



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Gina finds parchment
- Heritage policy
- BDHS lecture
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- Trips
- Rother Books

News from the Battle & District Historical Society

ISSUE 17

APRIL 2018

Parchment discovery

An original document has come to light in the BDHS archive which describes the ancient freedoms granted by successive Kings from William the Conqueror onwards to the people of the town of Battle and its Abbey. The document, which has made the headlines in the *Battle Observer*, was written by Abbot Richard Tovey in 1493, and takes the form of an open letter confirming the bearer's right to freedom from various taxes and to trial at Battle's own court as a town resident. Benefits included to freedom from tolls throughout the country – no equivalent of the Dartcharge for the fifteenth century traveller from Battle! Society volunteer archivist Gina Doherty was amazed to find the document which came to light during handover from the previous archivist, David Sawyer.



Gina Doherty BDHS volunteer Archivist with Christopher Whittick of ESRO and the parchment

Gina pointed out an interesting feature of the document: “a crossed out reference to the Pope shows that the ancient liberties granted to Battle by William the Conqueror were being claimed right up to the time of Henry VIII's split with Roman Catholic Church just before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536.” The document made a final visit to its original home, Battle Abbey, on 5th March, when the Society handed the document to Christopher Whittick, County Archivist, for safekeeping in the County Record Office. More information on the document, together with a digital image, can be seen on the Society's website www.battlehistory.btck.co.uk which in the Collectanea section contains over 70 local history articles by the BDHS Research Group.

Heritage policy decision

Battle Town Council has decided to set up a working party to consult in Battle about a draft heritage policy, designed to involve local organisations in protecting the history of the town and Netherfield. This arose from the BDHS contribution to the Battle Neighbourhood Plan Historical Environment Statement: please email bdhs66@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to be sent a copy. It is expected that the BDHS will be asked to nominate a member of the working party, to be Chaired by Cllr Allan Russell. BDHS is also advising on the Almonry redevelopment, with the Museum in partner role.

Forthcoming BDHS lecture

Thursday 19 April 2018: 'Tales, Titbits and Trivia of Sussex and Kent' by Chris McCooley

Chris McCooley is a freelance journalist, photographer and author, having contributed articles on gardening and travel to The Times, Daily Telegraph, Financial Times and Daily Express. He has also written a number of local history books. He was educated at Oxford University and spent a number of years living and working in Japan.

Museum news

The Museum reopened on 30 March, all days except Sunday 10-4.30 until 31 October. This year there are two new exhibitions: the history of Battle Post Office; and the fascinating world of Philip Papillon, early 18th century trader and financier whose family owned Crowhurst Park from the mid 19th century. The Post Office display has several curiosities including the 1970's Post Office medals awarded to van driver Brian Roberts, being inspected in our photo at the opening reception. Several of the other displays have a new twist. Visit the website for more information:

www.battlemuseum.com



Trips

Visit to Dover Castle 10 May 2018

Battle Twinning Association have organised a coach trip to Dover Castle on Thursday 10th May departing from Battle. There will be visits to the underground tunnels which were the HQ for the Dunkirk evacuations. There will also be a tour of Henry II's royal apartments and opportunities to visit the Roman lighthouse, military museum etc. The price including entry and a 2 course hot lunch with wine and tea/coffee is £52 per person. (English Heritage members £35). BDHS members are most welcome at the same prices as Twinning Association members. Full details including a booking form are available from stephenbradshaw1066@gmail.com

Walk through Trees and Time

BDHS member Peter Miles begins his series of historical walks again, with "Through Trees and Time". Several BDHS members went on last year's and had a fascinating time. Peter has broadened out from Darwell Down campaigning to spreading awareness of what the visible landscape as altered by humans, tells us about the historical and natural heritage of the Weald. This walk is in woodland. The practicals are: these walks are on Sunday 22nd April; Friday 27th; Sunday 29th; and Sunday May 6th, all at 9.30 am from Mountfield Village Hall. Free parking; loos at start and finish; bring wellies; well behaved dogs on leads OK but not great for children; two miles/three hours. £10 pp, profits to All Saints Church. To book, or for more details, contact Peter on savedarwell@gmail.com or 01580 880 614.

Browsing in Battle

Rother Books in Battle High Street is run by BDHS member Ian Cawley, and has a good stock of history books and a wide variety generally. Books by the Society's own Alan Judd, are in stock. *Black Tudors* by Miranda Kaufmann tells the stories of early migrants who made their way in Tudor society, including the extraordinary tale of Edward Swarthye. Charles Spencer's biography of *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* tells us more about the man whose dog "Boy" featured in the January BDHS talk about Battle and the English Civil War.