

History Talks

By David Clarke



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Whether it is a school talk, club meeting or group event, if you would like to find out a little more about the background to 1066, 1066 Harold's Way and other History Walks, David is an experienced and anecdotal speaker who will bring the history, walks and talks to life.

Talks will be tailored to meet your needs and fees, dates and presentation details will be discussed on enquiry.

David lives in St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex and walks, talks and writes about walking, local history and all things 1066.

He considers his membership of CAMRA, The Inn Sign Society, The Ramblers and the Long Distance Walkers Association to be a perfect match for walking and is the author and creator of 1066 Harold's Way, a 100 mile long distance walk inspired by King Harold's epic march to the Battle of Hastings, 1066.

1066 - King Harold's March from London

King Harold's march from London is encapsulated in 1066 Harold's Way, a 100mile long distance walk from Westminster Abbey to Battle Abbey inspired by King Harold II's epic journey to the Battle of Hastings. ***There can be no more emotive march.***

The talk traces the route along the Roman road network still being used in 1066, from London to Rochester on Watling Street and then south through Maidstone, Staplehurst and Bodiam. It is a clear route through the daunting Forest of the Andreasweald past castles and battle sites with rivers, streams and valleys to cross, forests to forge and hills to climb and Roman roads, green lanes and ancient foot-paths to walk.

Three days of marching, the nights were drawing in, a camp at Rochester, maybe Bodiam too and a final night at Caldbec Hill.

There are few facts, just stories and legends and this engaging account of the King Harold's march to Hastings will review why it all happened, the reasons for the Battle of Hastings, Harold's Timeline to the Battle of Senlac Hill and, of course, walking 1066 Harold's Way.

Three Castles and an Ironmaster's House

This talk is an engaging account of a walk between four National Trust properties; Bodiam Castle, Sissinghurst Castle, Scotney Castle and Bateman's, that explores the history and the industrial past of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in this part of Kent and East Sussex.

Three Castles is an opportunity to take the time to explore the castles and houses and towns and villages along the route. It follows man's ingenuity and progress and a changing industry from agriculture to iron, to sheep, to the woollen trade, smuggling, hopfields and back to agriculture.

There is a soul to the High Weald; one that reflects the passions and industry of man and also the tensions of war and rebellion. It is now a very pastoral picture with only occasional reminders of the noise, smoke and fire of the iron industry. The ironmasters and the rich woollen trade are survived by their architecture at Sissinghurst, Cranbrook and Burwash and Brightling. The derelict hoppickers cottages, next to the River Teise in Lamberhurst, provide a startling contrast to the rich and landed.

And such a varied landscape brings together tales to tell of Mad Jack Fuller and Bloody Baker, Admiral 'Foulweather Jack' Norris, and Captain Swing. There are tales of smugglers and Mechanical riots, Napoleon's horse, aliens in Robertsbridge and, of course, that 'vengeful dragon' in Angley Wood.

Three Castles and an Ironmaster's House will take you on a picturesque and enjoyable tour of the High Weald – without getting mud on your boots.

The Saxon Times - A Newspaper's Review of 1066

There is more to 1066 than the Battle of Hastings which, as every student knows, was fought on 14th October 1066 at Senlac Hill.

Primarily, it was the death of King Edward the Confessor that triggered the events that would have such a profound effect on England and The Saxon Times takes the opportunity to review the events of that tumultuous year through the eyes of The Saxon Times reporters.

The Saxon Times reports on the whole year from 25th December 1065 and the consecration of Westminster Abbey to William's coronation on 25th December 1066. The story ends on 31st December 1066 when the newly crowned King is found hiding in a nunnery in Barking.

This talk will review the important events of 1066 and delve a little deeper into the background and intrigue that surrounded key dates and a look at life during that turbulent year.

It will also follow King Harold's route to the Battle of Hastings and Duke William's subsequent march to his coronation.

The Saxon Times is based on all the evidence available for that year and brings it together in a logical, understandable and entertaining format.

1066 William's March on London

14th October 1066 seems such a terminal date in English history but life continued.

'1066 William's March on London' is an engaging account of what happened next as Duke William sought to consolidate his invasion of Anglo-Saxon England.

This is the story of Duke William's strategy that culminates in his coronation at Westminster Abbey on 25th December 1066 and ends on New Year's Eve.

Portrayed by his chroniclers as 'a generous and accommodating man' the reality is a little different as his plan unfolds and he cuts a wave of destruction across southern England with little opposition.

This talk delves a little deeper into the background and intrigue that surrounded the important events of that October, November and December starting with the aftermath of the Battle of Hastings.

The talk is based on all the evidence available for William's march to London and brings it together in a logical, understandable and entertaining format.

Explore St Leonards on Sea

There is more to St Leonards on Sea than the Promenade.

There is much to admire along the front but hidden away behind the houses in St Leonards on Sea, is a story of a dream to build a New Town which in 1841 was said that “None but the unrivalled crescents of Bath and Bristol is superior to the Marina of St Leonards”.

This talk will first lead you through the Regency splendour of the rich and wealthy, on past Mercatoria and Lavateria, built to service the grand houses before venturing into a green St Leonards hidden away behind the houses, on the very edge of the town, and a history that stretches back at least a thousand years.

Landing places for Duke William's fleet, a Saxon Manor house, the finest race course in the South-East and a Church hidden away in an ancient wood are all part of the legacy of St Leonards on Sea.

The talk is an engaging account of a walk around the history of St Leonards on Sea.

Copies of David's books will be available to purchase.

Books

Long Distance Walks

1. 1066 Harold's Way
2. Three Castles and an Ironmaster's House

History

1. The Saxon Times

History Walks around 1066 Country

1. A Green St Leonards on Sea Walk
2. Battle Circular Walks
3. 1066 Bodiam Castle to Battle Abbey via Vinehall
4. Hastings to Rye
5. Secret St Leonards Walking Trail
6. Pub Walks in Hastings and St Leonards
7. 1066 William's Way, Hastings to Battle