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THE FOLLIES OF KINGSGATE

By RONALD JESSUP, F.S.A.

ON the edge of the North Foreland are Joss Bay and Kingsgate Bay, two of the small coves floored with pale golden sand, the essence of the Thanet seaside. Little more than a century ago one could descend from the land only by deep gaps worn down through the chalk cliffs by generations of local farmers as they brought up from the shore cartloads of seaweed to be used as a top dressing on their sandy fields. Until quite recently it was a corner of quiet delight, overshadowed in name, perhaps, but never in spirit, by a famous golf course and a luxurious hotel. Now there are concrete steps down to the sands, a car park on the cliff top, fruit stalls and litter baskets. The fairways remain well kept and the greens trim. From them one still sees its gaunt square battlements outlined against the cliff, the castle-turned-hotel which has now been converted into flats, and in the same glance a companionable and sturdily flint-built inn which, without losing its native character, has expanded its premises to the obvious satisfaction of its customers.

Almost hidden, until it is seen directly on the roadside a mere stone's throw from the shore, is a house of some pretensions which until lately served as an annexe to the hotel. To most people it appears a largish but pleasant enough seaside residence ; a few know that it is called Holland House, still fewer, perhaps, that the Holland thus named was Henry, the father of Charles James Fox.

Henry Fox was created first Baron Holland of Foxley in 1763. He had been to Thanet for the sake of his ailing health some three years before, and then it was that he decided to build at Kingsgate, a deserted fishing hamlet, a house which should exercise to the full his interest and industry. No expense was to be spared ; everything in the way of classical and romantic decoration was to be exactly to its owner's taste. His personal fortune, which was enormous—he was widely regarded as a public robber, and as Paymaster-General of the Forces he was openly

described by the citizens of London in a petition to the King as "the public defaulter of unaccounted millions"—could well withstand the cost. He had already bought (from Robert Whitfield, a local man) a large tract of land, together with Quekes, Dandelion, Twenties, Vincents and several other estates in the neighbourhood. But what of his taste?

Its cold, inhospitable and wind-swept downs, the lack of anything much but cart tracks and farm roads, and above all its distance from polite society, would have been enough, one thinks, to preserve this isolated corner of Kent in its rustic solitude. The paint on the new bathing machines at Margate was scarcely yet dry; but the streets of the town were paved and drained in the same manner as those of London, declared the more enterprising of those with lodgings to let, and was there not a plan for a noble Assembly Room to be built in Cecil Square—a Room to be finished with great elegance and taste and to be one of the largest anywhere in England. But it was not, almost certainly, the attraction of nearby Margate which brought Lord Holland to Kingsgate. He was already a man disappointed in ambition, weary with intrigue and sick of popular opinion which regarded him with a relentless hatred. Kingsgate had already cured his dropsy, made less frequent his attacks of asthma, and might he not here forget his political life and hope that it was forgotten by the public. The very grandeur of the seascape, of the chalk cliffs and the wide freedom of the seaside downland gave him appetite, sleep and spirits. Here, he writes, he was very happy, and amused with trifles that led to nothing sad or serious. "I talk a good deal of cheerful nonsense in a day and in every day," he tells his wife, "the truth is that I divert myself." He loved his estate with a tenacious and absorbing affection.

The chief diversion was the building of Holland House. The present house gives no hint of it, but the original plan was that of a luxurious Italian villa, and the architect, Thomas Wynn (afterwards Lord Newborough), an equerry to George II and like many other men of his day an amateur in the art, had particularly in mind the lines of Cicero's famous villa near Formiae on the Appian Way. We can only imagine how such a house designed for the sunlit Tyrrhenian coast straddled itself across the mouth of this shallow tree-embowered combe at Kingsgate, its background the plain of the downs relieved only by stunted and windblown thickets.

But fortunately there is an almost contemporary account from which we can learn a great deal about the building which his Lordship saw growing quickly as he rode round day by day dark and lowering, his vast weight dragging, we think, on his little cob. In the front of the house, towards the sea, was a noble Doric portico. The wings,

faced with flint of curious workmanship, bore antique reliefs in white marble, an ovation of Marcus Aurelius and the story of Ceres and Proserpine, while the back was disposed in symmetrical apartments on two sides of a small but neat garden. The Saloon of Neptune, we are told, and some other of the apartments, the French Room, the Circular Room and the Passage Room surely among them, were very fine indeed. The curious ornaments of the ceiling in the Great Saloon—were they appropriate seaside frescoes ?—were painted by Mr. Hakewell, junior, of Soho Square, while " beautiful columns of scagliola imitating porphyry " were executed by a London firm who afterwards decorated the New Pantheon, that " Winter Ranelagh in the best taste of the grotesque " as Horace Walpole called it. It was in such surroundings in 1764, the May sunshine gleaming fitfully on the polished columns of red and green, in a room " prettyer than you can imagine " as Holland writes to his wife, that he received the despatch expelling him from office. Here nevertheless he spent many happy and profitable hours, reading steadily through history and once again enjoying the classics.

His taste in the classics was matched by the furniture and fittings in the house, by its antique columns, sculptures and vases. In the Repository, for instance, were to be found :

Two small columns of black Egyptian marble.
Two large columns of grey Berdilio marble.
Two large columns of verd antique, and other fragments of the same marble ; very valuable.
Two small columns of antique white marble.
An ancient doorway of rosso antico.
A profile of Augustus in white marble.
The Deae Matres, three female figures without heads, the drapery very fine.
A cinerary urn.
Fragment of an antique cornice of white marble.
Ditto of a Bacchus.
Ditto not known.
The Head of an Ox in white marble.

On a table in the Saloon of Neptune stood a bust of Democritus, presented to Lord Holland by Sir Charles Bunbury :

My dear lord, as a proof of my love and regard,
Accept of the busts which comes with this card ;
And may the old Grecian's ridiculous phiz
Inspire you with notions as cheerful as his ;
Persuade you with patience your griefs to endure,
And laugh at those evils no weeping can cure.

For a complete list of the statuary and antiques we have reason to thank Thomas Fisher, a bookseller of Rochester, who in 1776 published the first edition of *The Kentish Travellers' Companion*, the earliest and one of the most readable of Kentish travel books, and one written, moreover, by an author who had seen the county for himself.

Without doors, in that same neat garden adorned with the choicest flowers both native and exotic, were stones from the Giant's Causeway and fifty tons of bluish-grey lava from Naples, described as exquisitely hard.

All this, the sarcophagi, the Greek and Roman statuary in bronze and marble, and "some trifles dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum," were brought ashore at a specially built landing-stage facing the house. The gap to the sea was spanned by an ornate gothic gateway built of the local flint. There was a portcullis, and on the battlements his Lordship sited two dozen pieces of small cannon, the better to make a show of his property and to salute his friends. It was not yet complete. On the front, facing the sea, was fixed an inscription in metal, in Saxon characters,

GOD BLESS BARTH'LEM'S GATE

and on the landward side, an inscription in Latin announcing that the name of Bartholomew's Gate should now be changed to Kingsgate in honour of the landing there on 30th June, 1683, of Charles II and James, Duke of York. What piece of history, we wonder, was it intended to commemorate? The time was just three months after the discovery of the Rye House Plot, when the assassination of the King and his brother was perhaps projected, but the events of this unusual landing remain quite obscure. Someone with a bent towards local history may one day find the leisure to solve this minor puzzle; the story appears in all the early topographical guide-books, and the gate itself stood until 1819 when it at last fell before the March gales. One part of the saluting platform stood in the small meadow in front of the present riding-stable.

Here, and in such surroundings, the third son, Charles James Fox, may have learned under his father's expert eye to become a man and to gain, as he did a little later in Paris and Pisa, some skill at those games of chance which were later to deplete his fortune. Certainly towards his son the father was from early days more than tolerant. At Kingsgate he would have been perhaps twelve or thirteen, but not even St. Bartholomew's golden sands could have foretold that this rather clever boy, swimming and playing with his boat during his Eton holidays, would one day be hailed as a founder of British Liberalism and the people's darling.

At the same time, quietly, and in his own suite of rooms in Holland

House most generously provided for him by the new owner, sat Robert Whitfield, erstwhile lord of Kingsgate.

In such occupations did Lord Holland seek to forget himself. He, however, was far from forgotten, and the public hatred which his name still engendered, even in his retirement, is sufficiently indicated by many writers of the day who showed no mercy on his downfall. Here, for instance, is part of Thomas Gray's bitter *Stanzas, suggested by a view of the seat and ruins at Kingsgate in Kent, 1766*: [1]

> Old and abandon'd by each venal friend,
> Here Holland took the pious resolution
> To smuggle some few years, and strive to mend
> A broken character and constitution.

Gray, who had visited Kingsgate during a summer holiday at Denton Rectory, near Canterbury, went on to continue his poem :

> Here reign the blust'ring North and blighting East,
> No tree is heard to whisper, bird to sing,
> Yet nature cannot furnish out the feast,
> Art he invokes new horrors still to bring.
>
> Now mould'ring fanes and battlements arise,
> Arches and turrets nodding to their fall,
> Unpeopled palaces delude his eyes
> And mimick desolation covers all.

Less well known, and even more bitter in its polished Latin satire, is an Ode published privately in 1798 by Thomas James Mathias, Gray's friend and editor. (In his 1810 publication of *Odae Latinae* it appears as *Villae Formianae apud Portam Regiam in insula Thaneti*, not unfittingly with an Ode to a bishop on neglecting a parrot : both are worth the time of anyone curious in the byways of the late eighteenth century.)

For a moment let us not be drawn towards the mould'ring fanes, the arches and the turrets, but rather continue the story of Holland House.

Lord Holland died in 1774, leaving Holland House to Charles James Fox whose debts he had only that winter liquidated to the extent of £140,000. In due course Fox was obliged to sell, and the Estate Steward, James Powell, became the new owner.

By 1793 the house had become very shabby and neglected. Zachariah Cozens, Master of the Free School at Margate and an indefatiguable antiquary, saw it at about that time, and as packing cases were already prepared to remove the antiques, possibly for sale abroad, he

[1] Various texts survive, but apparently none in Gray's own hand.

took the opportunity of making a hand-list which he printed in his *Tour through the Isle of Thanet*. Still, in 1807, when for some years it had been little better than a common lodging house, there seemed that a happier prospect might lay before it, and that once again the fine Doric portico with its dozen columns of Portland stone would ring to the sound of visitors. Two London speculators, an architect and an attorney, bought the place for development—the transaction, in Thanet, has a decidedly modern flavour—as a seaside resort. One wing of the house was to be a coffee room and hotel, with a covered gallery to the Grand Saloon which was to be converted into an Assembly Room. The old Dining Parlour, they thought, would do well as a Public Library and Reading Room, while, all in the best possible taste, there was to be a crescent facing the sea with a public garden laid out in neat lawns and gravel walks. No longer would Kingsgate be a quiet and lonely fishing hamlet, the secret resort of duellists from the Ball Room at Margate. It was to become the evening retreat of the fashionable. But beyond dreams and lawyers' papers, nothing happened. The speculators sold out, the north-east wind did its worst, and the whole house was slowly dismantled and converted into three separate dwellings, the portico still remaining to grace their front towards the sea. Few stones of the Italian villa can have remained. The present house, with its cream-washed walls, shuttered windows, the flanking lions, and a balustrade parapet genteelly hiding the slate roof according to proper Georgian convention, is an essay in still another manner. Contrast with it the row of coastguard cottages next door which, their fresh cream, red and yellow paint notwithstanding, remain a basic and very satisfactory exercise in scale. There is something to be said, even in domestic architecture, for an Admiralty sealed pattern.

But it was not Holland House itself that Gray had in mind when he wrote so ironically of unpeopled palaces and mimic desolation at Kingsgate : it was the architectural curiosities with which Lord Holland had littered his estate, a Temple of Neptune, a Castle and a Convent, a Bede-house and memorial towers, all in a gothic fashion.[1]

It is interesting to see what has been thought of those buildings which were " for the most part intended to represent ruinated edifices of antiquity," as a contemporary put it.

" The design," said Thomas Fisher, the bookseller of Rochester whose account of Kingsgate in 1776 we have already noticed, " never fails to excite the wonder and frequently the censure of the spectators. Though we may venture perhaps to assert that the latter is not so well founded as is generally imagined." To decide the point of superior

[1] Mr. Hugh Honour discussed this " Epic of Ruin-Building " in *Country Life*, 10th December, 1953, as did Miss Barbara Jones in her delightful book, *Follies and Grottoes*, Constable, 1953.

taste between these and the structures which generally adorn the gardens of the nobility may be no easy matter, he continues, but these being of flint and chalk, both to be found on the spot, were certainly less expensive and more useful than most others. In any case, the principal buildings contributed at once to the advantage and entertainment of their proprietor. The more prosaic Zachariah Cozens felt them to be worthy of notice only because many of the buildings contained inscriptions, and to him that was what mattered; the origin of individuals, the descent of property, and the extinction of families were his studies.

To Edward Hasted, the formally-minded antiquary who wrote the standard county history, the surroundings of Holland House " create a disgust in the childish taste displayed in a number of fantastic gothic ruins . . ." But some twenty years later—he had written in 1800—the mellowing effect of the Regency was beginning to appear in popular travel books, and such writers were able to say, for instance, that the " whimsical ornaments which were censured as childish have been so modified by successive occupiers that they are at length become a source of amusement rather than objects of ridicule." It was an odd congregation of the modern antique, far from ill-conceived and certainly not badly executed, and it was only this association in a cluster which suggested an idea of the ludicrous. Thus came condonation. It was left to the guide-book writers to be forgiving : as the Castle and the Temple of Neptune were to scale, they were not unpleasing, and the effect might be said to be good. When someone could write that the buildings were " not without just pretentions to classic tastefulness," he was on the point of admitting that there might even be joy in sham ruins. Taste had run its course, but in a circle. Something of the same sort has happened in the last fifty years. We have been romantically revived and gothically revived until, some would say, we live only for the memory of those far away days when the sun always shone, and upon smiling faces.

Lord Holland's principal architectural follies consisted, as we have said, of a Bede-house, a Castle, a Convent, and a temple, and parts or traces of many of them even now survive, striking features in the Kingsgate landscape.

The Bede-house had the appearance of a " Roman chapel " with gothic windows, a cross on the roof, and a dedication to St. Peter. Far from being an almshouse, it was from the first a house of entertainment, pleasantly situated in a garden on the edge of the cliff overlooking Kingsgate Bay. In 1809 it was known as " The Noble Captain Digby," a tavern with a good reputation where the landlord exerted every possible civility and attention, he said, to accommodate the numerous parties which daily came to dine and drink tea in his house. No doubt he did well out of the failure of the Holland House scheme. Early one

November night not many years later during an extraordinarily strong eastern gale most of the house fell into the sea, except for part of one wing in which a servant boy continued to sleep peacefully, the family all being away enjoying themselves in Margate. The present " Captain Digby " Inn incorporates one wing of the Bede-house. The name of this four-square battlemented flint-built inn situated almost on the cliff edge, the rugged exterior of which belies its warm and friendly comfort, is derived from that of its first landlord, Captain Robert Digby, one of Lord Holland's roistering companions who did not abandon his patron.

There is a nice story told of Holland's will : we leave it to the reader to inspect the document if he can trace it. In a rhyming codicil he is said to have charged his lands in Kent with fifty shillings annually so that Bob Digby's health might continue to be drunk at the Digby Head after his death, and he also made arrangements whereby any young woman of the parish brought to bed of a child was to be encouraged with a bottle of strong malaga and a present of nutmegs. The present landlord cannot usually produce malaga, but he has up in one corner of his saloon bar, in a large glazed frame, a unique collection of prints of Kingsgate and its gothic fancies. And on the small lawn at the very edge of the fifty-foot cliff stands a roofless gazebo with its gothic brick-lined window facing seaward, the last relic surely of the original Bede-house.

A similar look-out stands on the cliffs across the bay in the grounds of Kingsgate Castle, the building which encloses within its fabric the meagre surviving fragments of Lord Holland's stable and coach-house. As a man of taste, said one of his biographers, he was bound to build a castle, but he was far too much a man of sense to inhabit it. Picturesque Effect was to be united with Rural Scenery, and had not William Mason, close friend of Gray and his biographer, in *The English Garden*, set approval on every structure needful for a farm being raised in castle semblance ? With Newborough, who had been Member for both Carnarvon and Beaumaris, as his architect—and however rare his visits to his constituencies we must assume that he knew something of their outstanding historical buildings—it is not surprising that Lord Holland's castle should be a small copy in chalk and flint of Welsh Edwardian. At the end of the eighteenth century it was converted into a comfortable dwelling-house, probably by a Mr. Thomas Gray, architect, of St. Peter's, who is said to have raised gothic buildings here in a very masterly manner. Bit by bit the structure was added to, and rather fittingly it was rebuilt by Lord Avebury who died there in 1913. The gothic fancy was maintained in full splendour, particularly by the circular flag-tower crowned with battlements and a mock *machicoulis*, so well, in fact, that the builder of Crampton Tower at

Broadstairs (in 1860) had to look no further for his inspiration. This latter tower, in reality a strictly utilitarian water-tower, is just outside Broadstairs Station ; it mixes gothic and the blind arches of a Romanesque arcade with great abandon and success. A skilful bit of building in flint, it is not without its lesson. It is the last of the Thanet follies.

The Convent, the next largest of Lord Holland's romantic fancies, was designed according to an account of the time " to represent the remains of one of those ancient monasteries formerly so numerous in this kingdom." One version of Gray's Ode does in fact speak of " unpeopled monast'ries " and not " unpeopled palaces." It so happened that the Convent was one of the buildings which was fully tenanted. Its cloister, with five cells, gave comfortable quarters to several poor and industrious families of the estate, who likewise had the benefit of a ruined chapel, a commodious lodge for a porter, and a noble gateway. An ancient statue of two Saxon chieftains—dare one guess they were representations of Hengest and Horsa ?—was reckoned to be the principal feature of the chapel. The Convent was made a private residence quite soon after the Holland estates in Kent had been sold by Charles James Fox ; it was much altered by a famous London surgeon early in the twentieth century and named Port Regis, the remains of the old gateway from the shore being already rebuilt in its grounds. At present it is a Catholic Residential School for Delicate Girls.

There were several smaller follies. One named Countess Fort—the Countess was Margaret of Kildare, who was also honoured by a remarkable column of black Kilkenny marble in the garden of Holland House—was intended for an ice-house, but it was never finished and soon fell into ruin. Another remains, almost complete in its external ivy-covered walls, the angle towers battered and provided with gun-loops for its mock defence. This is Neptune's Tower, the Temple of Neptune, on White Ness, a little beyond the " Captain Digby " and close to the Coastguard look-out. It is a miniature in flint of Camber, Deal, and the other blockhouses with which Henry VIII defended the south-east coast. Appropriately enough it served in wartime as a post of the Royal Observer Corps. In Lord Holland's day it had a central tower of red brick faced with clean chalk blocks which supported a statue of Neptune said, in an accompanying dedicatory inscription, to have been found in the neighbourhood, as indeed it may well have been, for other remains point to a considerable and wealthy population along this shore in Roman times. There were also Latin dedicatory inscriptions in which Neptune was hailed as Protector of the Isle of Thanet.

Thanet, round isle, by water encompassed,
Reckoned fertile and clean, to none on earth second.
Thy fisheries yield food, thy commerce, wealth ;
Thy baths give vigour, thy waters, health.

It seemed suitable too, the year was 1768, to record that in the view of a very accomplished and learned cleric, a local vicar who later did good for himself in being appointed to a prebendary's stall at Wells, a tower was built here in A.D. 448 by King Vortigern, the *Arx Ruohim*, Tower of Thanet, he thought, following certain of the Old English Chronicles. This bit of nonsense-history survived quite a long time. It gained place on reputable maps, to say nothing of its description in the many varieties and editions of Margate souvenirs and guide-books. Little wonder that visitors should stroll on White Ness after their refreshment in the "Captain Digby" to inspect the Saxon castle. And at a much later date two small boys on holiday formed a lasting impression of the Saxons from the golden-bearded Coastguard, spyglass under arm, who lazed in the summer sunshine, back against this little tower, as he passed a pleasant time of day with their nursemaid.

Spires and towers were much favoured by the Romantics. There are adequate theories to account for the tower-building wish from Babel, the first of all follies, onwards, but for all that the tower was a convenient structure, striking, and in this country of flint and chalk, fairly easy to build. It often commanded (or "improved") a landscape prospect, was friendly to the mantling ivy, and given a little ingenuity with the doors and windows it could be truly gothic, and so a polite advertisement of its owner's impeccable taste. Such was Harley Tower, the ruins of which may still be seen on the golf course south-west of the "Captain Digby" by the side of the Whiteness road. "My tower in honour of Mr. Harley is built I believe," wrote Lord Holland, "more for my private amusement than from public spirit; but he is really almost the only man who has not been a coward." Thomas Harley, Tory Lord Mayor of London in 1768, would not give his support to a proposed enquiry into the Paymaster's accounts, an enquiry which could not have been but embarrassing to Henry Fox. The tower suffered much damage during the second world war; now only the stump of its circular brick core and part of the plinth edged with hard chalk and faced with panels of knapped flints remain, a dedicatory tablet lying in pieces among the coarse grass at its foot. With a little guesswork one can still read the Horatian Ode:

Instum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava inbentium . . .
Mente quatit solida

The heat of fellow-citizens clamouring for what is wrong: what memories did that awake in Holland's sleeping mind?

There is yet another tower. On the highest point in Thanet, on Northdown Hill, Holland built "in the elegant and full perfection of Gothic architecture" a tall narrow tower in compliment to Robert

Whitfield from whom (as we have said) he bought the Kingsgate estate. A graceful urn on its summit was blown down by the wind in the first winter after it was finished, but in 1818 it was rebuilt, as its inscription tells, by the Corporation of Trinity House for the benefit of navigation, and the new bulbous finial together with the tower of Holy Trinity Church at Margate were much used as bearing marks by the fishermen. Whitfield Beacon stands in its round enclosure in a field on the east side of Northdown Hill at 162 feet above sea level.

It is hardly surprising that Lord Holland with his taste for antiquity could not resist the opportunity of digging into an ancient burial mound which stood within view of his Convent. Another and larger mound nearby had been opened by a farmer of Reading Street Farm in 1743 in the presence, it is recorded, of many hundred people. Under it, deep in the solid chalk, were several stone-capped graves which contained human skeletons bent almost double, " the bones were large but not gigantic, and for the most part perfectly sound," and several urns of coarse earthenware filled with ashes and charcoal. The urns, as seemed not unusual in these eighteenth-century excavations, at once crumbled into dust on exposure to the air. Cozens had to lament that there was not a single inscription among them. In the smaller mound, which Lord Holland opened in 1765, there were no burial urns but enough mouldering pieces of humanity to enable him to imagine a bloody battle between the Saxons and the Danes. That there were not more bodies must have been due, he thought, to the victors pushing the slain over the top of the cliff. It was in any case an event worthy of commemoration, and so on the larger of the two mounds there arose " in the stile of very remote antiquity " another inscribed gothic monument. This circular and squat embattled tower, built as usual of the local seashore flints and relieved by brickwork and stone loop-holes, surrounded by its low parapet wall, is still preserved in the private grounds of Port Regis, a later owner having made it into a clock tower. From Convent Road it is easily seen through the fence.

One day, when the Reverend Mother Superior had most graciously given us her permission to visit the tower, we found washed out of the sepulchral earth which forms the little flower garden at its foot a small piece of prehistoric pottery. Without doubt it was from the rim of a cinerary urn which belonged to the Bronze Age. Here, then, might be a clue to the age of this mound, and perhaps of that other one across the road which was made into a deeply guarded green on the North Foreland golf course.

The inscription, which is in finely cut letters still in good condition on a sandstone panel, and a fair example of Lord Holland's latinity, reads thus :

D M
Danorum & Saxonum hic occisorum
Dum de Solo Britannico,
(Milites nihil a se alienum Putant)
Britannis Perfide & crudeliter olim expulsis,
Inter se domicaverunt
HEN : de HOLLAND
Posuit
Qui Duces qualis hujus Praelii Exitus
Nulla Notat Historia
Annum circiter DCCCL evenit Pugna
Et Pugnam hanc evenisse Fidem faciunt
Ossa quamplurima
Quae sub hoc & altero Tumulo huic vicino
Sunt sepulta

A translation would run :

To the shades of the departed and in memory of the Danes and Saxons who were killed here whilst fighting for the possession of Britain, (soldiers think everything their own), the Britons already having been perfidiously and cruelly expelled, this was put up by Henry Holland. History does not record the names of the leaders or the result of the action. It happened about the year 850, and that it happened here seems true from the quantity of bones buried in this and the nearby tumulus.

But history retains its local dignity. The monument was given an appropriate inscription which is still easily to be read. The countryman, encouraged by the bearing of his noble landlord, was no doubt quick to call the mounds "Hack 'em down Banks," and as Hackemdown Tower this little folly finds its way, together with Hackemdown Point, the cliff over which the slain were tumbled, into the official map of the Ordnance Survey.

The local memory of history is a strange and curious thing. A roadman passing Joss Gap who had worked in this district for more than thirty years did not know Hackemdown by name, yet he told us that here in Kingsgate, "they said," the custom of drinking healths first started in olden days. It was quite by accident that we found the likely source of his belief : in a Journal of events kept by members of a well-known local family of yeoman farmers, the Mocketts of St. Peter's (it was published privately in 1836 by the *Kentish Observer* at Canterbury, and John Mockett, its editor, saw that copies found their way into many of the houses of East Kent), there was, under the heading of Kingsgate, a fanciful account of Vortigern, the Kentish King, drinking health to Rowena, daughter of Hengest. This happening, it was said, gave rise to the custom. Our roadman friend had in this way

obtained a garbled version of Nennius, the ninth-century antiquary-historian of the Britons.

Some months later we were able to repay our friend's kindly interest by showing him, close by, a curiosity of history-in-the-open-air. It was the ghost of a third burial mound, one of Lord Holland's group, showing through the growing corn on the hillside sloping down to Joss Gap from the North Foreland Lighthouse. Countless seasons of ploughing and the down wash of rain into the valley below had obliterated all traces of the mound from the landscape, but there it was, the circular plan quite clear in an outline of very dark green.

The explanation of this piece of apparent magic he found of great interest. Like all countrymen he had first-hand knowledge of the way in which crops react to the nature of the soil, especially here where there was only an inch or so of poor loam above the natural chalk. The filling of a hole, for instance, never settles down to quite the same compactness as the undisturbed soil around it, and you could see, he said, how well weeds grew above the holes got out for electric cables during the war. The burial mound, we thought, would have had quite a deep ditch around it to supply in part at least the chalk and rubble of which the mound was built. As, during the centuries, the ditch tumbled in and became silted up, so its lighter, aerated, moister filling would encourage a richer growth of vegetation than that on the surrounding soil : and so, in this particular year, corn had rooted well in the hidden circular ditch, its very dark green pattern showing strongly in contrast to the rest of the field.

Not all crops react as favourably—roots, potatoes and clover are of no use to the archæologist, and in any case the place must be seen at the right moment. There was a crop-mark which suggested the site of a Romano-Celtic temple alongside the Watling Street between Canterbury and Dover, but although it had once been photographed from the air and the site plotted with accuracy on a map, many visits, during which there had been a variety of crops in the field, failed to locate it. And at Kingsgate, though we had seen this ring-mark from an aeroplane, we had never before been able to see it on the ground.

It was indeed satisfactory that it need no longer be regarded as the most elusive of the Kingsgate Follies.

NOTE

The follies at Kingsgate are all within close distance of Kingsgate College where for the last ten years the Society has held its annual residential week-end meeting. Mr. Jessup's paper, based on informal talks given at the College, is published at the suggestion of members attending these meetings. It is of interest to note that part of the Holland House portico found its way to the Royal Sea Bathing Infirmary at Margate, where it is still to be seen.—*Editor*.

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