

Battle and District Historical Society



PER BELLUM PATRIA

JOURNAL

September 2017 No. 22

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PER BELLUM PATRIA

THE SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1950 to encourage the knowledge and study of local history within Battle and the surrounding area. This is achieved through:

- a programme of illustrated lectures by specialists in their subjects;
- a programme of day or half-day visits to places of historic or architectural interest;
- an annual Commemoration Lecture on the Battle of Hastings 1066 or a subject related to it;
- a free annual published Journal with reports on the lectures, visits and business of the Society;
- free admission to the Battle Museum of Local History;
- membership of the Society's Research Group in the active study of all aspects of local history;
- publication of local history guides;
- presence on the world wide web of a dedicated Society website with Society news, useful local information resources, and contact details for members of the public or potential new members of the Society.

The Society is a registered charity (Number 292593) and is affiliated to the Sussex Record Society.

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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016-2017

At this time last year the Battle district was awaiting the 950th anniversary of the battle that remains one of the cardinal events of English, and to some extent international, history; and indirectly gave the town its name. As recorded in last year's report, members of the Society were closely involved in the preparation of the event and took part in the celebrations. In addition to the work reported then, I should mention Tina Greene, whose additional frames for the Bayeux tapestry, stitched by very many volunteers, were completed during the year and are now on display in St Mary's Church. It should also be recalled that she organised the very well attended school parade up and down the High Street for Concorde 1066.

As an organised Society we commemorated the battle with a popular lecture by Hugh Willing, who as a Brigadier had the knowledge and experience to be able to view the various claimants to the site of the battle from a military point of view. If anyone at the lecture is tempted that it took place elsewhere – Crowhurst or Brede have been touted – then they cannot have been listening.

We try to keep a proper balance between the locality and other places. As to the district, we heard Professor Clive Bloom speak on 'Battle in revolt', an account largely of how and why the agricultural workforce became so disaffected in the early nineteenth century that it turned to active rebellion against the government of the day; in January four members of the Society gave brief talks on 'Four forgotten characters of Battle': the Hon. James Murray, an eighteenth century General and colonial governor; John Matthewson, a soldier whose refusal to keep silence led in the end to the abandonment of corporal punishment in the army; James Gutsell and John Pearson, both activists at the time of which Professor Bloom had spoken; and ex-King Miguel of Portugal.

This was followed by Charlotte Moore's talk on a distant relative, Ben Leigh Smith, a most resourceful nineteenth-century explorer of the north Atlantic Arctic. Looking out, more widely, we heard Dr Ruth Richardson on Dickens and the workhouse; Dr John Crook on William Walker, the deep sea diver who saved Winchester Cathedral; Alan Judd on the secret service; Professor Vanessa Harding on discoveries in an abandoned City of London churchyard; Dr Robert Hutchinson on the many and various ailments of Henry VIII and their possible effects; and last on Michael Faraday, by Professor Frank James.

I am glad to report that membership has increased by one member to 213. Members do not just arrive: they must know something of us to do so, and the work that Adrian and Sarah Hall put into this task continues to be very effective. If that were not all, the Halls have also organised the programme of lectures from the beginning of 2017. The lectures have also benefited from the care and work put into each evening concerned by Sue Moore and her husband Tony, who have organised the refreshments. The danger of overloading our technical consultant has led to the a solution with a new website www.battlehistory.btck.co.uk, initiated by Keith Foord.

In June about 30 of us had an excellent visit to Winchelsea, at the invitation of the Friends of the Ancient Monuments & Museum. We went into the parish church and heard a good account of its building, partial demolition and artworks; then to the ruins of Greyfriars Priory, which lie on private land; to a tour of three cellars originally designed to store the imports and exports of the busy port; and finally, by Keith Foord's arrangement, to the Wesleyan Chapel associated with John Wesley, where tea was provided.

The Research Group is hard at work, partly on peopling the Battle History Bank, now renamed *Collectanea*, accessible through the Society's new website, with well-researched accounts of many aspects of life in Battle over the centuries. Though remaining an active member I was pleased to hand over the chairmanship of this group to Keith Foord in November. His report of the Group's work appears later in this Journal. In 2015 we instituted a Reading Group, which has been (generally) enjoying itself every month in reading and then discussing works of history of all kinds and of all places including, this last year, China and Paraguay but inevitably with some emphasis on Europe, including the UK.

It was in vain that last year I tried to persuade Hugh Arbuthnott to continue his excellent work as Chairman of the Society, but he was obdurate. On behalf of the Society I thank him for his hard work, his wide knowledge, his wit and his courtesy; he will remain a hard act to follow. Amanda Helm has been an exemplary editor of the Journal but she too has yielded that task to me; regrettably I cannot reach her professional standards. But we have added new members to the Committee, whose names will be found in this Journal. Working with them is a delight. We look forward to another year of stimulating lectures and the further exploration of the history of Battle and the district.

George Kiloh

DICKENS AND THE WORKHOUSE

Dr Ruth Richardson

15 September 2016

Dr Richardson described her researches in 1989 and 2010 on the Cleveland Street workhouse in London (built in 1778 and part of the Strand Union since 1836), including the steps by which, forensically, she had in 2010 defined the connections between Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and the workhouse building, with the result that the building had been listed as part of the campaign to save it from conversion into flats, including social housing.

She had first been called in to investigate the history of the Cleveland Street workhouse in 1989 when writing an article (with Brian Hurwitz) for the *British Medical Journal* on Dr Joseph Rogers, already a campaigner for improved conditions in workhouses when appointed the Cleveland Street doctor in 1856. The motto of this workhouse had been 'Avoid idleness and intemperance'; the regime was harsh and the inmates were "effectively imprisoned". Rogers had shown the virtually non-existent medical care in the Cleveland Street workhouse at the time. His memoir of his time as a workhouse doctor (*Reminiscences of a Workhouse Medical Doctor*) made shocking reading about poor conditions in his own crowded (500 people sharing 300 beds) and filthy workhouse. There were no trained nursing staff or medical facilities and the sick were not segregated. This was in effect a judgement on the inmates, who comprised the dregs of society: the sick, elderly, disabled, handicapped, broken women (infected with syphilis), the illegitimate, and orphaned and deserted children. There were also chronic outbreaks of cholera from infected water. The smell of putrid laundry would apparently come up into the dining room above. Other malpractices were the keeping of unmarried mothers on starvation diets during postnatal confinement, and the beating of dust-filled carpets in the workhouse yard. Rogers's personal stipend of £50 a year was expected to cover the cost of medicines. This was typical and so it was hardly surprising that in many workhouses, bottles of coloured water served as cheap placebos in place of medicines.

Arising from Rogers's work, there was pressure from bodies such as the Poor Law Medical Officers Association for reform of workhouse infirmaries, and in 1866 a Sanitary Commission revealed the workhouse conditions. A visit to this workhouse encouraged philanthropist Louisa Twining to found the Workhouse Visiting Society and campaign for

improved conditions for inmates, especially those who had no visitors. In 1867 the Metropolitan Poor Act was passed and in the 1870s further reforms were gradually introduced, with separation of the sick from the healthy in workhouses and a building programme for new infirmaries. The Cleveland Street Guardians did not, however, approve of Rogers's campaigns and in 1868 forced his resignation as workhouse doctor on the grounds of his public criticism of the conditions at their workhouse. The same thing happened in 1883 at Rogers's next appointment, as doctor in charge of the Westminster Infirmary, but by then times had changed and after public protest at his removal it was the Guardians who were sacked and he was reinstated.

Dr Richardson argued that with the hindsight of later generations these reforms might be identified as the start of a new approach to care for the sick at the bottom end of society that culminated in the NHS, although inhuman treatment of the sick in workhouses continued even in the First World War when in some cases wives were forbidden to be with their wounded and disabled soldier husbands. Rogers's role as a catalyst in the early reforms has only recently been recognised. Dickens was a keen supporter: "Few anomalies are so horrible to me as the unchecked existence of many sick wards for paupers".

Dr Richardson's second encounter with the Cleveland Street workhouse was in 2010 when the UCLH NHS Foundation Trust proposed to demolish it. There were five weeks to save the building. A helpful article in *The Times* about the 'Georgian gem' bought time while Dr Richardson and other campaigners researched the history of the building, which in four centuries had successively been a poorhouse, workhouse, sick asylum, surgery/maternity wing, casualty clearing station, and finally the outpatients department of the Middlesex Hospital. The aim was to see whether there were any hitherto unsuspected historical links.

Knowing that Charles Dickens had championed Rogers's workhouse infirmary reforms, Dr Richardson examined forensically the local tradition of links between the building and Dickens, and in particular *Oliver Twist*, written in 1837. The blacking factory, where he worked as a boy, was significant for Dickens (he had to work there after his father came out of the Marshalsea debtors' prison) and the name of another boy there, Fagin, was very likely to have been adopted for the character in *Oliver Twist*. Was there any stronger link between Dickens, the blacking factory and the Cleveland Street workhouse? The moment of discovery

for Dr Richardson came when she put side by side maps of the time from the two parishes concerned. Although in a different parish, the workhouse was found to be located between Dickens's home and the blacking factory, so when Dickens as a young boy walked to work he would have passed the Cleveland Street workhouse. Most important, it was possible to confirm the location of Dickens's home for the periods 1815-17 and 1828-31: 10 Norfolk Street, now numbered 22 Cleveland Street. This arose from an accidentally-found compliments card he had used. The location of his home, the blacking factory and the workhouse and the walking route between them all fitted together. Very likely the Cleveland Street workhouse was the model for the workhouse in *Oliver Twist*. The tyrannical Master Mr Catch may have been the model for Dickens's Mr Bumble: they both, ironically, ended up in the workhouse as paupers themselves and Catch committed suicide. Other links then began to be found. For example, the branch workhouse for the Strand Union was in North End on the way to Hendon; Dickens's family had a house there. That a pawnbroker lived near 10 Norfolk Street was echoed by the pawnbroker story in *Oliver Twist*. Dan Weller, a dancing academy, and an anagram for Bill Menzies added to the links.

The efforts of Dr Richardson and other campaigners resulted in the Cleveland Street workhouse being Grade II listed in 2011. Amended redevelopment proposals have been put forward; although preserved, the future of the building remains uncertain.

Adrian Hall



Inside a Victorian workhouse (St Marylebone)

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS 1066 – MIRED IN CONTROVERSY

Brigadier Hugh Willing CBE

13 October 2016

The Battle of Hastings is undoubtedly the most famous military encounter in English history. Indeed, we can go so far as to say that it is one of the few truly decisive battles in history, not least because of the seismic social change that followed that single day: 14 October 1066. On that day Duke William of Normandy conquered a kingdom that had resisted Viking invasions for years, ending a line of Anglo-Saxon kings that claimed descent from Alfred the Great. And as we now know, this conquest altered the whole outlook of England, taking a nation that had looked towards Scandinavia, especially under three Danish kings, and locking her into a partnership and a struggle with France that was to last for centuries.

In this talk Hugh Willing concentrated on the many controversies surrounding the battle, which has fascinated historians for centuries and still divides opinion on just about every issue, from the size and nature of the armies to the events of the battle itself. And why should this be? The easy answer is that the events of that momentous day took place over 950 years ago, so we should not be surprised that uncertainty persists, and this is despite the plethora of primary source material. There are widely acknowledged to be fourteen such sources, some written or produced shortly after the battle and others in the years that followed, but all written by churchmen.

And then there is the Bayeux Tapestry. What other medieval battle can we teach to schoolchildren using contemporary pictures? But despite of or maybe because of the quality of the primary sources, almost everything about the Battle of Hastings is up for debate: where did Duke William land his fleet – was it really Pevensey or was it Bulverhythe, or maybe up the Brede valley below Icklesham? On which hill did it take place, Senlac or Caldbec or maybe it was fought at the bottom of a hill in Crowhurst? And then there is debate as to the exact course of the action on that fateful day; the numbers on each side and, famously, whether or not Harold was killed by an arrow in the eye.

Maybe all this uncertainty has been compounded by the failure of modern technology, upon which we rely so much today, to expose any conclusive archaeological evidence that a battle took place on this legendary site, even though the town is called Battle and we know that the Conqueror instructed that an Abbey should be built on the site, and we

certainly have one of those here. As one of the foremost experts of the last century, R. Allen Brown, once ruefully observed, “*Sometimes the only certainty about the Battle of Hastings seems to be that the Normans won*”.



The Battle of Hastings by Frank Wilson c1820, currently in Battle Abbey

History is of course, modern man’s interpretation of past events, and that interpretation is often based on unprovable assumptions about what actually happened in the past. We weren’t there in October 1066, and even if we were, your interpretation would depend on whether you were on the winning or losing side, what part you played and how you saw events unfold in just one small segment of the whole.

Brigadier Willing looked at some of the major controversies and questions about the supposed facts of the battle, using the most reliable of those sources in order to come to some clear conclusions. Up to recent times it has been universally accepted that the action took place in the town of Battle, just a few miles to the northwest of Hastings itself, although some are still unhappy with this theory.

According to tradition William the Conqueror marked his victory by building a great abbey on the spot where Harold fell. Happily the abbey survives and so enables us to identify the battlefield with some precision.

At the end, Hugh Willing gave his own view as to where the battle was fought, based on the sound military principles that he was taught at Sandhurst and the British Army Staff College and which have stood the test of time. He believes that there can be no doubt that the battle of Hastings was fought on the ground leading from Hastings towards Senlac hill. This was the neck of the ridgeway leading off that great whaleback that had formed the bridgehead for William’s invasion force, and was the

most obvious and best place for the English King to defend. From here you can dominate the approaches from high ground: not Telham Hill because that's within William's bridgehead and the route off it to the north would be left wide open. And it wouldn't be Caldbec Hill either because it lies too far back. Once across 'the neck' William's army could spread out and bypass anyone sat on Caldbec Hill. It had to be Senlac Hill and its approaches, which means that the ground between the Tesco filling station, and Burstow and Hewitt was the line of approach – what we would call the vital ground in today's military parlance.

When the victorious King William and many of his allied nobles returned to celebrate the conquest at Fécamp Abbey at Easter 1067, they were celebrated for reuniting Britain with Europe in Christianity under the rule of Rome. The main business of King William throughout his reign was to restore Rome's dominance over the Church in England and return to the Church in England and the Holy See lands dispossessed by Godwin and other Anglo-Danes in the decades before the conquest.

Hugh Willing



Final panel of the Battle Tapestry – the development of Battle High Street from the consecration of the Abbey in 1095 to the building of St Mary's Church in 1115. From Battle Community Tapestry ©Tina Greene 2017.

BATTLE IN REVOLT

Professor Clive Bloom

17 November 2016

Professor Bloom's subject was the influence that the eighteenth and early nineteenth century social structure in England had on the 'Swing riots' of 1830/31. Why had the supposedly idyllic rural life of the eighteenth century become, within a period of about 35 years, something of a nightmare by the early nineteenth? How did respectable farm workers become a pauper class; how did labourers become 'peasants'?

A typical village social structure had at its apex the absentee landlord, who would let land to farmers usually on a relatively short 20-year lease, meaning that the farmers had to maximise their revenues. Allied to the landlord were, at a similar level, the local squirearchy – knights, JPs and magistrates, and the local vicar. Supporting them from a lower level were the constable and the poor law officers. This was a static society in which central government was not involved. Most village residents had no say in anything and 'touching the forelock' was the order of the day unless you were a local craftsman such as a miller, baker, or shoemaker, groups which traditionally had a more independent approach.

In the eighteenth century farm workers lived in the same building as the farmer but by the nineteenth century this practice had died out. Bad harvests were frequent in the period 1795-1847, with wet winters and very dry summers. In this period a series of draconian laws was introduced – on top of the customary laws of old – which affected rural communities significantly: poor laws, corn laws, property laws, and laws against settlement, and poaching. There were even restrictions on the animals which sub-tenants could keep. At the same time, the labour market was overstocked and the introduction of new machinery to improve farmers' financial returns exacerbated that problem. An overpopulated labour market drove down the value of labour. All these factors created significant rural poverty: labourers and their families often could not afford to get the materials for a fire to warm themselves and would go to bed undried from work in the fields. The local vicar, the village constable and the poor law overseer became the focus of local resentments and retaliation.

Introduction of wages paid in money to labourers no longer living in the farm house, put pressure on the farmers who were trying to make money; and on the ratepayers who under the poor laws had to fund the unemployed. The farmers – caught in the middle – were not unsympathetic to the labourers' demands even if workers consequently

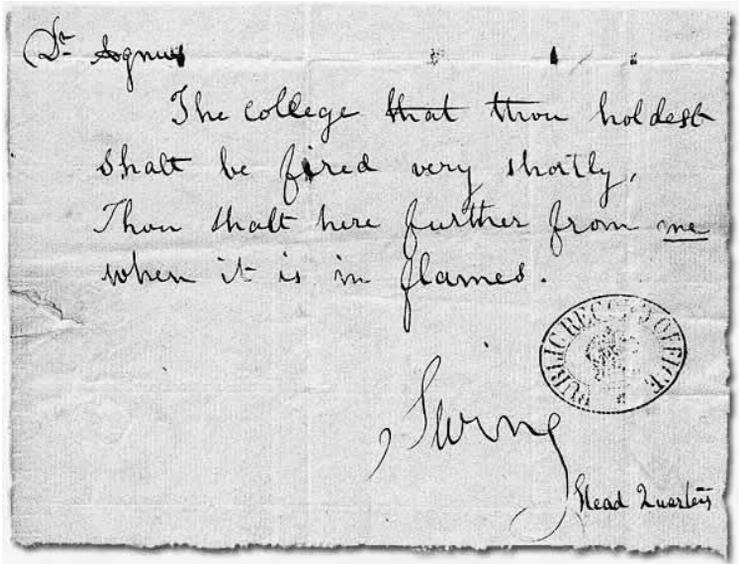
found their wage rates lower and their wages whittled away by rents. The poor law arrangements meant that the unemployed could not move to another area to be a burden on other ratepayers, so the static nature of labour markets was reinforced. The level of economic deprivation was illustrated by the common practice of giving babies opium in treacle so they could be left at the edge of a field while the parents worked.

All these factors led to ‘pauperisation’, which was the cause of bitter resentment. There was rural alienation: people like William Cobbett could barely understand Sussex dialect and, locally, farmers were seen as having become capitalists. It appeared that the money men had taken over the rural economy. In 1871-73, 4,000 people owned all the land in the UK and half the land was owned by just 1200 of them. There were 250,000 tenant farmers and 1.5m agricultural workers. There was also the humiliation of some types of work labourers were made to do: for example picking stones from the fields and grinding stones then putting them onto the roads. This kind of humiliation was returned as an attack on authority when, for example, in the Battle area, a poor law overseer was thrown into a dung cart, wheeled out of the village by the women, and dumped.

As anger and resentment about rural conditions built up in the early decades of the nineteenth century, rural workers in the main could neither read nor write, so their protests about conditions of poverty were in the form of burning property, smashing windows and sending threatening letters (usually from the mythical ‘Captain Swing’) which could be purchased ready-made. Later in the century, the Methodist church had an educative influence which provided a more peaceful means for expression of opinion.

Resentment first boiled over in the East Anglia riots of 1816. Perhaps because of ingrained deference, there was no looting. The First Dragoons were called in – four rioters were hanged, others transported. Attacks were mainly on machinery and were on a sufficient scale across the country as to cause long term damage to the economy in the period to 1850. Cheap immigrant labour was a trigger for many of the disturbances.

Riots in Kent and Sussex – many of them following Cobbett’s speech in Battle – were sufficiently bad to require the presence of the Fifth Dragoons and at the ‘Battle’ of Bossenden Wood, Lt Bennett became the first Victorian to be killed in a military conflict. Rioters often cross-dressed, not just for the benefit of disguise but also to make the point that they were trying to turn the world upside down.



A written threat by 'Captain Swing'

Across the country 2000 individuals were charged, of whom 500 were transported to Australia. In Kent the Swale riots of 1835 failed, and across the country riots petered out by 1838. Although some individuals were reputed to have aimed to re-create the French Revolution, Professor Bloom thought this a minor factor in the British disturbances.

Society changed radically with the arrival of the train network but resentment remained in the country for the long term. It was evidenced in animal maiming as a way of taking revenge on the landowners, and this practice was really only brought to an end by the First World War.

Adrian Hall

SUSSEX ON FILM: FILMS FROM SCREEN ARCHIVE SOUTH EAST

Dr Frank Gray

15 December 2016

Our lecture tonight had the potential to be stressful as it coincided with a rail strike and our speaker was travelling across Sussex from Brighton. Happily, he arrived on time and Dr Gray was able to entertain us with an absorbing talk on early film, accompanied by actual footage.

Dr Gray represented Screen Archive Sussex, a publicly-funded archive based at the University of Sussex. The Archive is now 25 years old and exists for public benefit by collecting, preserving and screening archive film, the material emanating from Sussex, Surrey and Kent. Much of the collection has been donated from a variety of sources, for example the armed forces, local authorities and members of the public. A unique archive was donated by Shippams of Chichester.

Many items have come from museums, which were donated films in the past but were not able to preserve or restore them and had no facilities – or remit – to show them. Such collections would simply have decayed in basements.

The very survival of old film is miraculous and a reference to the commercial cinema is relevant. The National Film Archive records “the indifference of the film industry; the neglect, loss, decay or wilful destruction of countless films. It is estimated that two thirds of all silent films and perhaps a quarter of sound films have been irretrievably lost. All studio films until 1951 were shot on highly flammable, chemically unstable nitrate cellulose stock so their survival was finitely limited in any event.” If the commercial cinema was unable to look after its own product the survival of amateur film is even more surprising. Interestingly the physical nature and appearance of the negative helps to date its production where other dating clues are less obvious.

Donors of the film, as has been noted, were many and various. One valuable donation was a quantity of film from a Swedish diplomat who had lived and worked for many years in Japan; another came from a Ramsgate museum which had long held a remarkable film promoting the town as a holiday resort before the Great War. Some films are described as ‘orphans’, which means that no-one knows who shot the film or when or where.

Another aspect of the archive is its value as an academic source. For example a particular esoteric search was into the subject of when and where women first appeared wearing trousers. Schools also study these films as regards World War Two as it affected children, in particular evacuation and austerity.

Dr Gray then showed examples of preserved films. As the majority were without sound it needed a leap of imagination to appreciate the contents. To an older audience, many of the images stirred memories. The first example was a film donated by the Lucas family of Horsham and showed a middle-class wedding. The family had commissioned a professional cinematographer so the quality of presentation was excellent. It was a time capsule from the 1920s showing fashion, body language and expression.

This was followed by an advertising feature from the same period which showed shops and businesses, mainly in Cranbrook, but also the George Hotel in Robertsbridge. The images showed how self-reliant was the typical small town of the time where the shops would have supplied every need from the butcher's to the draper's. Now one large supermarket has swept many of these businesses off the map and where once a family made a comfortable living the town now has estate agents, charity shops and the sort of business that smells nice but sells things that nobody wants or needs.

The next sequence – this time in colour – showed a Home Guard squad commanded, believe it or not, by a Colonel Pike (the comparison with Dad's Army was delightfully and astonishingly familiar). We were shown rehearsed sequences of how to spot a spy or man a road-block. All that was missing was Corporal Jones. Colour was first applied to film from its early days but was very primitive and unsophisticated. Hand colouring and tinting was used and later a process called Kinemacolor was patented in 1906 using a filter system. Its finest hour was in 1911 when a film was made of the Delhi Durbar in India. It lasted six hours but sadly only the black and white version remains.

A final sequence showed a representative selection from the Shippams Paste archive. Shippams actively advertised their product in both cinema and television until well into the 1960s.

It was a fascinating display, both familiar and nostalgic and, hopefully, we will see more in the future.

David Sawyer

JOHN THOMAS MATTHEWSON
(c.1822 – 1887)

Neil Clephane-Cameron

19 January 2017

John was baptised at St Mary's, Battle on 26 April 1824, the 'base-born' son of Maria Grace (or Graves). John's father was Alexander Matthewson.

Matthewson had taken the Queen's shilling, initially enlisting in the Royal Artillery and then in April/May 1846 transferring to the elite 7th Queen's Own Hussars, but by July he was in hospital at the regiment's barracks on Hounslow Heath, having received 100 lashes on 22 June 1846; he was 'not expected to live.'

In the adjacent bed was Private Frederick John White. White had dressed Matthewson's back after the flogging and was himself in the hospital, having, on 15 June received 150 lashes with the cat o' nine tails. After apparently starting to recover, White observed to Matthewson on 30 June that his heart was beating so violently it was visible through his shirt; He died on 11 July. A post-mortem undertaken at the barracks recorded that White had died of inflammation of the heart, pleura and left lung, and, much to the annoyance of the regiment's officers, an inquest was convened. It was in his evidence, commenced on 20 July 1846 (the second sitting of the inquest), that Matthewson was launched to national fame.

Matthewson gave evidence of his own offence at his court-martial:

Whilst working in the stables he heard a voice calling him from outside. He answered "Halloa" at which a sergeant entered. The sergeant demanded what he meant by answering in that manner to which Matthewson rejoined, "Do you want me to go on my knees to you?" His evidence continued to explain he was then taken before the commanding officer who gave him seven days' solitary confinement for insolence to a N.C.O. Unfortunately Matthewson, not knowing when to give in, asked how he was supposed to answer. The Colonel then immediately ordered a court-martial for insolence, at which he was sentenced to receive 100 lashes.

In the House of Commons debate that followed it was stated by Colonel Peel MP that matters were not as Matthewson had purported; that he (Peel) had reported Matthewson for being grossly disrespectful to him



A nineteenth-century flogging: note the gallows in the background.

but that being a young soldier Matthewson had been let off with a warning. However Matthewson had taken none of his Colonel's fatherly advice and four days later answered the sergeant "in a surly manner". Col Peel related that the commanding officer initially gave Matthewson seven days' confinement. Matthewson then 'in a most insolent manner' demanded of Col Whyte "How would you have me answer a sergeant?" to which the Colonel had answered that he should do so in a respectful manner. However the MP related that when being taken to the guard room Matthewson muttered "most insolently and used language such as cannot be repeated in this House", and that all had agreed Matthewson's conduct had been much the most insolent they had ever witnessed.

But the press and the nation took notice that Matthewson had received 100 lashes with a cat o'nine tails for a crime that could not be absolutely defined, and took a close interest in following his evidence to the inquest. The coroner told Matthewson that as he had received punishment his name should not be published by the press, but Matthewson declined this offer and continued his evidence:

"...When Dr Warren examined White he did not put his ear to his chest, or tap it. He came again the same evening and bled him, and in the morning he blistered him..... On Thursday morning Dr Warren came about 10 o'clock, and told the deceased to cheer up, and he would be a good soldier yet. He looked at the deceased's chest and back, but did not go near him or use any instrument. He ordered him a blister if he felt worse....[then referring to himself] ...my back is not well now, properly speaking. I had boils on my back, and pains in my chest, side and back, same as White complained of. The day after the flogging I had difficulty in breathing. Three or four days after the pain left the chest and came to the sides. It would sometimes leave for

two or three hours, then come back again.....I still feel it in the evenings when I lie down and draw breath. It feels as though something was running into my sides.....I believe there is an order for the removal of the stock [an item of uniform which might otherwise have provided an element of protection] from the neck while under punishment....I was going to keep my stock on, but I took it off by the order of the Adjutant. Some of the lashes fell on my head and amongst my hair. The marks are there now. The same farriers flogged me as flogged White.”

The press made hay with Matthewson’s evidence, and readers wrote adding their experiences and thoughts. Matthewson gave further testimony at the third and fourth sittings, during which he alleged his colonel tried to get him to modify his testimony by the offer of promotion to Corporal.

By now he was being hailed by the reforming press as a whistleblower and by the Tory press he was condemned for a soldier-lawyer from ‘*the same class as furnishes the Chartist Orators...and....Anti-Corn Law League lecturers*’ who were ‘*sufficient to corrupt the discipline of a regiment by their pettifogging insolence*’. Eventually, on 3 August 1846, the inquest jury returned a verdict that White had died,

from the mortal effects of a severe and cruel flogging....In returning this verdict, the jury cannot refrain from expressing their horror and disgust at the existence of any law amongst the statutes or regulations of this realm, which permits the revolting punishment of flogging to be inflicted upon British soldiers: and at the same time the jury implore every man in this kingdom to join hand and heart in forwarding petitions to the Legislature, praying in the most urgent terms for the abolition of every law, order and regulation which permits the disgraceful practice of flogging to remain one moment longer a slur upon the humanity and fair name of the people of this country!

Inevitably debate followed in the House of Commons, rehearsing the arguments presented at the inquest.

Within two months *The Times*, on 30 September 1846, recorded that Matthewson was facing another court-martial for insubordination and ‘*using insulting and disgustingly abusive language to Lance Sergeant O’Donnell, his superior officer, accompanied by threats of violence*’. Convicted on the sole evidence of Sergeant O’Donnell, this time Matthewson was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment, two of which were to be in solitary confinement; however, he appealed on the ground

that he was convicted under an incorrect name, i.e. 'Thomas Matthewson' and again the appeal was widely reported, but it was thought unlikely to succeed.

By March 1847 he was back with his regiment, but John Thomas Matthewson had become a *cause celebre* not just with the reforming press but the wider public, a committee having been formed to raise, by penny subscription, funds to purchase his discharge from the army; Matthewson's discharge cost £30 and was recorded in January 1848.

Flogging was to continue in the British army, albeit with further reduction of the permissible maximum number of lashes, but John Thomas Matthewson was to have the final word. More than thirty years later an incident during the Zulu War of 1879 brought the subject once more before the House of Commons. During the debate a letter from Matthewson was read to the House by F. Hugh O'Donnell MP, Member for Dungarvan:

“Sir,

Seeing that members of the House of Commons doubt the statements made as to the effects of the punishment of the lash, I will give you my experience of it.

.... I belonged to the 7th (Queen's Own) Hussars, and at the time I bore a good character.

My crime was calling out 'hullo' to a sergeant who called my name. I was warned for court-marshal, tried, sentenced, punished, and in hospital in less than two hours.

My boots were filled with blood. The marks are still to be seen on my back and neck. My back is always breaking out where the knots of the cat cut, and I can get no rest, so that I have been punished for 33 years by a hot-tempered colonel, and that for no crime. I am now almost sixty years old, and I suppose I shall suffer to my death.'”

The navy suspended flogging that same year. The last flogging in the army occurred in 1880. Abolition was finally achieved in 1881. John Thomas Matthewson died at West Ham during the last quarter of 1887.

Neil Clephane-Cameron

**THE LIFE OF GENERAL THE HON. JAMES
MURRAY
1721-1794**

Dr Keith Foord

19 January 2017

James, the fifth and youngest son of Alexander, Lord Elibank was born at Ballencrieff, West Lothian, on 21 January 1721, just after Elibank had lost a huge amount of money when the South Sea Bubble burst. James was sent to a school where pride, poverty, and self-reliance were hallmarks. His older brothers had had many more benefits.

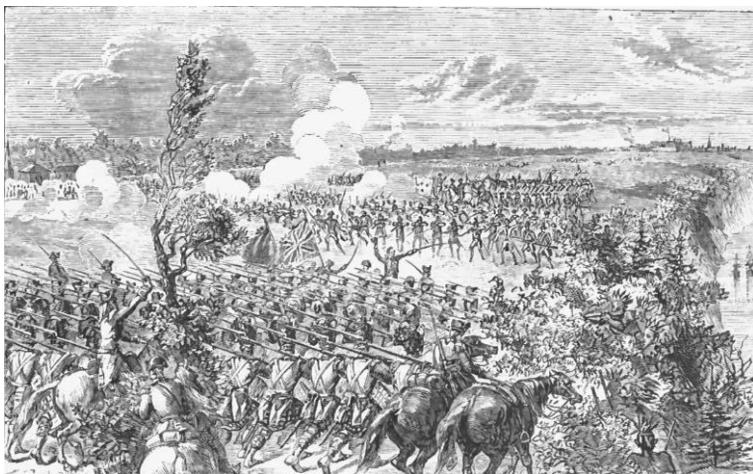
James left school in 1736, becoming a cadet in the 3rd Scots Regiment on 6 December, and was sent to the Austrian Netherlands (now essentially Belgium); the regiment was stationed at Ypres. In 1740 the 19 year old Murray became a 2nd lieutenant and joined a new battalion of marines (Wynyard's Marines). By 1740 Britain was at war with Spain and James's new battalion was one of six formed to try to break its control over the South American trade. They arrived at Dominica in December 1740. Already scurvy and dysentery had caused many deaths and the initial campaign was a disaster, but James's unit stayed on in the West Indies attacking Cartagena (Colombia) and deploying in Cuba. Murray survived and returned to Britain in 1742. In 1744 he was attached as a Captain to an anti-smuggling unit in Hastings. This was when he first met John Collier and his family, including a daughter Cordelia. The young soldier was clearly attracted to Cordelia from the first.

In the War of the Austrian Succession Britain sent reinforcements to Ostend. One of the battalions sent was the 15th Foot, and Murray went with it, sailing in July 1745. Soon the town was surrounded and had to surrender, and Murray was badly wounded. By 1747 he was back in London and in further wooing of Miss Collier. His approaches to Cordelia's father were not too welcome as Collier obviously '*could never think of marrying my daughter to the uncertain situation he was in*'. In May 1748 Murray visited Hastings to make a personal application, and made some progress. James won in the end, and they married on 17 December. Soon afterwards they went to Waterford. In 1749 James managed to buy the rank of Major for £1100 although he could not access the £3000 Cordelia had received on marriage as it was held in real estate.

In 1751 he became Lieutenant-Colonel of the 15th Foot and in 1753 moved to Limerick, returning in 1755. Collier arranged for his son-in-law

to be appointed a freeman and Jurat of Hastings in 1757, hoping to draw him away from the military but, also in 1757, the 15th Foot became embroiled in a raid on Rochefort.

Secretary of State Pitt planned the conquest of Canada, and orders were issued to assemble a large force at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Twelve battalions based in North America were sent there and two additional battalions, including the 15th Foot commanded by Murray, were sent from England together with 23 warships which sailed on 19 February 1758. Their first action was an assault on Louisbourg at the mouth of the St Lawrence; it surrendered on 27 July 1758. Murray lost only 21 men from his battalion, 13 of whom drowned when a boat overturned, and he was promoted to be a Colonel 'in America'. It was too late in the year to undertake a large expedition up the St Lawrence to take Québec, but some winter raids were made on settlements along the estuary. The command of the force to take Québec was given to James Wolfe; his three brigadiers were Robert Monckton, George Townshend, and James Murray.



The first battle on the Plains of Abraham – copy of an engraving from Tuttle's 'History of the Dominion of Canada'

Arriving at Québec on 26 June 1759, the British took some days to devise a plan, but on 8 or 9 July they landed 1.2 km (3/4 mile) east of the Montmorency Falls. Wolfe met no opposition from the French. Murray and his brigade joined him on 10 July. After fortifying Montmorency, Wolfe considered his plans. Instead of the plan to attack from the east, he decided to attempt a landing on the steep northern bank of the St Lawrence to the west. The army landed at Anse du Foulon (Wolf's Cove)

on the night of 13 September. They then climbed the Heights of Abraham with minimal challenge from the French, and deployed on the Plains of Abraham in a single line of battalions. Monckton and Murray commanded the line, with Wolfe positioned to the right. It was a short, decisive battle but Wolfe died of wounds received in action. The British army and fleet then besieged the city and on 18 September it was turned over to British control.

Murray was in command of the city but still faced French forces further up the river. In April 1760 they counter-attacked and were met by Murray at Sainte-Foy, just to the west of Québec, but the British were pushed back into Québec until British warships arrived. In the summer Murray took part in more actions which led to the French surrender of Canada and in autumn 1760 was appointed military governor of Québec, following which he became the first civil governor of the Province of Québec on 10 August 1764. On 10 February 1763, by the Treaty of Paris, France formally ceded Canada to Britain.

Murray was promoted Major-General on 26 March 1765. He was sympathetic to the French-Canadians, and allowed French civil law to continue because at the time the French outnumbered the British 25:1 and the last thing he needed was a rebellion. Later dissatisfaction of British settlers about this led to complaints and his recall to England in 1766 to face charges that were dismissed, and he remained governor of Québec until 1768, although he did not return to Canada.

Slavery was still being permitted in North America and Murray allowed the Québécois to continue slavery in Québec. Clearly he had no problem with slavery, as an advertisement appeared in the *Québec Gazette* on 23 February 1769 for a "*negro woman, aged 25 years, with a mulatto male child, 9 months old. She was formerly the property of General Murray. She can be well recommended as a good house servant, handles milk well and makes butter to perfection*". He may have brought black servants to Beauport as there is a Battle parish burial record for one '*William Murry, on 13 May 1768, a negro: the same person baptised the 1st day of the same month.*' The baptism record says that he was '*a negro servant to the Hon General Murry aged 22 years*'.

Collier died in 1760, and assigned Cordelia's share of the estate to her husband. The inheritance divided amongst the five daughters was a very large sum, principally in real estate in Hastings and the adjacent area.

Murray and Cordelia had had no children, and he had never been able to persuade Cordelia to join him in Canada. But while still in Canada he

bought the estate of Denham's Folly in 1762. He re-christened it Beauport after a village near Québec. He retired there but also resumed a part-time military career with the Irish staff in 1766 and then as an inspecting general of the Southern District. In 1772 he was promoted Lieutenant-General.

In 1774 he began another assignment, as lieutenant-governor of Minorca, then a British possession. James and Cordelia arrived on Christmas Eve 1774. Since the governor, General John Mostyn, was not resident, Murray was *de facto* in charge. Hostilities with France recommenced in 1778 and French ships made life difficult on Minorca. In April 1779 Murray was made governor and a lieutenant governor of his own, Sir William Draper, was appointed. There were personal problems almost from the start between Draper and Murray.

Cordelia developed malaria and was sent home on a neutral ship, only to die in Hastings on 26 June. Murray then made a second marriage, on 1 June 1780, to Ann Whitham, who was only 18. Her father was employed on the island in the consular service. A daughter, named Cordelia, was born on 16 March 1781.

The French, now with the Spanish, continued the blockade into 1780. On 19 August 1781 a Spanish army landed practically unopposed. It occupied the town of Mahon at once and besieged Fort St Philip. On the day of the landing the new Mrs Murray, once more pregnant plus baby Cordelia, had managed to leave for Italy. The Spanish commander tried unsuccessfully to bribe Murray to surrender. On 28 December scurvy broke out, but astoundingly the garrison held out until February 1782.

Murray's first son was born in Livorno, Italy, on 25 January 1782 after which Ann and the children returned to England. Murray's homecoming must have been tempered by finding that Draper had made many malicious complaints about him. Murray kept silent at first, but then asked for a formal court martial. This dragged on until January 1783 and the court found Murray guilty on two trivial points (out of 29) for which he was reprimanded, but the King '*was pleased to dispense with any other reprimand.*' With the object of preventing a duel, Draper was ordered to apologise to Murray. Murray did not wish to accept an apology, but was advised by the King to do so. His reluctance appears to have somewhat upset the King, but on 19 February 1783, Murray was promoted to the rank of full General.

A second civil suit was brought by a Mr Sutherland concerning suspension from a judicial office in Minorca. The jury gave damages

against Murray of £5000 in spite of the fact that at the time the matter had been referred to Britain and Murray's action approved by the King. On 6 May 1785 the House of Commons voted that the damages and Murray's costs in this case be paid out of the public money. Before this case was over Murray was appointed Governor of Hull, a military sinecure office with no significant duties.

Murray lived for the rest of his life at Beauport, dying on 18 June 1794. He and Ann had had four more children of whom two, a daughter and son, died in infancy; two daughters survived. His earlier son, James Patrick, became a Major-General before retiring in 1830. At the time of his death James Murray was Lord of the Manor of Ore and was buried in the churchyard of old St Helen's there. The churchyard still contains the family vault of General Murray, '*Conqueror of Canada and builder of Beauport Park*'. His monumental inscription was moved to the new St Helen's Church on The Ridge.

Keith Foord

JAMES GUTSELL AND JOHN PEARSON

Adrian Hall

19 January 2017

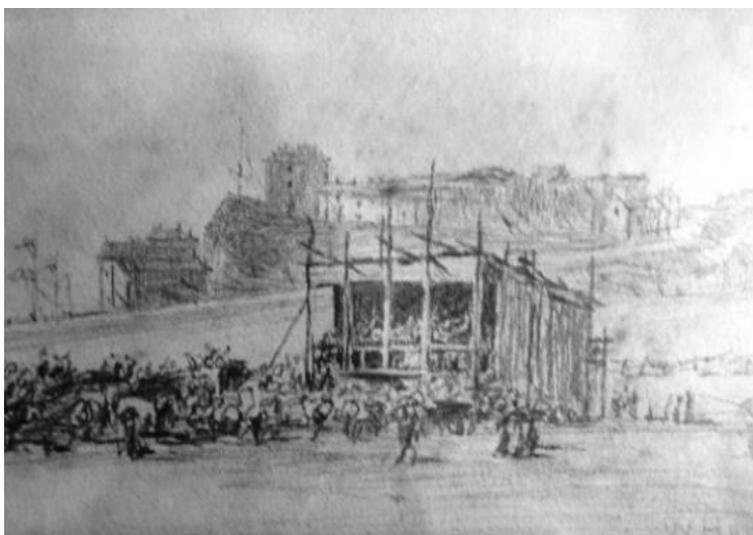
Adrian Hall explored the lives of two nineteenth century political activists who helped William Cobbett in his famous meeting of 1830 in Battle. Both had subsequent careers, which were examined.

James Gutsell organised the 500-strong meeting at the Watch Oak on 16 October 1830, at which Cobbett attacked low agricultural wages and noted the success of recent protests known as the Swing riots. When, as a result, the Government prosecuted Cobbett for seditious libel, Gutsell organised the Battle Declaration which saved him and led to his acquittal. He took the lead in getting 103 signatures and judging from papers seen in the Cobbett archive at Nuffield College Oxford, penned many of them himself.

Gutsell later joined Cobbett's staff as his secretary. He survived a scandal with one of Cobbett's female servants, with whom he ran off. He survived another in relation to the loss of Tom Paine's bones, brought back from America by Cobbett: Gutsell was in the room at Cobbett's London HQ when they were last seen. After Cobbett's death in 1835, Gutsell helped Cobbett's son with the first biography of his father.

After this, Gutsell disappears from recorded history – efforts to trace him in Hastings in later life produced too many Gutsells to make firm conclusions.

The speaker then explored what is known about Cobbett's other helper, John Pearson. Pearson probably constructed the booth for Cobbett's meeting in Battle. Later in his career, in Hastings, he continued to support the causes of free trade and campaigned against corruption. He was one of the supporters of Robert Ross Rowan Moore, an anti-corruption candidate for Hastings in the 1844 Parliamentary elections. He may well have constructed the booth for this candidate: we know from a drawing in Hancox of 1844, by Du Val, what this "booth" looked like:



Pearson lived until 1883 as a radical campaigner and received the following wonderful obituary in the *Hastings News*, with which the talk closed.

Pearson was a reformer before the electoral reformation (of 1832) – an advocate for popular rights when peer and priest and squire united to treat the poor as little better than serfs. He believed in the Divine rights of men, whilst Parliaments and Pulpits were upholding the Divine rights of Institutions. He held strongly that a working man must have a very scanty knowledge of the history of his class or his country to have any faith in Toryism, which has always upheld the monopolies of the landed aristocracy and the privileges of the rich,

and has, with equal persistency, refused the slightest concession to popular demands, or to the claims of religious freedom.

Adrian Hall

BATTLE'S ONLY RESIDENT KING

George Kiloh

19 January 2017

History points to many bad kings. Only one king has ever lived at Battle, though only for a short time, and he was one of them: Miguel, king of Portugal from 1828 to 1834. He edges into Battle's history partly through newspaper cuttings but also by way of the Cresy report of 1850 that brought running water, sewerage and a proper cemetery to the town. Cresy records that Miguel lived at Rose Green.

This house dated from 1761, built by George Worge on freehold land acquired from the Websters. He was a solicitor and steward to the Abbey estate. The house was on the site of the Glengorse development and included 14 rooms, seven cellars, a walled garden and grounds large enough to accommodate cricket matches.



Worge died shortly after it was built and the house thereafter had tenants. They included the fourth Webster baronet, ejected from the Abbey by his aunt after he married a girl of fifteen years of

*Rose Green, Battle Hill,
by Samuel Grimm c1790*

age, an event that ultimately led to his public divorce and perhaps to his suicide shortly afterwards. By 1850, when Miguel arrived, it was back in the hands of the Websters.

Miguel's story involves an argument of succession to the crown and conflict between conservatives and merchants. He was barred from the Portuguese throne by his father king João after three times attempting a coup, and the succession was settled on his niece Maria, who was in

Brazil. João had also introduced a proper constitution for Portugal, to the active distaste of landowners and the Church. When he died in 1826 there was confusion, and in the end it was agreed that Maria should be queen and Miguel regent.

When Maria tried to return, Miguel did not let her land, repealed the constitution and declared himself king. There followed a reign of absolutism, with the usual results such as summary executions. There was also a considerable opposition.



France and Britain had important commercial interests and ambitions in Portugal. France intervened briefly, without success; Britain stood aside, at least officially. But it was a British sea captain with an excellent record, Charles Napier, who was put in charge of the rebellious part of the Portuguese navy and led it to a landing at Oporto. He then took whatever support he could and secured Lisbon. By 1834 Miguel was beaten and exiled for

Miguel, king of Portugal 1828-34

life. By 1847 he was in London, where a coup was planned; it failed. He came to Bexhill and then to Battle, where he lived before going to Bavaria to marry a minor princess.

Napier was dismissed from the navy for infringing the Foreign Enlistment Act but joined again, ending his life as an admiral and a knight. Maria and her descendants stayed on the throne until the republic came in 1910. The last king died childless so the claim to the throne passed to Miguel's descendants, and the current claimant lives near Lisbon. Rose Green was demolished in about 1857. So in a sense all turned out well, except that Rose Green is lost to us.

George Kiloh

WILLIAM WALKER: HOW A DEEP SEA DIVER SAVED WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Dr John Crook

16 February 2017

Dr John Crook, an independent architectural historian, archaeological consultant and photographer was born just down the road from Battle in the village of Brede, and still lives there when he is free of professional duties. He is a consultant archaeologist to Winchester Cathedral, St George's Windsor, and St Cross Hospital, in Winchester, one of the finest medieval alms-houses. He has also undertaken a major study of the buildings of the medieval Palace of Westminster. Amongst his other interests is the cult of saints, which was central to mediaeval society. He has written many books and articles, some about a man called William Walker, who was perhaps a saint, but not mediaeval.

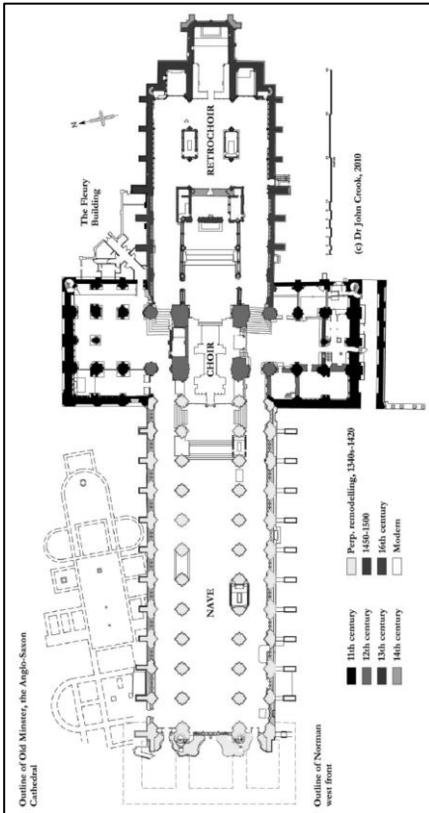
Dr Crook gave a bountifully illustrated lecture about the huge structural problem that was faced by Winchester Cathedral in about 1900, and the role that William Walker had in preventing the cathedral from falling down.

Winchester Cathedral has all the architectural styles through the Middle Ages from Norman, starting in 1070 when the Normans decided to replace the previous Saxon minster (started in 642AD and whose footprint is still shown in outline within the precincts, see the figure opposite), through Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular Gothic. The cathedral is the second longest in Britain at 170 metres (556 feet) long – surpassed only by Liverpool's modern cathedral, and is also the longest medieval cathedral in Europe which is still intact. Quarr limestone from the Isle of Wight is used extensively in its facade.

The cathedral lies on the flood plain of the River Itchen, with a very high water table, so that the crypts are often flooded. It also overlies in part Roman roads and buildings.

Dr Crook explained why the cathedral was in such danger by 1900. There were large cracks in the masonry. One of the pillars in the crypt in the eastern end of the Cathedral was forcing itself through the earth beneath so the vaulting was collapsing there. The west front of the Cathedral was in a terrible state with bits of masonry falling off. The south wall was leaning and could have fallen. The soil beneath the foundations was found to have a deep thick layer of peat above a sound layer of chalk and grit. Dr Crook explained that this was not such a big

problem under the Norman part of the cathedral as the Normans had driven in large vertical oak piles, all the way down through the peat to the substrata under the foundations, so that the weight of the walls was taken on the sound chalk/grit layer. It was the non-Norman part that was in big trouble, where beech logs had been laid in criss-cross fashion above the peat layer. This was quite inadequate to support the weight of the walls, which over the centuries began sinking as the peat layer was compressed, with the walls above starting to rotate outwards.



A civil engineer - Francis Fox – and an architect - Thomas Jackson – were asked for advice and they came up with a solution. This was to remove the saturated beech logs and pump in concrete to underpin the foundations. This was to be achieved by tunnelling down to the layer of gravel under the Cathedral walls. But they had not taken into account the high water table and the function of the peat layer. This meant as a trench was dug it filled with water faster than it could be pumped out once the peat layer, which formed a sort of compressed water barrier (unless disturbed!) was removed.

Fox then had a brainwave – to employ a diver to descend into the murky water to gradually remove the peat layer and replace it with cement bags in layers, bedded onto the sound under layer, then fill with concrete and finally layers of engineering bricks. In all 235 pits were dug out along the southern and eastern sides of the building, each about six metres deep.

The digging out of the peat and laying of the cement bags in each pit took a huge effort by William Walker – a leading diver of his day,



working in almost complete darkness in the water-filled pits with four metres (13 feet) of water above his head. He worked tirelessly from 1906 until 1911 to place more than 25,000 bags of concrete, after which the water could be pumped out and other workmen could lay 115,000 concrete blocks and 900,000 bricks.

William Walker
WyrLight.com



Walker used the best gear available – a rubberised canvas suit with round diving helmet, and heavy boots – the whole suit weighed around 200lbs.

He is a hero in Winchester. At the cathedral is a small statue of him in his diving suit, holding his massive helmet, there is a pub named after him, and each St Swithin's day prayers of thanksgiving are offered for the work of William Walker along with Francis Fox and Thomas Jackson. Walker was a quiet, modest hero – he cycled home 150 miles to Croydon and back each weekend to see his family.

Walker was awarded the MVO (Member of the Royal Victorian Order) by King George V, who said that he had "*saved the cathedral with his own two hands*". Of course there were hundreds of people working on the Cathedral, but 'the diver' inevitably became the great focus of attention and without his work the other work was impossible.

Sadly, he died aged just 49, during the great Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

Keith Foord

BEN LEIGH SMITH – POLAR EXPLORER OF EAST SUSSEX

Charlotte Moore

15 March 2017

It would be fair to say that the British contribution to the exploration of the Arctic, in contrast to that of the Antarctic, has been limited. Charlotte Moore explained why – partly a reluctance to re-engage following the disappearance of Franklin's 1845 expedition – and showed us the work of Ben Leigh Smith who carried out five hazardous expeditions northward in the 1870s and 1880s, all funded by himself.

Ben was illegitimate, a son of Benjamin Smith, a radical MP. That was no bar to success, or that of his sister Barbara, later Bodichon. He went to Cambridge and trained as a lawyer but, having inherited large sums from his father and an uncle, he decided to live the country life and to explore. In fact he got closer to the North Pole than anyone before him.

His first three expeditions were all to Svalbard, now belonging to Norway, on the 85-ton schooner *Samson*. (This is remarkably small for such a voyage.) He had a scientific approach to his work, for example recording sea temperatures: sometimes deep water was warmer than that closer to the surface, suggesting the existence of warmer currents further down. He was also able to sample sediments and their creatures. Svalbard was then barely mapped, and he explored much of it, naming its features – its northeastern extremity is now named Cape Leigh Smith. (He had a habit of naming geographical features after family and places: across the Arctic 37 of these survive.) When bringing a young polar bear back to England he had to rugby-tackle it to prevent it jumping off the ship.

The second voyage was also on the *Samson*. Now he tried to find the North Pole but was turned back by thick ice. On this journey he met Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld the elder, the Swedish explorer.

On the third journey, this time on the *Diana*, a steamship, but backed up by the *Samson*, he found himself having to rescue Nordenskiöld's party of 67 people who had been trapped in the ice and were near starvation, by providing much-needed food and fuel. (Ben always made sure that he had ample provisions.) For this he was awarded the Swedish Order of the Polar Star.

On his return he had his own ship built at Peterhead, the *Eira*. It was much larger – 360 tons, with a 50 h p steam engine. It cost him some

£10,000. He had decided on this occasion (1880) to go further, on the expectation that there might be clearer sea beyond Svalbard, and there was. He reached the more distant Franz Josef Land, discovered only in 1873 (it is now part of Russia). His crew was composed largely of Scots from Peterhead. Franz Josef Land had not been explored, and Ben set about charting the coasts so as far as he could; photographs survive and Charlotte Moore showed some of them: great barren cliffs, largely devoid of snow. Here he named a small island Mabel after his niece, among the 41 to which he gave their first names.

Ben had very wide interests: meteorological, botanical and zoological. He brought back fossils, plants and sea creatures. He reported back that he thought this was possibly the best way to the North Pole, given the clearer seas, and he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.



This is BLS on board the Eira in 1880, probably near Shetland. Some members of the whaler Hope's crew are paying a visit, including the young ship's doctor Arthur Conan Doyle. The man with the pipe is the Eira's doctor, Dr Neale. The Eira is on her way to Franz Josef Land. BLS has the pale hat and big beard; Conan Doyle is just behind him.

He was now getting a little old for expedition, being over 50, but that did not deter a final challenge. In 1881, again on the *Eira* and again well-provisioned, he made again for Franz Josef Land. In August, however, the ship was driven against the ice and holed. Soon it sank, but not before he

and the crew had rescued a large amount of the supplies, including four table-cloths that were to come in useful, along with four boats. In those days, of course, there was no way of calling for help; one had to stay until conditions improved and escape could be made. Nevertheless his continued absence from the UK was noted and caused concern.

One has to be practical on these occasions, and a near-mutinuous crew quickly came to understand that their best means of survival was to build themselves robust accommodation and stick it out until spring. They found a site against a cliff and built a long house from the stones of the area, with a canvas roof. Despite a temperature that reached -42° everyone survived: they were fit enough by the summer, when the ice began to retreat. They varied their diet by eating the polar bears that they shot, with birds. Three pets, a cat, a canary and a dog, kept them company. The canary died at Christmas, but for all the others their imprisonment last ten months.

Back in the UK the agitation increased to find out what had happened to them, and if possible to rescue them. It was reckoned that to do so would cost some £14,000. The government offered only £5,000, but the sum was found and a rescue began. The expedition commander knew Ben well and guessed what he would do if he were still alive and able to move and found him. Ben had led his men (and the pets, but only the dog survived) across the ice and for 500 miles across often stormy seas, sailing by means of the four tablecloths rigged up to the masts. They left in June 1882 and met the relief expedition two months later. Again, there were no casualties and no serious illnesses. (One man did die shortly, but of a condition not associated with his privations.)

That was the last time that Ben ventured out. For the rest of his life (to 1913) he managed the extensive Sussex lands that he owned, living first at Glottenham (where his initials remain carved above the front door) and after Barbara's death at Scalands. His main crop being hops. He surprised his family at the age of 59 by marrying an 18-year old French girl, later known in her family as Aunt Charley (and after whom Charlotte Moore was named).

This was a gripping lecture about parts of the north rarely mentioned in the annals of British exploration, and it was well-illustrated with a number of photographs taken at the time. After questions a long cardboard tube was brought out, and from it emerged a narwhal tooth more than a metre long. Ben had brought it back from the Arctic.

George Kiloh

THE SECRET SERVICE SINCE 1570

Alan Judd

20 April 2017

Spying is reputedly the second oldest profession – in BC1250 the Lord instructs Moses to send agents ‘to spy out the land of Canaan’ – but in British history the late Tudor period saw the establishment of a government-run intelligence service and bureaucracy that continued into subsequent reigns. It was maintained primarily by Francis Walsingham, a copy of whose portrait hangs in MI6’s training establishment as the first of a series featuring Chiefs of the Secret Service.



Walsingham was ably assisted by, among others, a brilliant young decoder of secret ciphers named Thomas Phillipps, a young Londoner who was also, apparently, a gifted linguist, mimic and forger. He and his colleagues were devout Protestants determined to prevent a Catholic counter-reformation, successfully frustrating a number of Spanish and

Sir Francis Walsingham c1530-1590

French plots to invade England and install Mary Queen of Scots on the throne i.e. the Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babbington Plots (the latter leading to the execution of Mary). They also had a conception of the state that arguably did not exist in earlier times – Phillipps is the first known to use the phrase ‘the security of the state’.

Walsingham’s network and interception capabilities survived in modified form under the Stuarts but blossomed again in the Civil War. John Thurloe (the second portrait in the MI6 gallery) ran an effective intelligence network on behalf of Cromwell, which included the establishment in 1657 of the General Post Office (GPO), partly in order to facilitate government interception of correspondence. There was a private Letter Office in the Threadneedle Street HQ in which, every night, an official secretly opened and examined suspect letters and packets.

The Secret Service fund (later known as the Secret Service Vote) was

established under Charles II. It was not a network or organisation but a slush fund used not only for occasional espionage or diplomatic and political bribery but increasingly for other purposes such as sustaining Charles II's former mistresses. In 1703 the Deciphering Branch was established under an Oxford don, the Rev. Edward Willes (later Bishop of Bath and Wells). Its purpose was the deciphering of foreign diplomatic correspondence and it became a family business, employing members of the clerical Willes family until it was disbanded in 1844.

The Secret Service Fund was used increasingly as a political slush fund during the middle part of the 18th century. Walpole and his successors as prime minister spent most of it at home, bribing MPs to vote for them – Walpole spent £40,000 on the 1734 election alone. This changed after 1783 with Pitt the Younger, who used it more for bribery overseas, usually via British ambassadors who referred to it as 'The Cavalry of St George' (St George featured on sovereigns).

There was a great expansion of spying and funding during the Napoleonic Wars, with the Secret Vote reaching £172,830 in 1805, although a number of anomalies remained, e.g. the £4000 pension paid to Cardinal York, last survivor of the House of Stuart. During this period the Northern Department (equivalent of the Home Office) and the Aliens Office tended to concentrate on counter-espionage at home and the Southern Department (equivalent of the Foreign Office) on espionage abroad. The poets Coleridge and Wordsworth were investigated as spies following reports by locals who couldn't understand their accents (they were declared innocent).

The Secret Service and secret funding went into decline during the middle part of the 19th century, with Gladstone reluctant to believe that gentlemen might spy on each other. However, pension payments to former spies dating from the Napoleonic Wars, such as Portuguese nuns and Persian princesses, continued to be paid and are recorded in the National Archive at Kew. In 1855 the librarian of the British Museum was granted a substantial sum to free six political prisoners from Naples.

Espionage picked up again towards the end of the century with the establishment in 1883 of the Special Irish Branch (subsequently the Special Branch) following Irish Republican bombings in Whitehall, at *The Times* office, at Parliament, at Scotland Yard and at train and underground stations. In the 1890s there was a growing threat from international anarchists who murdered a number of heads of state and became the inspiration for Joseph Conrad's novel, *The Secret Agent*. At the same time there developed what became known as The Great Game, the undeclared

tussle between Britain and Russia in High Central Asia over access to India. This in turn inspired Kipling's novel, *Kim*.

Poor performance in the early stages of the Boer War led to improvements in military intelligence and the belated recognition that Britain needed a central staff to direct and coordinate operations. There was growing alarm, too, at the increasing German military and naval threat; the latter inspiring Erskine Childers's novel, *The Riddle of the Sands*. This culminated in 1909 with the establishment of the Secret Service Bureau charged with counter-espionage at home and espionage overseas. Within a year the two parts separated to become what we know as MI5 (the Security Service) and MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service). Both were successful during WW1, aided by the growing radio intercept capability.

Following the war wireless interception and decryption became part of MI6, but both services were greatly reduced in size and funding, despite increasing recognition of the threats posed by German re-armament and Soviet communism. Bletchley Park, famous for its work on the Enigma machine, was established by MI6 during the 1930s and contributed significantly to WW2, not least by helping MI5 eliminate or control virtually every German spy reporting in the UK. Work on Enigma was much aided by Typex (Type X), the British equivalent based on the Enigma machine (which we had purchased during the 1920s) and which securely transmitted all the Enigma decrypts.

In 1945 responsibility for interception was removed from MI6 and given to GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters), where it remains today. Since then the three intelligence agencies, MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, have worked together under the direction of the Home Office, the Foreign Office and the Cabinet Office, the latter providing the JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) with information that helps task and assess the products of the agencies.

Alan Judd

THE NEW CHURCHYARD AND BURIAL IN EARLY MODERN LONDON: New Insights from the Crossrail Investigation

Professor Vanessa Harding

17 May 2017

Professor Harding started by explaining that the New Churchyard has a history of being forgotten, remembered and forgotten again before being rediscovered in 1986, when what looked like a jumble of skulls, vertebrae and other bones was uncovered. As further exploration took place it became clear that these were deliberate burials, and not in a mass grave but as individual burials, oriented east-west, overlaying and often cutting through each other in a very dense pattern of use and re-use.

The site, in Broad Street, just west of Liverpool Street station, was excavated by the then Department of Urban Archaeology and set Professor Harding off on an extended period of research into burial practices and beliefs in early modern London, which was desperately short of burial spaces. Archival research revealed the site to have been known as ‘The New Churchyard near Moorfield’, founded in 1569 as a response to a series of epidemics (notably influenza and plague) that had hit the city and given rise to fears that it would be unable to cope with further burials in the event of another epidemic. In the sixteen- and seventeenth-centuries it was on the fringe of London, becoming firmly ‘inner city’ during the expansion of the city in the nineteenth-century, by which time its existence had become unknown to most people.

During the nineteenth-century, however, numerous bones were found during the building of Broad Street and Liverpool Street stations and the Metropolitan Railway but no particular notice was taken of this so its rediscovery in 1986 came as a surprise even to some in the academic community. When it came to the digging for the Crossrail line it was already known what was likely to be encountered, the work requiring clearance of about one third of the site. Excavation occurred in 2011-15.

The archaeological significance of the site is that it is the largest such area to be excavated and was in use for some 200 years; being so well documented yields important evidence of the evolution of burial practice, the management of burial and through osteological investigation the characteristics of the population of early modern London.

The site sat outside the city wall. Excavations showed it to have been undeveloped and little used until the early fifteenth-century when it became enclosed into gardens and as a ‘tenter’ ground, i.e. an area for drying woollen cloth. Stowe, writing in the sixteenth-century, describes near one acre of ground being enclosed within a brick wall near Bethlehem hospital (the latterly notorious ‘Bedlam’). This description and alternate name of ‘Bethl’em churchyard’ led to its mis-association with the hospital. By the date of closure burials were 1.4 – 2 metres thick, each cubic metre of ground containing the remains of 6 – 8 individuals; thus between the opening of the New Churchyard in 1569 and its closure in 1739 it is believed some 25,000 burials took place. Whilst this is in itself a large number it is a tiny fraction of the estimated 2,000,000 burials which took place in London between those dates.

The New Churchyard was initially extended in 1607 but ‘phase 1’ of its existence is classified as before about 1670 when the wall and gate were reconfigured, leading to a change in how the site was used. Phase 1 is marked by predominantly individual, east-west aligned burials of which some 60% were coffined, the uncoffined burials being contained in the lower layers. This bears up the documentary record which shows coffined burial to be commonplace by 1600. Of the ‘phase 2’ burials some 80% were coffined and all were on a slightly amended alignment. Phase 2 also revealed most of the funerary decorations and name-plates, again supporting the documentary record for the growth in popularity of monuments. Additionally the appearance of four brick-built vaults and lead coffins is seen, indicating that some wealthy families chose burial in a generally low status burial ground. One reason for this is likely to be the growth of non-conformity and the wish to be buried in consecrated



*‘Bedlam’
burials
uncovered at
Broadgate
ticket hall,
August 2013*

ground that was not associated with the Anglican Church. Two mass graves belonging to phase 2 were discovered as were charnel pits, pits into which bones were placed during clearances to make way for later burials.

Full osteological analysis was undertaken on 800 of the 3,000 or so skeletons excavated. These revealed evidence relating to stress and work injuries, respiratory problems, dental health and dietary changes such as the increasing availability of potatoes and refined sugars; and the deleterious effect of smoking tobacco.

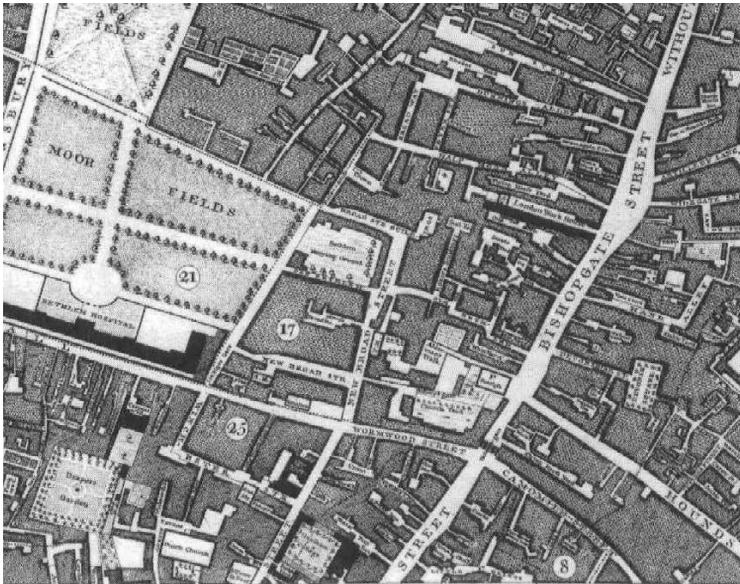
The New Churchyard was finally closed due to the expansion of the city, and following years of complaint from local residents of 'intolerable steams and vapours of a noxious and pestilential quality'. These arose due to the practice of leaving pits open until 16–20 coffins had been laid in them with no earth between and only a small amount of earth on top. The last known burial was in 1738 and within a short time the site began to be used as a dumping place for industrial waste, particularly glass.

Having completed the story of the New Churchyard Professor Harding went on to explain about the 'Bethle'm Project'. Being non-parochial, there is no register of burial for the New Churchyard as there is for parish churches. Fortunately many of the London parish registers contain information detailing where each burial took place and several name the New Churchyard. The Bethle'm Project examined these burial registers to compile as full a list as possible of the names of those buried in the New Churchyard and the area from which burials were drawn across London.

A list of 8,214 individuals from 75 parishes was revealed from an examination of burial registers of 103 parishes. Whilst some (typically non-conformist) individuals certainly chose to be buried in the New Churchyard, examination of parish registers has revealed that people who were poor, dependent or strangers were more likely to be buried there than in their local parish churchyard. Plague victims were also likely to be buried there as in times of such high mortality the local parishes were unable to cope. But even the New Churchyard was unable to cope in 1665, leading in that year to the creation of the, still partially extant, Bunhill Fields burial ground which as another non-parochial burial ground became better known as the burial place of choice for those who did not wish to be associated with the Anglican Church.

The New Churchyard provided important evidence of burial practice for plague victims. Excavations revealed that although bodies were buried in communal pits they were laid decently and with conventional east-west orientation, demonstrating care and respect. *Yersinia pestis* bacillus, the pathogen of modern plague, was identified in the early twentieth-century and was widely held to have been the cause of historical plagues. However this view and its means of spreading were challenged about fifty years ago as the historical records describe it acting in a different manner to modern plague. Examination of the remains excavated at the New Churchyard has added a further complexity to the debate by revealing the presence of *Yersinia pestis*; thus while the cause has now been settled the search for an explanation of why its behaviour was so different historically now needs to be undertaken.

Neil Clephane-Cameron



La Roque's map of 1746 shows the 'Bethlem burying ground' as an open space immediately east of Moor Fields. The modern Liverpool Street Station runs northwards, west of Bishopsgate, starting just a little north of St Botolph's church.

MAD, BAD AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW – THE MEDICAL HISTORY OF HENRY VIII

Dr Robert Hutchinson

15 June 2017

The world of Tudor medicine was a mixture of care provided by doctors licensed by the Church and of local ‘wise women’ and blacksmiths. Infant mortality was high: 220 out of 1000 births resulted in the death of the baby and even if he/she survived, there would be a 30% chance of death before the age of fifteen. Only 10% of adults lived beyond their 40th birthday.

Diseases that were prevalent at the time included the English Sweating Sickness. This is thought to have been brought over by the mercenaries who supported the future Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth: there were five major epidemics between 1485 and 1551. It is believed to have been a type of viral pneumonia with symptoms including delirium and sickness followed by palpitations of the heart – death could follow within 12-24 hours of the symptoms appearing. Thomas More wrote to Erasmus that it was safer on the battlefield than in the city; in an outbreak in 1528, 50 people died each day. Anne Boleyn and Thomas Wolsey were two notable Tudors who managed to survive the illness. Other prevalent diseases included tuberculosis, which killed Henry VII and probably his son Prince Arthur, Henry Fitzroy (Henry VIII’s illegitimate son) and Edward VI (coupled with measles); malaria, also known as the tertiary fever; typhus; dysentery; influenza; smallpox – Henry VIII, Anne of Cleves and Elizabeth I all contracted it; and scurvy – vegetables were not a popular feature of the Court diet.

Medical theory and practice was still based on the works of Aelius Galenus (129-210 AD). It was believed that four humours governed the health of the body: blood, phlegm, black bile (melancholy) and yellow bile; red heads (of whom Henry of course was a famous example) were believed to have a surfeit of yellow bile, leading to a fiery temper. Healthy bodily balance was regained by removing liquids: blood, urine and sweating.

The stars were also believed to influence health problems as well as providing guidance as to which treatment was appropriate at any given time. Henry was born under Cancer: his horoscope suggested he would be vulnerable to coughs, smallpox and constipation among other problems;

his birth chart predicted that he would be a cheerful, frivolous child who would grow into a man of action but one who would eat and drink to excess, have a healthy libido and would be prickly if criticised.

Treatments included blood-letting, with 8-10 fluid ounces taken at each session. This was carried out either by a scalpel or by the more expensive method of using leeches. The smell, colour and taste of urine were also important in the diagnosis of disease, with detailed essays surviving to assist physicians in their analysis. Constipation was treated with an enema applied by an inflated pig's bladder attached to a greased copper tube, with a weak solution of more than a pint of salt and infused herbs to be retained for 1-2 hours; haemorrhoids were treated with a honey and milk solution; ulcers were drained; wounds cleaned with honey and turpentine; and amputations had to be completed within 1-2 minutes to avoid death from shock but the operation to amputate a leg would take 10 minutes in all to complete the sealing off of arteries and veins.

It was into this environment that Henry VIII was born. His father, Henry VII, had established the Tudor dynasty after the Battle of Bosworth Field but his claim to the throne was not strong and he had to deal with rivals to the throne for most of his reign. Henry VIII realised that the future of the dynasty was fragile, at a time when the monarch personified the country. At the very least, he needed an heir and a spare. In spite of having an illegitimate son in Henry Fitzroy and perhaps two other children by Mary Boleyn, his failure to produce a son from his marriages to Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn put considerable psychological pressure on his sexual performance. Even after the birth of Prince Edward, anxiety remained high without 'a spare'.

The dynastic pressure obviously contributed to the fact that Henry was a raging hypochondriac. Of particular concern was bubonic plague: there were seven outbreaks during his reign. Messengers were sent ahead of the Royal Court to check that towns were free from infection; in Windsor and Calais there are records of the dying being dragged from their houses and left to die in the fields. In 1517 Henry sent his own recipe for a cure to Sir Brian Tuke – in all he developed about 100 recipes for treatment of different illnesses. On 23 September 1518 he set up the Royal College of Physicians and in 1540, he joined the Barber-Surgeons to further the regulation of medical care. He had the largest medical staff of any European Court.

His first serious bout of illness as King was in 1513 when he contracted smallpox. His physicians feared for his life but he 'rose from his bed fierce against France'; in 1521, he contracted malaria.



In 1524 he suffered a jousting accident, after which he suffered from migraines. In 1527, he hurt his foot playing real tennis and in 1527/28 he was confined to bed in Canterbury with an ulcer on his left leg, which this time healed quickly; in 1536 he suffered a serious jousting accident, after which he could not speak for two hours, probably either because of concussion or bruising of the cerebral cortex – on hearing the news, Anne Boleyn miscarried a three-month-old healthy male foetus; in 1537 he had ulcers on both legs

The famous picture of the king by Hans Holbein the younger was painted in 1536-37. Understandably it shows a fit and bold monarch.

and in 1538 one of the fistulas closed up for 10-12 days and he was in great danger; in 1539, he suffered a severe bout of constipation, one of many such episodes in his life; in 1541, his physician reported concerns about his obesity; in 1544 his ulcers flared up again; in 1545, he had deteriorated to such an extent that a dry stamp was used for his signature by a number of his trusted advisers; and in 1546, two 'king's trams' were purchased to help him move around the Royal Apartments.

It has been suggested that Henry suffered from syphilis. Dr Hutchinson argued against this for several reasons. His history of ulcers could suggest syphilis but it is clear from contemporary records that Henry's ulcers were very painful - the *gummata* associated with syphilis are not; his children showed no signs of the disease; and the contemporary cure was for six weeks treatment, including the use of mercury. No such length of absence was reported by ambassadors and nor are there any records of purchasing

mercury in surviving apothecary's or physicians' accounts. Instead, Dr Hutchinson argued rather that he suffered from Cushing syndrome, the symptoms of which include gross obesity, slow and poor healing of wounds, high blood pressure and diabetes, sudden mood swings, emotional detachment and recurrent headaches. In 20% of cases, the sufferer also suffers from paranoia.

He died in 1547. At his request, he was interred next to Jane Seymour, mother of his only legitimate son. Next to him is buried Charles I. Henry VIII had planned a magnificent tomb himself and actually acquired the sarcophagus that Wolsey had made for himself. This was to be considerably embellished and, if finished, would have been much grander than that of Henry's parents. However, it was never completed and in 1805 it was used as the base of Lord Nelson's tomb in St Paul's Cathedral.

Sarah Hall



Henry VIII's tomb at St George's Chapel, Windsor, by A Y Nutt, 1888

MICHAEL FARADAY AND HIS INFLUENCE

Professor Frank James

20 July 2017

For our last lecture we were privileged to hear Professor James on the remarkable scientist Michael Faraday.

Faraday was born in 1791 into a poor London family who were members of the Sandemanian Christian sect to which faith Faraday adhered throughout his life, becoming an elder of the Church. He received only the most basic of school education. However he was apprenticed at age 14 to a local bookbinder where he educated himself, developing an interest in science and wishing to become a 'scientist' (though the term was not yet in use, and he did not like it). The Royal Institution had been founded in 1799 'for the application of science to the common purposes of life' and in 1801 the precocious Cornish scientist Sir Humphrey Davy (1778-1829) had been appointed lecturer in chemistry and director of the laboratory. In 1798 Davy had joined Dr Beddoes Pneumatic Institute in Bristol which largely dedicated itself to the properties of factitious gases such as nitrous oxide ('laughing gas').

Faraday took a keen interest in this work and in Davy's subsequent lectures at the RI, on which he sent Davy a full set of notes. In return, in 1812, Davy secured Faraday a post as laboratory assistant at the RI.

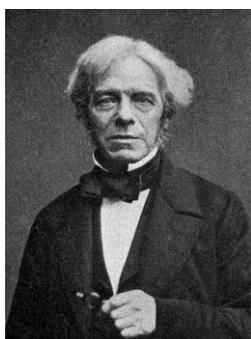
In the same year Davy married a wealthy widow, became financially independent and resigned his positions at the RI, but in 1813 he offered Faraday to accompany him on a tour of the continent, having received a document of free passage from Napoleon, with whom Britain was still at war. Davy would die in 1829, and his death free Faraday to pursue his own investigations.

In 1815 Faraday returned to England and resumed his post as laboratory assistant under the new Professor of Chemistry William Brande. Faraday worked at the RI throughout his life – as laboratory assistant till 1826, Superintendent 1821-1867, Director of the Laboratory 1826-1867 and Fullerian Professor of Chemistry 1833-1867. Between 1830 and 1851 he was Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Military Academy and from 1836 to 1865 Scientific Advisor to Trinity House. He married Sarah Barnard, also a Sandemanian in 1821; they had no children.

Faraday is best known for his work regarding electricity and magnetism. In 1821 he designed the first electric motor by electro-magnetic rotations. Ten years later he returned to his electric research; he discovered electro-magnetic induction in August 1831 and created the first transformer. A few months later he made a simple piece of apparatus based on his ring, developing the first ever electric generator, thus laying the foundations of the practical use of electricity.

Throughout this period Faraday regularly lectured at the RI and in 1825 introduced a series of Christmas lectures for children.

Faraday's major work in the practical application of his discoveries was connected with lighthouses. He desperately wanted to electrify their lights and after several false starts a system was installed at South Foreland and later at Dungeness. It proved too expensive, however, and was abandoned in 1880.



Faraday's practical work mirrored his development of electro-magnetic theory and vice-versa. His lecture *Thoughts on Ray-vibrations* in 1846 laid the foundations of the field theory of electric magnetism. At that stage he used the term 'field' in a descriptive sense to describe the space surrounding a magnet. By the 1850s he argued for the reality of the field defined in terms of lines of force. This led to

Michael Faraday, about 1861

field theory becoming and remaining one of the fundamental concepts of modern physics with numerous important applications. Some of his work anticipated that of Einstein, who acknowledged it.

In 1848 the Prince Consort secured a grace and favour house for Faraday and in 1858 he semi-retired to live there. Gradually his health failed and in 1865, after 50 years of continuous service at the RI, he gave up running his laboratories. He died at Hampton Court in 1867.

Nicholas Hollington

THE RESEARCH GROUP

The Research Group exists to find out more about the history of our area and its people. Battle has a unique history, dominated by the events of 1066, then by the Abbey and after the Abbey was dissolved in 1538 by the manorial history. Battle was not a corporate town like Rye or Hastings and only since the 18/19th centuries has the town and surrounding area been free of Abbey oversight – but even today there are echoes of it.

Local history is not just about kings and the ‘big house’. It is about people and the way society works and plays and improves living conditions. History of local families is also very much Local History. Personally I have been surprised to find that distant relatives may have been involved in the last days of the Abbey, as a mayor of Hastings, in the gunpowder industry, as ship owners and fishermen at Rye, the religious turmoil of the early 19th century and in emigrations to New Zealand paid for by the poor rates of Brede (I also now know that I have many 6th cousins in New Zealand and Australia!).

During 2015-16 members of the Group helped with the production of the Concorde 1066 brochure, advised on the content of Tina Greene’s superb Tapestry of Early Battle, created a Battle History Tour for the Geotourist App (which is narrated by the actor Anton Lesser) and authored a number of mini-projects. The Geotourist App is available as a free download for smartphones.

The range of papers produced by the group in the last few years is extraordinary – from abbots to the workhouse, with authors, entertainers, non-conformity, revolts and wars in between. These have covered the lives of people associated in many ways with Battle and district, and the general and social history of the area. The group publishes this work, mainly to the ‘History Bank’ on the BDHS website and paper copies are placed in the Society Archive. See <http://www.battlehistory.btck.co.uk/>

Sometimes the work expands and you will be aware of the books that have been published in the last couple of years – George Kiloh’s *The Brave Remembered* about Battle and its heroes of the First World War and Keith Foord and Neil Clephane-Cameron’s *1066 and the Battle of Hastings – Preludes, Events and Postscripts*. These have both sold well and as a publisher the Society has a surplus with these books.

In January 2017 four group members presented short papers to the Society meeting on 'Lesser Known Characters of Battle' – General James Murray of Quebec and Beauport Park; the exiled King Miguel of Portugal; John Pearson and James Gutsell (who were associates of Cobbett); and John Thomas Matthewson (a soldier who helped abolish flogging in the British army). These seem to have been well received and this exercise will be repeated in January 2018 with three more 'Surprising Tales of Battle'.

There is certainly no need to have a degree in history to join us, just a curious mind wishing to explore aspects of history in a bit more depth. We would like you to share in this work and any project, large or small, can be accommodated. You might also like to share your family history, indeed we would like you to do so particularly if there are local connections. And you won't be asked to speak at a meeting, unless you want to, or to write a book unless you get really carried away!

Members of the group meet four to six times a year over cups of tea and coffee, cake and biscuits, and the odd glass of wine, and in between share ideas via email and ad hoc discussions. Quite a bit sharing of ideas and of mutual help is offered. Have a chat with Keith Foord, George Kiloh, Gina Doherty, Neil Clephane-Cameron or Adrian or Sarah Hall if you would like to know more.

Recent papers include

Abbots of Battle Abbey	The Hayler family
Barbara Bodichon	Cobbett and the Battle revolution
Cresy and Battle's public health	Isaac Ingall
Battle at war after 1066	The Princesse de Lamballe
Battle Union Workhouse 1840-1930	The Brassey family
Christianity and 1066	The first site of Battle Abbey
The life of James Murray	The Papillons of Crowhurst Park
William Vidler: a peculiar clergyman	Carters and Lamberts of Telham Court
Local civilian casualties of WWII	Battle and the early kings of England
Frank Chacksfield	Miguel, sometime King of Portugal
Henry Webster	Treatment of Battle's poor & sick

Keith Foord, June 2017

PROGRAMME OF LECTURES 2017-2018

Almost all lectures will begin at 7.30 pm in the Wynne Room, Memorial Halls but see 16 November 2017 and 14 December

Thursday 21 September 2017

**ANOTHER MAN'S WAR: THE STORY OF A BURMA BOY
IN BRITAIN'S FORGOTTEN ARMY**

Mr Barnaby Phillips

Thursday 19 October 2017

THE HISTORY OF DOVER CASTLE

Mr Roy Porter

Thursday 16 November 2017

**Annual General Meeting at 7 pm followed by
HENRY III AND BATTLE ABBEY**

Professor David Carpenter

President of the Society

Thursday 14 December 2017

TWELFTH NIGHT

Mr Tim McDonald

Followed by CHRISTMAS PARTY

Time and place to be confirmed

Thursday 18 January 2018

SURPRISING TALES OF BATTLE

BDHS Research Group

Thursday 15 February 2018

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCESSES OF EDWARD I

Professor Louise Wilkinson

Thursday 15 March 2018

**THE PREVENTATIVE SQUADRON AND THE WEST
AFRICA SLAVE TRADE**

Brigadier Hugh Willing

Thursday 19 April 2018

TALES, TITBITS AND TRIVIA OF KENT AND SUSSEX

Mr Chris McCooey

Thursday 17 May 2018

Springford Memorial Lecture

**FROM THE DUNGHEAP TO THE STARS: THE HISTORY
OF EARLY GUNPOWDER**

Ms Kay Douglas-Smith

Thursday 21 June 2018

HENRY THE NAVIGATOR

Ms Imogen Corrigan

Thursday 19 July 2018

Robertson Memorial Lecture

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IN LONDON: THE BRITISH LIFE
OF AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHER**

Mr George Goodwin

