wall, which corresponded to those on the South, until the North chapel was built in the XIVth century. This period is indicated by the East window of the chapel being of the Decorated style.

About the same time, the South wall of the Nave became dilapidated and had to be rebuilt; this accounts for the very beautiful tracery of the windows on this side of the church, which are typical of the XIVth century.

A considerable amount of work was done during the XVth century. The present tower was built at this time; the West window over the main entrance being pure Perpendicular style. Although the West doorway is undoubtedly XIIIth century, this no doubt was carefully removed from the West wall when the tower was added, and was rebuilt into its present position. It is almost certain that the tower of Abbot Ralph's Church stood on the site now occupied by the present vestry. The great thickness of the wall between the chancel and the vestry could have been for no other purpose. After the removal of the tower to its present position, the Chapel, presumed to be that of St. Catherine (now the vestry), was, of course, built in the style of the XVth century.

Another great alteration made during this period was the widening of the North aisle. This made the small window facing West (in the North chapel) an interior window, and consequently useless. All the windows constructed during this alteration are good examples of Perpendicular work. The small window high up in the wall near the North door, now built up, is thought by some people to be a Leper's Squint, and by others to be the window of an Anchorite's cell. In the centre of the window the initials R. B. in Roman capitals, can still be seen. These may be the initials of Robert de Bello, Abbot of the Abbey from 1351 to 1364. The Rood could have been seen through this window from the outside, owing to the slant of the splays of the window.

The corbels each side of the North door, outside, may represent the heads of Henry VI and Queen Margaret, he being king at the time of the widening of the aisle.

The font, in all probability, is the original one of Abbot Ralph's Church, being of Norman design. It is of Purbeck marble.

Most of the XVth century stained glass was destroyed by the Puritans. There is, however, a considerable portion remain-

ing in one window of the North wall ; it is the head and shoulders of an Archbishop, and may be that of Thomas à Becket.

The East window of the chancel, which was previously a five light window, was put in by the Duchess of Cleveland, in memory of the Duke. The beautiful stained glass was the work of the artist Kemp, and is considered to be some of his best work. The centre light shows the Madonna and Child, with the Cleveland arms below ; on the right is St. Benedict (the Abbey being a Benedictine monastery) ; on the left is St. Martin (the Abbey having been dedicated to St. Martin).

The stained glass of the East window of the North chapel was put in by Dean Currie, in memory of his wife's mother, Mrs. Hotham.

On the North side of the chancel is the Italian alabaster tomb of Sir Anthony Browne and his first wife, Alis. It was originally coloured in green, red and gold, but only faint traces of colour can now be seen. It has been doubtfully attributed on stylistic grounds to the Florentine sculptor Torrigiano (a pupil of Michel Angelo) who made the tomb of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey. The recumbent figure of Sir Anthony is clad in armour and habited with the mantle and collar, etc., of the Noble Order of the Garter. He was Master of the King's Horse, and one of the Honourable Privy Council of Henry VIII, and a tutor to Queen Elizabeth. He was the first occupier of the Abbey after the Dissolution of the monastery. The figure on his right is that of his first wife. His second wife was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Sir Anthony died in 1548.

The large tablet on the North wall is in memory of Edmund Cartwright, a clergyman who invented the power loom, for which Parliament voted him £10,000. He retired to Hastings, and at times assisted the Dean of Battle. He died in 1823 and was buried in Battle Church.

Scratched on a pillar in the vestry can be seen some votive crosses, a common mediæval method of expressing thanks for favours received in answer to prayer.

When the church was thoroughly cleaned in 1846, some ancient mural paintings were revealed between the clerestory windows and over the chancel arch ; they were in a very bad condition, and were again whitewashed over. During the short time they were exposed, copies of the best of them were made by an artist in a book which is now kept at the Deanery.

The church was renovated in 1868-9 by the architect Butterfield, during which time it was closed, and the services held in Mr. Thorpe's warehouse near the railway station.

The work included rebuilding the chancel arch ; cutting out the fine old oak tie-beams and king-posts from the roof, and substituting the present iron bars ; replacing the old horse-back pews with those now in use ; taking away the gallery which extended out to the first pillars in the nave from the West end of the church (the organ from the gallery was re-erected in the North chapel, but was again moved to its present position in 1884) ; and bricking up of the small door in the North wall, which led to the winding staircase, inside the wall, up to the gallery, leading to the rood-loft. This gallery was removed at the same time.

The most notable Brasses in the church are the following :
John Lowe, surveyor of the manors of the monastery, died 1426.

Robert Clere, Dean of Battle 1440-1452.

John Wythines, Dean of Battle, died 1615.

W. C. ALLWORK.

Lecture by Mr. C. T. Chevallier at the Pilgrims' Rest, Battle,
on February 9th, 1951

BATTLE BEFORE THE NORMANS

After the formation of the English Channel, about 6,000 B.C., the present sea level was not stabilised until about 1,500 B.C., and, for long after, navigation by primitive boats was precluded. Consequently, the various invasions of the New Stone and Bronze Ages passed well to the North or West, and only in about 700 B.C. was the dense East Weald forest penetrated by the first Iron Age invaders—the squat, dark, vivacious breed which to this day forms a distinctive element in our peasantry.

The next important conquest was by Belgic tribes from Northern France. They resisted Cæsar in 54 B.C., but later established such relations with Rome that the Roman occupation in A.D. 50 was largely by consent. Around Ripe and Dicker a most interesting colonisation was carried out on an Italian model, while South and East of Battle iron was worked. To link this area with London, a straight road was built from Rochester to the headwater harbours at Bodiam and Sedlescombe.

From A.D. 300, constant "Saxon" incursions took place, and by A.D. 450, Frisian Jutes established themselves in Kent and East Sussex, notably at Bulverhythe and Bexhill. A little later, the Hastingas, a tribe of possibly mixed Frankish and Saxon origin, settled in eastmost Sussex and established their kingdom of Hastingset, adopting the Jutish-Frankish culture.

In several ways more liberal than that of the Saxons, this included a land system of individualist type, where the hamlets consisted of two or three farms only, in contrast with the large villages, surrounded by great communal fields, of the Angles and Saxons. In the Battle district the later Saxon conquests never displaced the Jutish land system. Even the absorption of all Sussex into Wessex left Hastingset largely a separate entity.

Perhaps about 780 the Kingdom of Sussex pushed forward colonies as garrisons against Kent and its satellite Hastingset, to hold the boundary towards Hawkhurst and also the main ridge of the Weald about Battle. In the light of the old hundred boundaries and the account given in the Battle Abbey Chronicle of 1176, the location can be surmised of the various pre-conquest manors set out in Domesday.

A branch of Wilmington might tentatively be assigned to North Trade Road (this consisting of five or six 15-acre farms); a branch of Hooe to the area just West of the Abbey ("Herste"); while the area from Upper Lake to Starrs Green and Telham Court, including the East part of the Abbey Park, was a cultivated area of 225 acres, belonging to Bollington Manor, opposite Bulverhythe.

This branch was locally called "Santlache." Seventy years ago Professor Freeman attempted to substitute this name, in the form Senlac, for Hastings as the name for the battle. On good authority, William himself used it on his deathbed. Any chance that the suggestion would catch on was spoilt by the false derivation from the French "sang" and "lac," which Freeman in fact rejected.

"Santlache" may mean "sandy layer"—such a layer is to be found in Marley Lane, near the station. "Lache" may indeed be connected with the North Frisian root "lach"—a hamlet or part of a parish. From a group of farms, "Boerlach" had come to mean a group or guild of farmers, and in one case even a communal quarry—significant ideas when one recalls the Senlac guildhall or community centre mentioned in the Abbey Chronicle. Also, in regard to "Wasingate" (way up through the meadows—Marley Lane) and "Herste" (wooded slope of a projecting spur of lane), further North German analogies can be adduced.

C. T. CHEVALLIER.

LECTURE ON THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

Given by Lieut.-Colonel A. H. Burne, D.S.O., at the Guides' Hut, Battle, on March 2nd, 1951.

The lecturer opened with the situation after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, and then passed to the problem why Harold, an impetuous commander, in the flush of victory, adopted a passive defence to meet the Normans. The reason, said the lecturer, must be sought in Harold's impetuosity itself. Two forced marches, one of 190 miles to London in six days, and the other of 58 miles to Battle only five days later, had so hopelessly strung out his army that when he arrived near the Hoar Apple Tree he halted because he had not enough troops with him to attack William. He contemplated, no doubt, waiting till the rear should catch up, but William, in the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "came upon him unawares, ere his army was collected."

He had halted, however, on an excellent defensive position which he had probably noted during his visit to the coast the summer before, just as Wellington noted the possibilities of Waterloo. It barred the direct route to London, was admirably devised to withstand cavalry attack, and had the Weald close in rear. It seemed unreasonable to suppose, as many historians do, that the flanks were refused, as that would have meant placing them in the valleys where they would be vulnerable to Norman cavalry. With some confidence the lecturer placed the left flank at the end of the ridge where the school has been built, and the right flank on the slight swell of ground 425 yards west of Harold's command post. That gave a front of 800 yards. If Harold's army exceeded 10,000 men, the position probably extended another 200 yards to the end of the ridge. His own estimate was that each army was about 9,000 strong, but that the English received substantial reinforcements during the battle.

The English dispositions were very simple: a single line of House-carls (household troops) extended along the whole front, behind which the levies were formed up ten or twelve deep. The lecturer dismissed as poetic phantasy the idea of a wall of interlocked shields. The shields of the period were neither broad enough nor of suitable shape; moreover the Tapestry shows House-carls wielding axes with shields slung on their backs. He then told the story of "the fiercest controversy of the generation"; that on the alleged three-fold palisade. He himself did not know why there had been any controversy at all. There was no palisade on the Tapestry. Wace, in rhymed verse, which necessitated the inexact use of words, writing 90 years after the event, is the only chronicler who mentions it. Moreover, the English only arrived the night before the battle.

What time was there to cut timber, cart it, and construct such defences ?

William had a healthy respect for Harold's martial qualities, and showed great caution after landing ; he spent a fortnight re-fortifying Hastings Castle, and also erecting a pre-fabricated castle he had brought. When, however, he heard of Harold's approach, he immediately assumed the offensive, and marched out at dawn on October 14th to meet him.

On reaching Telham Hill he received the report of a scout. He must then have made his own reconnaissance of the English position, and deployed his army in three divisions to attack it ; French and Flemish division on the right, Normans in the centre, and Bretons on the left. The Duke's plan was quite simple and modern in conception. Phase 1 : the archers, the artillery of that day, would "soften up" the enemy line with direct fire. Phase 2 : the heavily armed infantry would attack and breach the line. Phase 3 : the cavalry would charge through the disorganised enemy.

But the Duke's plan did not work out. The English caught the arrows on their shields, and did not return them as they had few archers. The Norman supply of arrows therefore ran out, and the English line was in no way "softened up" when Phase 2 began. The English gave the infantry attack a murderous reception, which was too much for the Bretons, who broke and fled down the hill pursued by the shire levies. The retrograde movement began to spread along the Norman line, a common occurrence in war ; and the rumour spread that the Duke had been killed. Then it was that the Duke intervened, showed himself to his troops, and after some confused fighting, launched a body of fresh cavalry against the flank of the pursuing English.

The situation was restored ; the English filled the gaps in their line, and that was the end of Phase 2—honours easy. A pause probably then ensued for reorganisation on both sides, bringing up more missiles, and possibly also some food and water.

William's plan had gone wrong ; half his army was in a state of confusion ; but the main body of his cavalry, reserved for the pursuit, was still intact. He made the hazardous decision to launch most of it against the unbroken English line.

The lecturer here remarked on the curious spectacle which must have been presented by the Norman knights forcing their reluctant and terrified steeds up the hill under a hail of arrows, javelins and stone-headed clubs, and then trying to get close enough to engage the grim line of House-carls waiting for them with axes poised. Most of the heavy Norman casualties must have occurred then.

At length the cavalry of the Norman Division broke, and the morning's episode of the Breton's flight was repeated. Groups of English broke ranks and pursued the fugitives into the valley, where they were overwhelmed by fresh bodies of Norman cavalry charging downhill on to them. The Norman chroniclers describe this incident as a feigned retreat, and say that their cavalry, as pre-arranged, wheeled about and charged their pursuers. The lecturer pointed out that such a manœuvre is, and must always have been, almost an impossibility, even with well-trained troops, and suggested that the chroniclers dare not record that the Normans ran away, though they might tell the truth about the Bretons. The fact of the matter was that the Duke again restored a nasty situation by an immediate counter-attack with fresh cavalry.

Archers, infantry and cavalry had all separately failed to break the English line, but the Duke now, for the first time, applied the principle of co-operation. Archers carried out a barrage of high-angle fire, under which the Normans, now probably a confused mass of infantry and mainly dismounted cavalry, advanced through the gaps left by the English who had broken rank, and the whole position was rolled up.

Harold, already wounded by the barrage, was killed. His brothers had been killed earlier, and there was nobody left to take command. Still the House-carls fought on in little knots and islands of desperate resistance till darkness enabled a few to find refuge in the forest. William now launched his last reserve of cavalry in a pursuit which lasted far into the night, though some pursuers met their end in the Malfosse. Wherever the Malfosse was, said the lecturer, it must have crossed ground where cavalry could gallop, otherwise they would not have fallen in. Personally he accepted Baring's location towards the head of one of the small streams 1,000 yards North-west of the Abbey.

VISIT TO BATTLE ABBEY

Members of the Battle and District Historical Society were fortunate in their first outdoor meeting on Wednesday, April 11th, when upwards of one hundred members had the pleasure and privilege of being taken round Battle Abbey by Mrs. Harbord, their Vice-President (whose family has owned this lovely place for more than 230 years, and whose knowledge of and devotion to it were obvious and delightful) and by Mr. R. H. D'Elboux, a learned member of the Society, who kept members both interested and amused by his knowledgable and witty explanations as to how monastic life in an Abbey of this

kind was carried on, and of the typical regulations which had to be observed. Indeed, our guides made these dead stones live, and we came away with a new appreciation of the beauty and historical importance of Battle's great heritage.

Rightly we started on the site of the Abbey Church, the spiritual head of a great and complex body. Few ruins remain above ground, but, standing near the transept, we were able to appreciate the size of the great church when it was completed, and to get a mental picture of its magnificence in its heyday. There is little doubt that the high altar before the 14th century enlargement stood on the actual spot where Harold fell. There is promise of further discoveries when it becomes financially possible to carry out the extensive excavations which would be involved. One unsolved problem is the site of the Bell Tower—a separate building probably to the East of the chancel. It is known to have had at least four bells.

We were told that the yew trees in the Monks' Walk (about which there have been various legends) were almost certainly Tudor, but that there was probably an alleyway between the church and the outer wall which was used for processions.

Next we moved to the Cloisters, and here we were given our most comprehensive picture of the Great Abbey with its many buildings and activities. The Cloisters was not a place for loitering, but the throbbing heart and workshop of a busy community. Here in draughty shelter and in wooden cubicles the craftsmen monks worked—though it seems probable that at a later stage the writers and illuminators plied their trade in a separate scriptorium.

At one point would be the stone basins of spring water where the monks washed hands and face before meals, and there are records that, in some abbeys, various injunctions were in force such as that the monks should not blow their noses on the towels, and that they were not to hold parliaments while waiting for meals—in other words, they were not to be querulous.

The Frater or dining-room was on the South side of the Cloisters. Here, during meals, one of the monks from a stone pulpit edified his brethren by reading to them from the Lives of the Saints, and there was an injunction that monks should not interrupt by cracking nuts. The kitchens, in which there are reputed to have been five fireplaces, were located on the South side of the Frater.

On the West side of the Cloisters is the Abbot's House. This has been in almost continuous occupation for nearly 900 years, and is more important than we generally realise. Here

in the Great Hall, in the Parlour (place of talk and business—not gossip), and in his private apartments, including his private chapel, lived the Abbot.

Here he entertained his most important guests, Princes of the Royal Blood, great nobles and ecclesiastics, and here he transacted the Abbey's business.

In addition to the hospitality extended to the more important visitors there was a separate guest-room where hospitality was extended to merchants and similar visitors, while for lowlier pilgrims hospitality was provided at the Almonry at the Gate-house.

On the East side of the Cloisters was the Chapter House, where the whole community met at least once a day. Next to the Chapter House, and at the South-east corner of the Cloisters, was the "slip"—only recently re-discovered—a passage with stone benches open at both ends. Here in full view of their superiors and brethren the monks could receive visits of relations and friends from the world outside.

To the South of the "slip" is the famous range of monastic buildings—perhaps the finest monastic remains in the kingdom—comprising the unroofed Dorter (the sleeping place) and the three rooms below it. In addition to the main staircase by which the monks ascended to the Dorter, there was a small private staircase for the Prior's use, by which he could visit the Dorter to see that all was in order. The most northerly of the three rooms below the Dorter was the "Warming Room," warmed by braziers. Our special attention was drawn to the ribbed roof, unadorned, but very attractive, supported by Purbeck marble pillars. Next was a small room which may have been a scriptorium when the Cloisters ceased to be used for that purpose. The function of the lowest chamber which, owing to the slope of the ground is the highest pitched, is uncertain. It may have been a "Novices" room, or have been occupied by the lay brethren of the Abbey.

Leading East from this fine range of buildings were the Prior's quarters and the Infirmary at the Northern end, and the "Reredorter" or water-closets—flushed by a spring which conveniently rose higher up the slope, at the Southern end. Underneath the Abbey was an extensive drainage system—the drains being 4 feet square and probably being the secret passages, to which legend refers as existing underneath the Abbey.

The Infirmary served a multiplicity of purposes. In addition to housing the sick, all monks attended periodically to be bled, and when a monk had been a monk for fifty years he could live in the Infirmary—one advantage being that there were no "meatless" days. (This created nostalgic thoughts in the

minds of many of the Society's members). It was one of the Prior's duties to pay frequent visits to the Infirmary to make sure there were no malingerers.

Space does not permit of detailed reference to the many interesting things we were told about the Guest House, built by Sir Anthony Browne over the old Abbey cellars, thought to have been intended for the Princess Elizabeth, but never, in fact, completed or occupied, or about the Gateway and Market Hall and Court Room.

For the latter part of our visit we were taken over the Abbot's House where, in addition to the magnificent Great Hall with its beautiful roof and stonework, we were privileged to go over the greater part of the building including the earliest parts which comprised the original Abbot's Rooms, as well as the further rooms, which were added later when the building was extended.

The great damage caused by the fire in 1931 was offset by the discovery of a number of interesting features, including staircases, doors and windows, whose previous existence had not been suspected, and also a chapel adjoining the Abbot's Parlour on the first floor and having a window in the party wall through which the Abbot could, if he so desired, listen to Mass without actually going into the chapel. This chapel is now used as the School chapel. It was also discovered that the roof of the Great Hall had been attacked by the Death Watch Beetle.

So came to an end what was without doubt one of the most interesting tours of the Abbey which has taken place.

VISIT TO ASHBURNHAM PLACE

May 16th, 1951

On May 16th, 1951, by kind permission of the Lady Catherine Ashburnham, some 150 members and friends visited Ashburnham Place.

The earlier arrivals were divided into two parties, which, with Lady Catherine Ashburnham and Mr. Rupert Gunnis as guides, were conducted on an explanatory tour of the State apartments of the ground and first floors, special notice being taken of the admirable collection of pictures, the particular care of the present owner. The remaining members, whilst awaiting their turn for the house, were similarly divided to visit the church and stables and the grounds.

The Ashburnham family is one of very few allowed by the late J. H. Round, an indefatigable exposé of conjectural pedigrees, to claim Saxon origin. The printed pedigree has of late years been much revised, and can be traced back in records to a mid-twelfth century date. The family owned, as now, the

chapel of St. James in the parish church*, and in the 16th century adhered firmly to the Old Faith, but the heir in 1563 being a minor, and so in the Queen's hands, was educated as a Protestant.

The Caroline John Ashburnham was a faithful adherent of King Charles, and Groom of the Bedchamber. His private ledger, showing sums subscribed to the Royalist cause, with each page signed by the king, and letter written from Newcastle by the Royal Martyr, were on view to the Society, together with his watch and shirt, drawers and garters worn on the scaffold, and the sheet on which his body was laid—once in the church, but since the theft of the gold case of the watch (made specially for it by order of John Ashburnham), kept at the house.

His grandson adhered to William of Orange and was rewarded with a barony. In the small dining-room, the walls of which are devoted to Stuart portraits, was displayed a fine linen tablecloth commemorating the Battle of the Boyne. This was probably brought into the family by the marriage of the first earl with Mary, daughter of the second Duke of Ormonde, who entertained the Dutchman after the battle. In 1730 the dignity was advanced to an earldom.

The house would appear to have been rebuilt in early Georgian times, though in part on earlier foundations, and although much altered, some of the Georgian work can still be discerned. In the early nineteenth century (1812-1816) extensive alterations took place externally and internally, and under the guidance of George Dance the younger, a Gothic mansion emerged. Later in the century, and possibly because Dance's work was found structurally unsound, all Gothic facing was removed, the exterior refaced with the present red brick, and some small additions made to the building.

The grounds were laid out by Capability Brown, whose original plans are in the muniments. The bridge, however, though not Gothic, is by Dance, and as well, probably, the small temple on the South side of the lower lake, sited to give a picturesque view across water of the house and church tower.

Below the extensive walled garden are the cranberry beds, the oldest in England, being started from seeds sent in 1772 by Sir Joseph Banks, the famous 18th century President of the Royal Society.

The stables are well-proportioned around three sides of a cobbled yard, and contain a family coach of early 19th century date, still capable of being used, and a Victorian fire

* Dedicated to Our Lady; the rebuilt church was dedicated to St. Peter.

engine, once sent hastily to Battle on a Guy Fawkes night, under the misconception that the Abbey was afire.

The church was, save for the tower, entirely rebuilt after the Restoration in the Gothic style. Its interior fittings, save for the Caroline gallery removed from the old church and set in the new, are contemporary, and include a fine commandments table in a carven frame. The family chapel of St. James, on the North side, contains the Ashburnham monuments, that of William Ashburnham and his wife, Jane, Countess of Marlborough, being by Bushnell the sculptor. The South chapel has above it the family pew, a good, if unpretentious example among the few now remaining in England.

R. H. D'ELBOUX.

BODIAM CASTLE

A Lecture Delivered by Mr. Alfred Duggan to the Battle and District Historical Society when they visited Bodiam Castle on 6th June, 1951.

Early History of the Fief.

In Roman times a road from Sandhurst Cross to Cripps Corner crossed the river near the present Bodiam Bridge. But the Rother was then a much bigger stream, tidal up to Roberts-bridge, and probably the Romans used a ferry, not a bridge. Mr. Margary suggests that the earthwork at Court Lodge, now known as the Gun Platform, is the site of a Roman station.

Bodeham is the Home of Bode, an early Saxon proper name. Therefore Bodiam was probably settled earlier than the neighbouring Hursts, which are clearings in a wood, only inhabited in summer.

William the Conqueror granted the whole Rape of Hastings, with 108 manors, to his relative William, son of Count Robert de Eu.

Domesday Book. Osbert fitzHugo de Ou (Eu) held of the Manor of Ewhurst one hide and three virgates in Bodeham, with a hall. Roger and Ralph de Ou, his brothers or sons, held other land in Bodeham. They held no land elsewhere, and took to calling themselves de Bodeham. The moat of their hall can still be seen, on the border of the Kent Ditch. Since Bodeham formed part of the parish of Ewhurst the Rother must have been easy to cross. Perhaps there was already a bridge.

1176. Liber Niger Scaccarii. Roger de Bodeham held the Manor of Bodiam with a park by the service of four knights.

Before 1278 Bodiam passed by marriage to Henry de Wardieux.

Sir Edward Dallingridge, born 1346, married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of John de Wardieux.

In 1377 the French sacked Rye, and at this period their fleet was supreme in the Channel.

Therefore, 21st October, 1385, Sir Edward received a royal licence to castellate his hall. He interpreted this liberally, building on a different site, the other side of the hill, where he commanded the passage of the Rother.

The Fabric.

Bodiam Castle is self-conscious architecture, designed to look more military and imposing than in fact it is. The design is French rather than English, and recalls Derval in Brittany, or Villaudrant in Gascony, either of which Sir Edward might have visited. It is very nearly a square, but none of the angles are right-angles, and each wall a different length, which suggests that the plan was traced on the ground without instruments. The interior is an unusually comfortable and elaborate hall-house; much more comfortable than Penshurst, for example. The 33 fireplaces are among the earliest in England, though the brick firebacks are not loot from Roman Pevensey, as I told the Society, for Mrs. Jacquetta Hawkes informs me they are Flemish. In the great hall the builder stuck to the old fashion of a central hearth, with louvre above, instead of fireplace and chimney. The lavish accommodation of 28 garde-robes discharge straight into the moat, but the well is fed by its own spring, thus the drinking water would be clean. The stone came from Wadhurst, by barge down the Rother. The sparse ornament is in the Perpendicular Style.

As a fortress the castle was well defended against casual raiders by its wide moat, its 40-foot wall and its 60-foot towers. But there is only one wall, and it could not have withstood a serious siege by 14th century engines.

It is remarkable as having been built entirely at one time, to one plan, without further additions, unlike most castles, which were continually altered and strengthened.

History of the Castle.

Sir Edward Dallingridge died *c.* 1395, and was buried in Robertsbridge Abbey; succeeded by his son, Sir John. He died childless in 1407 and was buried beside his father.

By strict feudal law a fief could not be left by will, except to the Church or the natural heir. But already by 1400 there were ways of getting round this. Sir John managed to set up a trust, with the result that the castle went to his widow, Alice, for her life. She lived to 1446.

In the 19th century there was a theory that the castle was never completed and never lived in. But Sir Edward and Sir John, though they spent most of their time at Court or on official missions, had no other home than Bodiam, and the trust would

not have been devised unless Dame Alice intended to live there. We may say that from c. 1390 to 1446 the castle was fully inhabited, by an appropriate household. But it must have been rather a white elephant, for the one Manor of Bodiam, worth the service of four knights, was all the land which paid for its upkeep, though the two first owners had fees and salaries from the king in addition. But an income in money, without land, was very precarious in the Middle Ages.

In 1446 the castle passed by inheritance to Philippa, daughter of Sir Edward's brother, Walter, who was married to Sir Thomas Lewknor. The Lewknors had other seats in Sussex, and henceforth the castle may have been inhabited only by a bailiff, to look after the estate.

October 1483. Sir Thomas Lewknor (grandson of Philippa) tried to proclaim the Earl of Richmond at Rochester. The rising failed, and he fled overseas. On November 8th, Richard III sent orders from Exeter to the Earl of Surrey to capture the castle from the rebels. The Yorkist castellan was paid from December 12th; counting in the time taken to send messages from Exeter to Sussex there cannot have been much of a siege, though it was presumably at this time that the bombard was thrown into the moat. Lewknor was, of course, attainted, but this was reversed after Bosworth in 1485.

In 1542 Sir Roger Lewknor sued other members of his family for possession of the castle. This may have been a collusive suit, to establish a clear title.

Henceforth the castle, now obsolete as a fortress, was frequently shared (not divided) among co-heiresses. This suggests that it was no longer inhabited, and that only the land of the manor was valued. C. 1642, someone, perhaps Lord Thanet, loopholed some of the arrow-slits for musketry. But in fact there was no fighting here in the Civil War, 1649. General slighting of all castles not held by the New Model Army. If the castle had hitherto retained its lead roof, it could now be removed with impunity. Stones were stolen from the inner walls, but the outer wall remained because it rises sheer from the moat and was difficult of access, except by boat.

1864. Mr. Cubitt, later Lord Ashcombe, did certain repairs.

1917. Lord Curzon bought it from the second Lord Ashcombe, and in 1920 carried out a thorough restoration of the foundations.

1925. Lord Curzon bequeathed it to the National Trust, which is supported by Voluntary Contributions, NOT by the taxpayer.

A. DUGGAN.

MUSEUM. Notes on the Society's Exhibitions 1951.

"It is only by studying the past that we can foresee, however dimly or partially, the future."

"It may well be that it is only by respecting the past that we can be worthy of the future."

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL. November 9th, 1951.

The chief object of a local museum is to preserve material from which local history may be studied. Today the difficulties of starting and maintaining a worthy museum in Battle appear almost insuperable. A way out of this dilemma is to hold temporary exhibitions and to keep a most careful record of the whereabouts of everything relating to local history.

This consideration was in the minds of those who organised the seven exhibitions of 1951. Six little shows at Battle Youth Centre in January and April (open free to the public from 2 until 4.30 p.m.) led up to a more ambitious effort from July 30th to August 11th as a part of the local Festival of Britain activity. This was held in the Abbot's Hall and Parlour of Battle Abbey by permission of Miss Sheehan-Dare and the Abbey authorities. Members of the Society were admitted free and 2,000 visitors paid for admission.

This is not the time or place to list the exhibits nor to thank the lenders, private people in all walks of life and museum councils. It is worth recording that almost everyone offered to lend their treasures without hesitation. In addition to the interest and pleasure given, these exhibitions showed how great a store of material is available and they indicated lines of action and enquiry which might usefully be pursued.

Buried Treasure.

Lent by the Sussex Archæological Society and by the Very Rev. W. W. Youard, lately Dean of Battle, the silver pennies from the hoard, part of Harold's War Chest, dug up at Sedlescombe in 1876 were a direct link with the Battle of Hastings. So, too, may have been the axehead found in April 1951, during road excavations in Marley Lane within 200 yards of the battle. It was given to the Society by Mr. H. Catt of Chapel Cottages, Battle, and if the Society had not existed it would have been lost. Another workman gave us a Nuremburg token (Venetian type) which he found in 1947 when Battle Churchyard wall was moved for road widening. In this strip of the churchyard some thirty skeletons were found at no great depth, some face downward and not in coffins. There were traces of iron about them, indeed the works foreman described them as "in armour from head to foot, but everything crumbled

at a touch." Because of this some people jumped to the conclusion that these were the remains of the warriors of 1066. This is unlikely ; in a burial-ground in constant use from the XIIth century the conditions found were to be expected, particularly as during most of the period only the well-to-do were buried in coffins.

This happened less than five years ago but there are neither authenticated records nor photographs. The Society might well try to be organised to record historical finds accurately and without romance.

Manuscripts

The mass of written material from the 12th to the 19th centuries, worthy of study, is quite amazing, and it is easy to overlook its importance. Usually each manuscript is a unique record. Each is a piece in a jig-saw puzzle which, correctly assembled, gives a vivid picture of Battle down the centuries ; any piece destroyed is gone for ever and the picture to that extent less clear. The same considerations apply to original drawings, paintings and even photographs.

At the exhibitions only a tithe of the material available was shown and it is possible to mention here only a few typical items :— e.g. the 12th to 16th century monastic manuscripts (Abbey grants, accounts, etc.), 17th century records of Courts Baron (Montagu period) and from 1719 to today a mass of papers of the Webster period. We may mention a deed 1758 by Sir Whistler Webster appointing a coroner, witnessed by Isaac Ingall ; Battle Poor Law records and accounts from 1724 ; the beautifully written minute-book of the Battle Mechanics Institute from 1824 ; and the rough notes in contemporary exercise books of that Battle worthy, Wm. Ticehurst, 1767 to 1852, among other things High Constable of the Hundred, Clerk to the Overseers and to the Burial Board, schoolmaster, postmaster, etc. These included movements of paupers, billeting of soldiers during the Napoleonic wars, burials, etc.

Iron.

During the Roman occupation and again from 1500 to 1800 our local iron was of national importance. The Roman period was represented by Roman pottery and cinder from the bloomeries (see article on excavations at Sedlescombe). The second period gave us Tudor cannon and "shotte," firebacks, mantraps, sea-chests, etc., and an amusing collection of domestic utensils and ornaments. Some maps, and the working models of a furnace and hammer-mill lent by Hastings Museum, helped to make these exhibits interesting.

Church.

During Festival Week, St. Mary's, Battle, staged an interesting display in the church itself and at the earlier little shows some of the treasures were lent to us.

Family History.

The exhibitions owed much to help and loans from the Webster family, whose romantic history is in course of being written. Other exhibits brought to light interesting family history, the Watts, the Vidlers, Saxbys, Avanns, Ticehursts, and many others. This genealogical research concerns more than those most intimately associated—each little picture, as it becomes clear, helps to complete another corner of our jig-saw.

Farm and Forest.

Our exhibits only touched the fringe of this vast and fruitful subject for research. We showed a Saxon quern found at Sedlescombe and, from more than 1,000 years later, a flail and horn lanthorn, hop tallies, horse bells and brasses and a photograph of the last local team of plough oxen.

In these brief notes no mention has been possible of many stimulating exhibits, e.g. the "Angel of Robertsbridge Abbey"; Isaac Ingall's walking stick; the wand of office of the Netherfield Hundred; the preventive man's pistol found bricked up in a cottage wall; or the crossbow used for killing Abbey deer. So much has perforce been omitted and, even so, it has been impossible to keep the account in proportion.

L. H. PYKE.

FIELDWORK DURING THE SEASON 1951

The Romano-British Bloomery, or ironworking site, in the Durhamford valley, which was already in a flourishing state in the first century, was discovered by the late Mr. Ernest Straker in 1924, and described by him in his book "Wealden Iron" under the heading "Footlands." It lies less than half-a-mile west of the Sedlescombe-Staplecross road, which is itself on the line of the first-class Roman road which connected the Battle ironworking area with Maidstone, and thence via Rochester and the Watling Street with London.

Assuming that there must have been a road or roads connecting the ironworks with the main thoroughfare, the fieldwork sub-committee of the Historical Society decided that its first task would be to find and examine them. The following work was therefore carried out.

The Approach Road from Sedlescombe.

Indications of the line of such a road running from Little Castlemans to the South end of Beech Wood were given by a line of ploughed-up cinder, what were apparently low aggers in the Aldershaw and Beech Wood, and a line of rabbit holes in a slight fold across the Lavix Field. During May and early June six members of the Society opened trenches : (1) In the Aldershaw (Ordnance Survey 1/25,000 sheet 51/71 773193) ; (2) In the Lavix Field (773194), and (3) In the South end of Beech Wood (772196).

In the Aldershaw, under a top soil of ten inches of loam, a road surface consisting of iron cinder 14ft. 8in. wide was exposed. The road was well cambered and proved at that point to be 28 inches thick, resting upon a subsoil of clay. The great thickness was probably given to lessen the steepness of the bank down to the stream. This part of the road has now been removed by the owner of the land.

In the Lavix Field, a trench four feet wide revealed the road surface at an average depth of 30 inches. It was 11 feet wide, and again composed of iron cinder. When cut through it showed a section with little camber seven inches thick in the middle. It lay on a clay subsoil and was covered by loam. The ground here had a side slope of 1 in 11. It was interesting to observe how the road had been levelled ; exactly one half had been laid on a dug-out foundation, and the other half brought up to the same level by extra metalling.

In the South end of Beech Wood a flat surface of rammed sandstone, ten feet wide, was found under 14 inches of top-soil. When cut through, it merged imperceptibly into the sandy clay subsoil. There are traces alongside of a small quarry where the sandstone may have been dug.

Mr. I. D. Margary, Chairman of the Sussex Archæological Society kindly came to see our work, and measured and photographed No. 1 section. He confirmed that the road we had exposed was indeed a Roman vicinal road to the ironworks, and that the portion in Beech Wood was made of sandstone because it was the most readily accessible material. Diagrams and photographs, including some excellent half-plates kindly taken by Mr. Bramley, of the excavations, were exhibited in Battle Abbey during Festival Week.

The Approach Road from Cripps's Corner.

The fact that the approach road from Sedlescombe followed the course of a scheduled public footpath suggested an examination of the footpath from Footlands Wood to the former

Compasses Inn near Cripps's Corner. As a result, an outcrop of iron cinder was found in the bank of the stream at 773202 where the footpath crosses. From that point, by probing, the line of a road two feet underground and about 20 feet broad was found to run straight across the field and into the corner of Kemp's Wood (775204); thence running parallel to the Eastern edge, and about ten yards from it, it emerged to pursue a straight course to the entrance of Compasses Lane, which marks the line of the main Roman road. At one point in Kemp's Wood the removal of a few inches of top soil revealed a flat road surface of iron cinder no less than 25 feet broad. This road, leading inland, appears to have been more important than the one which led towards Sedlescombe wharf.

Examination of a Field on Footlands Farm.

This field, in which some excavation was carried out in 1925, showed, this year, some rectangular bare patches among the bean crop. It is bounded by the western end of the footpath mentioned above. On June 11th the footstand of a small Roman Samian dish and several other small fragments of Samian and local British pottery were picked up by the side of this path at 772202. On August 19th two small trial trenches were dug in the hope of finding some foundations of a building. One trench disclosed a portion of a Bloomery hearth, and the other yielded a few pottery fragments, but no trace of a building. The footpath, on probing, was found to lie above an iron cinder road for part of its course just as it did on the east side of the stream. The Eastward line of this road remains to be found, as inclement weather put an end to further exploration for the season.

The Society is indebted to the owners and tenants of the land, who so readily gave their permission to explore and dig, without which this small contribution to local history could not have been made.

C. H. LEMMON.

VISIT TO BRIGHTLING AND BURWASH CHURCHES

Conducted by Mr. W. Edward Meads, September 12th, 1951
Brightling Church

There was one reference in the Domesday Book to the church of Brightling, a village situated high on the hills north-west of Battle. Nothing is known of the Saxon church which probably stood here, and the present church dates from about 1080, from which time, by grant of the Earl of Eu, the advowson and control were under the now almost destroyed collegiate

church of St. Mary-in-the-Castle, Hastings. Formerly named St. Nicholas, it was rededicated to St. Thomas-à-Becket some time after his death in 1170.

This building is a good example of how parish churches in mediæval times were built, enlarged and altered, to suit the requirements of the time or the purposes of a superior establishment; it is one of the most complex in the district, and contains work of early Norman date, Early English and Decorated.

Norman work of 1090-1100 can be seen in the South door, and parts of the South and West walls are probably of this date.

The church was practically rebuilt between 1180 and 1200, in the Early English period, the characteristic features of which can be seen in the main part of the added West tower (1170-1200) and the general structure. The chancel is Early English, and in its East and South walls are the remnants of blocked windows of about 1200.

In the North wall of the North chapel there is an Early English lancet window, which has led to the theory that this part of the church is also of the Early English period; it is more likely, however, that this window was moved from the old North wall of the chancel when the Chapel of St. Nicholas was built on the North side of the chancel. The window contains fragments of 13th century glass.

The North chapel and North aisle were added in the 14th century and exhibit Decorated features, especially in the East end window. It is possible that there was originally no connection between the two. In the East end of the chancel is a fine Decorated window, and one at the East end of the North chapel of almost similar design.

Of the Perpendicular period are a number of windows, and the top and buttresses of the tower. The gallery at the West end of the church dates from 1750, and the unusual barrel organ 1810.

In the church there is a bust of Squire Fuller, "Mad Jack," who sat in three English Parliaments. He built his own pyramidal tomb in Brightling churchyard, as well as other strange monuments in the neighbourhood. He did many foolish things, but these were largely offset by his founding of Fullerian professorships, his interest in music and art (he introduced Turner to Sussex), and the fact that he saved Bodiam Castle from destruction.

Among the brasses are the 16th century memorial to Thomas Pye, and the 15th century record, once broken in two, of the bequest of lands to the church by John Batys, together with the record of how the land was restored after being alienated for many years.

Burwash Church

The Church of St. Bartholomew at Burwash, originally Norman, was very much restored in the last century, and is therefore much less interesting archæologically than Brightling.

Ancient parts include the Norman tower of 1090-1100 ; the double aperture in the West face of its upper section is inferior Norman imitation of Saxon, and may be contrasted with the Saxon windows at Worth. There is a shingled brooch spire, a type common in Sussex church architecture. Two buttresses were added to the tower in the 14th century, owing to fear of subsidence of the ground, and in 1856 an external stair turret was built giving access to the belfry.

The church has North and South aisles, and the arcades dividing these from the nave are of Early English date. The South arcade of about 1190-1200 has three bays with obtuse arches and two free piers of different form—one octagonal, the other round—with the square-cut abacus of date prior to 1200. The North one, with four bays and three piers, is later, about 1250 ; the abaci are rounded and the pillars do not line with those of the South arcade.

The chancel arch is original 13th century, carried by 14th century corbels ; it is flush with the walls of the chancel. The chancel itself and the aisles date only from 1856, when the church was generally rebuilt. The modern triplet of lancet windows in the East end of the chancel has some good modern stained glass.

In 1856 the side walls of the church were pulled down and the aisles widened by three feet ; the East walls of the aisles are not in line with the chancel arch, but are placed further Eastward. Except for those of the tower, all the exterior walls are modern ; the main porch, in an unusual position on the West wall, was rebuilt in 1856, but is a good copy of the Decorated one of the 14th century.

In the church is one of the oldest known pieces of Sussex iron, a 14th century grave slab to one Joan Collins, an iron-master's daughter, with engraved cross and inscription ; and an early 15th century octagonal font bearing, on two sides, the Pelham buckle on a shield.

The oak carving in the chancel, a low screen and stalls to match, are modern but very fine.

VISIT TO ETCHINGHAM AND MOUNTFIELD CHURCHES

Conducted by Mr. W. Edward Meads, September 22nd, 1951
Etchingham Church

Etchingham is an excellent example of a manorial church, that is, one built by the Lord of the Manor for the purposes of his manorial people only. This church was built in 1360 or a little later by Sir William de Echyngham, who died in 1388. His manor house stood on the site of the present station.

In contrast to Brightling and Mountfield, this church is all of one date and style, being a fine specimen of late Decorated architecture, and remains mainly unaltered. There is an indication that it was originally moated ; since it is a manorial church, the chancel is relatively large and elaborate, for the Lord and his people, and the nave relatively small, for retainers and manorial workers only. It is built in a distinctly foreign form, with high pitched roofs, and its square tower is carried on the Easternmost bay of the nave, which is strengthened by a cross arch to bear the weight of the tower. Owing to subsidence, there is an inclination for the walls of the nave only to lean outwards.

The nave has three very symmetrical bays with Decorated capitals on each side, and there is a clerestory above them. The two aisles have two-light windows in the sides and West end and three lights in the East end. The church has, in fact, numerous interesting windows, and one of its most noteworthy features is the Decorated tracery ; the East window is very fine Flamboyant style, and is practically of identical pattern with the corresponding Flamboyant work in the East window at Lindfield ; those of the chancel especially exhibit great variety in their flowing reticulated tracery ; and the tracery of the West end, which is one of the latest windows, is very unusual and curious.

An interesting feature is the blocked up door well above ground level on the North side of the chancel, to which it seems there was formerly a staircase. On the South side there is an Early English door, probably preserved from an earlier church.

The fine carved stalls and canopied triple sedilia and piscina in the chancel are original ; the interesting tiles at the end of the nave leading into the chancel are also of very early date. This church has one of the best and oldest wooden porches in Sussex, in the arch of which are large boards of oak. A note-

worthy piece of work to be found at Etchingam is the font, the pedestal of which appears to be of Early English date, but the bowl Decorated and contemporary with the church. The vane on the tower is the original, and is a pennon of fretty, the arms of the founder.

The brasses include the single figure of the founder of the church, Sir William de Echingham. Another large figure brass is to a later De Echingham, while a small one in the South aisle is to two sisters.

Mountfield Church

Mountfield Church, not far north of Battle, is an interesting example of a small village church. It dates from Norman times, and it retains many of its original features.

The nave walls are mostly Norman, dating about 1080-1100, and there are two Norman windows in the North wall. The walls themselves are three feet thick, as opposed to those of Saxon churches, which were usually only about two feet. Also Norman is the simple semi-circular chancel arch, practically unaltered ; it is flanked by a squint, of later date, on each side.

About 1160-80 the small West end tower was built against the original West wall of the nave, and is therefore a specimen of Early English work. Perpendicular buttresses have been added, and from the tower there rises a characteristic Sussex shingle spire.

Later Early English work is to be seen in the chancel, which was entirely rebuilt about 1230-50. Some of the windows in the nave are of Decorated and Perpendicular styles of architecture.

The walls are now plastered over inside, and there are half-hammer beams in the roof. The South porch is contemporary with that of Etchingam, and is of the same timbered style. There are also the old solid wooden stairs in the tower.

The font—which is illustrated and described in SAC XLIV 31-32—is of unusual interest. It has a large circular bowl which was originally Norman, but in the 15th century it was altered by being carved in the style of that time.

First of Five Talks on Architecture

by Mr. H. E. Bunce, F.R.I.B.A., at the British Legion Hall,
Chequers Hotel, Battle on October 5th, 1951.

GREEK AND ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

Mr. Bunce began his talk by explaining that he intended to describe and show slides mainly of public buildings, and to speak primarily of the pure architecture, with little reference to history or to the influence of prevailing political or economic conditions.

He described firstly the features of the three Greek orders, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, pointing out the different designs of columns and capitals, and showed ground plans of typical Greek temples; the main body of these usually consisted of a large covered chamber containing the image of the god, with an open porch in front and perhaps a smaller room behind, all surrounded by a colonnade. The temples were constructed with fine mathematical precision to ensure the greatest possible beauty of line, and the Greeks had a great advantage in being able to use for them the beautiful Pentelic marble which is to be found near Athens.

The Parthenon is one of the best examples of a Doric temple, with its simple, severe columns and capitals, long frieze (probably once painted) with alternating triglyphs and metopes, and colonnade. The now ruined temple of Diana at Ephesos was Ionic, and also the Erechtheum on the Acropolis at Athens, whose porch is carried by six Caryatides (one now a terra-cotta cast). In this order the column was taller, and, unlike the Doric, stood on a base; the capital was surmounted by lateral volutes; the frieze was continuous. In the Corinthian order the column was similar to the Ionic, but had a more complex and elaborate capital; this can be seen in the choregic monument of Lysicrates at Athens. Although the earlier buildings are Doric (the earliest existing one dates from about 700 B.C.), the orders later became largely contemporary and do not signify specific dates.

Turning to the Romans, Mr. Bunce showed examples of their imitation of the Greek orders—Doric and Ionic are combined in the Colosseum at Rome, and Doric and Corinthian in the theatre of Marcellus, while Corinthian is to be found alone in the Roman temple of Jupiter at Baalbek and the Augustan Maison Carrée at Nîmes. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans were fond of buildings of more than one storey, and they specialised too in colonnaded streets; reconstructions show that these were probably to be found in the Forum Romanum and the Imperial

Fora. The most splendid Imperial Forum was that built for Trajan in the 2nd century A.D. ; in its centre stands a huge Doric column carved with a spiral relief depicting scenes from the Dacian wars.

Also typical of Roman constructions in the time of the Empire were the monumental arches (a form used originally in Egypt and Mesopotamia), such as those erected for Constantine, Titus and Septimius Severus, carved simply or with commemorative reliefs. One of the most remarkable Roman works is the Pantheon, the oldest roofed building which still stands intact ; it carries a very wide dome, and is lit entirely by one central hole in the roof.

An idea of how the Romans spent some of their leisure could be gained, as well as from such buildings as the Colosseum and theatres, from the ruins of their famous Baths, massive and high-ceilinged, with calidarium, tepidarium and frigidarium. Mr. Bunce showed slides with photographs and reconstructions of those of Caracalla and Diocletian, which were interesting as giving a clearer insight into Roman life, as well as showing the great feats of building of which the Romans were capable.

Mr. Bunce concluded by showing what he considered to be one of the finest of all Roman engineering achievements, one which we can see for ourselves to-day—the three-tiered, arched aqueduct, the Pont du Gard at Nîmes.

M.S.M.

Lecture by Squadron-Leader L. G. Pine, B.A., F.S.A. (Scot.), F.R.S.A. (Editor of *Burke's Peerage*), at the Church Hall, Battle, on Saturday, October 13th, 1951.

POLITICAL EVENTS IN ENGLAND FOR FIFTY YEARS BEFORE 1066.

The period in question begins in 1016, the year when Ethelred the Unready died. The events of his reign led to the Norman Conquest. Ethelred had succeeded to the throne on the murder of his half-brother, Edward the Elder, and it is said that the murder was instigated by Ethelred's mother, Elfrida. Although Ethelred was only a boy of ten years old at his accession in 978, the circumstances appear to have weighed on his mind. His reign marks the decay and break-up of the old English monarchy, the house of Cerdic, the first king of Wessex, from whom is descended our present royal house through the marriage of Henry I. with Matilda, niece of Edgar Atheling.

The principle events of Ethelred's reign were :

(1). The permanent settlement in Northern England, in the Midlands, and in East Anglia, of the Danes. Sweyn of

Denmark was acknowledged by these parts of the country as king ; when Wessex also accepted him, Ethelred fled to Normandy.

(2). The alliance between England and Normandy. Ethelred married as his second wife Emma, daughter of Richard I. Duke of Normandy. His sons by Emma were educated in Normandy, and Edward the Confessor was more Norman than English.

Ethelred returned in 1014. Sweyn died and was succeeded by his son Canute. Ethelred died and was succeeded by his son (by his first wife) Edmund Ironside. When the latter died and Canute became sole king of all England, Englishmen became accustomed to the rule of kings, not of the House of Wessex.

Canute died in 1035. Between 1035 and 1042 reigned his sons, Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute. Then the House of Wessex was restored in Edward the Confessor. He was an ascetic and had no child. The natural heir was Edgar, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, but he was only a child.

The House of Godwin, Earl of Wessex, rose to eminence in the reigns of Canute and his successors, and Harold son of Godwin became the chief man in England.

In the meantime, Duke William of Normandy, the great-grandson of Duke Richard, and the second cousin of Edward the Confessor, visited England in 1052, during the short-lived outlawry of Godwin, and claimed that King Edward had made him his successor. In 1063 Harold went to Normandy and, according to William, took an oath on sacred relics to make William king. In addition, Harald Hardrada of Norway considered himself as heir to Canute.

Popular feeling in England led to the election of Harold as king after Edward's death in 1066.

To complicate matters, Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, had received the pallium from a Pope not properly elected. Stigand's position was irregular and this, coupled with the allegation that Harold had broken his oath to William, led to the Pope and Roman Church supporting William in his attack on England.

The Normans were superior militarily to the English in (a) Castle building, (b) Cavalry, and (c) Archery. In addition, a great strain was imposed on Harold by the threat of an invasion from Norway at the same time as from Normandy. Harold's troops were largely militia, and during their dispersal in September 1066, Hardrada landed. Just after his defeat on 25th September, William landed unopposed in Sussex.

COMMEMORATION WEEK-END

Service in Battle Parish Church, October 14th, 1951.

As well as the lecture by Squadron-Leader Pine, the Commemoration Week-end comprised a special service in Battle Parish Church on the evening of Sunday, October 14th. The service was a most inspiring one. The lessons were read by Mrs. Harbord and Mr. A. E. Marson, and there were special psalms and hymns. The Rev. F. Vere-Hodge officiated and the Rev. R. C. Vere-Hodge preached the sermon.

After congratulating the Historical Society on their rapid growth and the conclusion of a most successful year, he said that God taught through history and that anniversaries were kept so that these lessons might be more clearly understood.

He then referred to what he considered to be one of the main lessons to be learnt from the invasion of 1066, namely, that the great risks involved were only justified, and the subsequent rapid conquest of England was only achieved as a result of the political weakness of the country at that time; and that in the present times of difficulty and international tension it was of the greatest importance that there should be a strong and united government.

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