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"Tides of Invasion: The Selsey Story", performed at Church Norton, West Sussex  
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## TIDES OF INVASION

### THE SELSEY STORY

by Geoffrey Dearmer

- NARRATOR: The story of Selsey is dominated by the sea. The Sea's erosions eat away our homes, but the sea has given us a livelihood.
- COMMENTATOR: "There are four good things in Sussex" wrote Isaak Walton, "A Selsey cockle, a Chichester lobster and Arundel mullet, and an Amberley trout."
- NARRATOR: The sea has brought invaders to our shores – invaders good and bad, warlike and peaceable; heathen and Christian, Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman; Pagan Celt and Christian Bishop – the good and saintly Wilfrid. The sea has covered the work of Wilfrid's hands – his monastery and the first Cathedral.
- SUSSEX VOICE: /though some folk don't believe that, and Rector e says it ain't true/
- NARRATOR: But the sea has left, here, to this day, part of the church built by Wilfrid's successors, though the waves of the estuary almost lap its stones.
- COMMENTATOR: /Look to your left and then look to your right and see what we mean/
- NARRATOR: Later in history the sea waves brought rumours of more invasions – Armadas from Spain, "Boney" from France, and Hitler from Germany, but by then Sussex and Sussex men "that never did nor never shall lie at the proud foot of a conqueror" have, with the help of God, preserved their lives and independence.
- And still the ever-rolling sea remains, encroaching, receding, disciplined and controlled by God and man, but always, like the people of these islands, of this Seals Island – FREE!
- Before the dawn of written history as we know it, we have nothing but the history of the rocks. Thousands of years passed, and gradually the Paleolithic or Stone-Age emerged when rough stone – flint – implements and weapons were used. At some time during this long age Britain became an island.
- CHILD'S VOICE: What, weren't we always an island?

NARRATOR:

Thanks to Providence we became an island "bound in with the triumphant sea" as Shakespeare put it. Then came the Neolithic or New Stone Age, when man became a herdsman as well as a hunter.

COMMENTATOR:

The channel subsided, the sea rushed in.  
This did much more our battles to win Than Roman or Norman, Jute, Saxon or Gaul.  
Thanks be to God, to God above all.

Triumphant MUSIC,  
/perhaps "Now thank  
we all our God"/  
Suddenly PRIMITIVE MAN  
appears. The MUSIC  
breaks off abruptly.

NARRATOR:

That, ladies and gentlemen, is one of our ancestors. From such as he are you and I descended. "There is all Africa and her prodigies in us" as Sir Thomas Browne wrote. Can you doubt it? Look at this poor heathen savage, his body painted blue with woad. Are not your nails dyed red with henna? Look at him as he clubs his wife-to-be and drags her to his cave - or tries to: but she hits him below the belt and he decides that discretion is the better part of valour, and clubs a wild animal instead. He drags it to his cave and they skin and cook it there. Your methods may be different nowadays, ladies and gentlemen, but deep down in your hearts there lurks the savage, and you have seen, as I have seen, in our own time, crimes committed on this earth of which this poor primitive man would have been incapable, for the instruments of such monstrous sin were not his to wield, and the responsibility of knowledge lay not at his door.

PRIMITIVE MAN acts  
the above in mime.  
After being worsted by  
his imaginary wife, he  
attacks and slays an  
imaginary animal and  
drags it off.

MUSIC.

COMMENTATOR:

How came this man to Britain's gate?  
On dry land from the shores of France  
Ere the sea battered through the straits?  
Or did the tortuous tide's advance  
Force him in hulks too long delayed  
To face an unknown and sudden sea,  
And settle where the tiger preyed  
And had as yet no enemy?

NARRATOR:

Sir Winston Churchill, in his

splended "History of the English Speaking Peoples" says there wasn't enough game in the whole of Southern Britain to support more than seven hundred families of these primitive men.

COMMENTATOR: "All this fine estate, no work but sport and fighting" he writes.

NARRATOR: But already man had begun to discover that "a flint was better than a fist". They were not a hard-headed so much as a long-headed race. In this garden of Eden, this demi-Paradise, they lived in peace until the first tides of invasion set in, bringing with them war, war but new blood, new inventions and discoveries as well. Copper and tin were blended to make bronze. Britain was a backward country when invaders armed with iron entered Britain from the Continent and killed the men of bronze, or made slaves of them. It was a period of hill-top camps. Men, like birds, feel safer on the top of a hill, or a tree. And then the Romans came.

Enter ROMAN SOLDIER  
with SPQR banner.

COMMENTATOR: SPQR - Societas Populusque Romanus.

NARRATOR: Julius Caesar, B.C.55, when he landed, had a look round, wrote some unreliable commentaries, lost most of his fleet and went home; and in B.C.54, when he came again, he got as far as Brentford and again went home, and this time proclaimed a triumph.

COMMENTATOR: "The Roman true whose blood was blue  
He was I-tal-i-an,  
But Romans true were very few  
Few were I-tal-i-an.  
The mighty Empire they controlled  
Consisted of a motley crew  
French, German, African.  
Oh what a hell of a hullabaloo  
Was the mixture of tongues they spoke.

NARRATOR: But they all had to learn Latin.

CHILD: Did they have to learn Latin?

COMMENTATOR: Yes, dear, they had to learn Latin...  
"For in Latin were military words of command  
And if to obey you should fail,  
You got much more than a reprimand  
When a lash curled round your tail.  
The Roman Army was bound to win  
For it was a model of discipline,  
And the spell of the Senate in far off Rome  
Brought the word of the Empire home  
To sundry races of diverse men.  
It was the ambition of all to seek  
Be they French or German or Gaul or Greek,  
Yes, even Britons were proud to seek  
The title of Roman Citizen.

Civis Romanus sum,  
I am a Roman citizen

No prouder name  
In the hall of fame  
Was the title St. Paul was proud to claim.

NARRATOR: What, I wonder, did we in Sussex know  
of all this? What were we to the  
Romans or they to us? We belonged to  
one of the Belgic tribes. The Belgae  
invaders were Celts, Iron-Age men  
originally and

COMMENTATOR: "by far the most enlightened invaders"  
says Churchill, "who had hitherto spread  
over Hampshire, Sussex, Wiltshire and  
Dorset long before the Romans came".

NARRATOR: We built new towns in the valleys.

COMMENTATOR: St. Albans and Colchester, Winchester  
and Silchester.

NARRATOR: We introduced a coinage of silver and  
copper. Rich hoards of gold coins have  
been found here in Selsey, most of them  
Roman. We can imagine our thrifty  
ancestors hurriedly burying their gold  
and silver when, after a lapse of a  
hundred years, in A.D. 43, the Roman  
Emperor Claudius sent Aulus Plautius to  
renew the conquest. The King of the  
Belgae in Sussex welcomed the legions  
and for the next 400 years Chichester  
was a flourishing capital. More and  
more is being discovered thanks to the  
labours of keen excavators. For  
instance, quite near here, at  
Fishbourne, a Roman site has recently  
been discovered.

A Roman soldier driving  
a peasant carrying a bulging  
sack passes across.

What's in that sack? It's grain. There  
was a large wooden granary at Fishbourne,  
the first requirement of a settlement.  
Then more buildings, shops, baths, even  
mosaics.

A Roman Official in a  
toga passes across on  
his way to the baths.

Fishbourne was quite a place. In A.D.  
75 a vast palace was built there with a  
central court and colonnades and more  
mosaics. And there it stood for about  
200 years till fire or a Saxon raid  
destroyed it.  
Plautius was succeeded by another Roman  
Governor, Ostorius Scapula -

COMMENTATOR: "Names, names, names. What do these  
names mean to us?  
Now we can all go to Hadrian's Wall in  
a very nice Green Line Bus..

NARRATOR: And if we feel game for a longer ride  
We can go further north to the Forth  
and Clyde.

COMMENTATOR: It's all very true and it's all very  
fine  
But Hadrian's wall and the Antonine

BOTH: Have nothing to do with us.

CHILD: Hurrah!

ALL: Have nothing to do with us.

NARRATOR: And yet, you know, the Roman occupation  
in general had a very great deal to do  
with us, all of us. We may never have  
heard here till some time afterwards of  
Boadicea's revolt in A.D.61 when she  
raided Colchester, London and St. Albans  
to the ground and was then defeated by  
Suetonius. Nevertheless, the British  
Warrior Queen mattered. She mattered  
very much.

WOMAN: I'd say she did. She wouldn't be still  
driving her chariot across Westminster  
Bridge if she didn't. She and her  
subjects were "bleeding from the Roman  
rods". They'd had enough of it.

NARRATOR: They had indeed, and yet - you know,  
there's always an "and yet" in the  
aftermath of war. The result of all  
that mutual carnage was tolerance.  
Suetonius, provoked though he had been  
beyond all endurance, was recalled.  
Herein lay the innate genius of the Roman  
Senate at the height of its power.

COMMENTATOR: "Send us a Governor" -

ENTER LEGATE

wrote the Procurator of Britannia at the  
time "free from feelings of hostility  
and triumph, a Governor who will deal  
gently with our conquered enemies".

NARRATOR: Wild bands of Britons and Belgae still  
fought on, fighting, starving and  
perishing in the forests and fens. And  
so, in A.D.78 Agricola, a Governor of  
talent and energy was sent to Britannia,  
and from that time "for nearly three  
hundred years, Britain, reconciled to  
the Roman system, enjoyed in many  
respects the happiest, most comfortable  
times its inhabitants have had".

COMMENTATOR: It wasn't all done by kindness you know.  
There was a bloody Roman victory at  
Mons Graupius.

NARRATOR: The last battle, and a long way off -  
in "Caledonia stern and wild". The  
Romans brought us law, order, peace  
and food.

WOMAN: And what is more, they brought us something which we, in our almost incredible stupidity, overlooked for a little matter of fifteen hundred years and haven't altogether rediscovered yet.

NARRATOR: And what is that, pray?

WOMAN: Central heating and hot baths!

NARRATOR: We in the South had no need of a Hadrian's Wall or an Antonine Wall, we had the sea and we had Roman protection, their smelted iron, their roads, their villas. But the Channel, like the walls, was not enough, so the Romans fortified the coast from the Wash to Spithead and put an office called the "Count of the Saxon Shore" in charge of the Home Guard against Saxon invaders. And then the blow fell. Rome recalled her legions. From Vectis in the Isle of Wight to Hadrian's Wall in the North, the military life-blood of the nation was gradually drained. And we can be sure, as Kipling has so finely shown in his Roman Centurion's Song, that many of the legionaries were more than reluctant to go.

TWO ROMAN SOLDIERS enter, carrying a table, a third carries a chair. CRIES of "Halt", "Salute"! are heard *ff*/. The LEGATE enters carrying a scroll or two which he studies, seated at the table. An ORDERLY enters and mimes a request for the CENTURION. The Legate nods. The Centurion enters and stands to attention. The Legate nods, sits back and listens.

### THE ROMAN CENTURION'S SONG

/Roman Occupation of Britain A.D.300/

COMMENTATOR: Legate, I had the news last night -  
my cohort ordered home  
By ship to Portus Itius and thence  
by road to Rome.  
I've marched the companies aboard,  
the arms are stowed below;  
Now let another take my sword.  
Command me not to go!

I've served in Britain forty years,  
from Vectis to the Wall.  
I have none other home than this, nor  
any life at all.  
Last night I did not understand, but,  
now the hour draws near  
That calls me to my native land, I  
feel that land is here.

Here where men say my name was made,  
here where my work was done;  
Here where my dearest dead are laid -  
my wife, my wife and son;  
Here where time, custom, grief and toil,  
age, memory, service, love,  
Have rooted me in British soil. Ah,  
how can I remove?

For me this land, that sea, these airs,  
those folk and fields suffice.  
What purple Southern pomp can match  
our changeful Northern skies,  
Black with December snows unshed or  
pearled with August haze  
The changing arch of steel-grey March  
or June's long lighted days?

You'll follow widening Rhodanus till  
vine and olive lean  
Aslant before the sunny breeze that  
sweeps Menausus clean  
To Arelate's triple gate; but let  
me linger on,  
Here where our stiff-necked British  
oaks confront Euroclydon.

You'll take the old Aurelian road  
through shore-descending pines  
Where, blue as any peacock's neck,  
the Tyrrhene Ocean shines.  
You'll go where laurel crowns are won,  
but - will you e'er forget  
The scent of hawthorn in the sun, or  
bracken in the wet?

Let me work here for Britain's sake -  
at any task you will -  
A marsh to drain, a road to make or  
native troops to drill.  
Some Western camp /I know the Pict/  
or granite Border keep,  
Mid seas of heather derelict, where  
our old messmates sleep.

Legate, I come to you in tears - My  
cohort ordered home!  
I've served in Britain forty years.  
What should I do in Rome?  
Here is my heart, my soul, my mind -  
the only life I know.  
I cannot leave it all behind.  
Command me not to go!

NARRATOR:

Kipling's Roman Centurion's entreaty  
fell; I fear, on the Legate's deaf  
ears. Gradually the Roman Tide ebbed  
in the anti-climax of departure. We  
can imagine little disconsolate groups  
of Britons huddled, frightened and  
dismayed, standing silently waiting to  
see them off - here and elsewhere along  
the South Coast full of foreboding,  
watching the silent exodus. What were  
their thoughts, I wonder?

A muster of BRITONS  
assemble and stare seawards,  
one of them holds on a  
standard the Eagle of a Legion.

COMMENTATOR: We hailed you with a shower of spears  
And javelins wildly hurled,  
But now you leave us all in tears  
Lost in a lost world.

The wheel of Time, full circle turned,  
Unconquered you depart.  
Yet what you've taught us we have  
learned.

Take from a thankful heart  
This message back to Rome to show  
Burns on your kindled flame,  
Romans, we're sad to see you go  
But proud to think you came.

The LEGATE enters. The  
Standard bearer kneels and  
gives him back the Eagle.  
The Legate holds it high  
and the group salutes it by  
raising their arms. EXIT  
LEGATE with standard. Tramp  
of departing legion is heard.  
The group raise their arms in  
the Roman salute.

COMMENTATOR: "The Britons" says Sir Winston, "fought  
those who are now called the English  
for nearly two hundred and fifty years;  
for a hundred years under Rome, and for  
a hundred and fifty years, alone".

NARRATOR: The Germanic Saxons who wielded the  
short one-handed sword came from  
Schleswig-Holstein. "None", says  
Churchill, "was more cruel than they".

COMMENTATOR: The Saxons swallowed the Angles and  
the Jutes.  
They were, to put it bluntly, before  
St. Wilfrid, brutes!

NARRATOR: Yes, before the Cross came to redeem  
us; soul and body, home and hearth, let  
us make no mistake about that. The  
invading tribes, with the splendid  
exception of the Romans, were hordes of  
hooligans for the most part. We in  
Sussex, the all-merciful God only knows,  
had our troubles, but we were spared  
those which other counties suffered.  
We had not, for instance, to contend  
with those two cheerful blackguards,  
Hengist and Horsa, who founded the  
Jutish /and brutish/ kingdom of Kent  
upon the corpses of its former  
inhabitants.  
The poet Hugh Chesterman, with the good  
humour of most English poets since  
Chaucer, hits them off well in the  
following by no means unhistorical  
lyric.

ACTION on stage during  
poem, and Hengist and  
Horsa meet and quarrel.



COMMENTATOR: Hengist and Horsa  
Landed in Kent  
Oh, what a feverish morning they spent,  
Pooling the pillage  
Of township and village,  
And each on outwitting the other was  
bent.  
As this went to Hengist,  
And that went to Horsa,  
Those meddlesome aitches grew more  
discontent.  
Hengist and Horsa  
Quarrelled in Kent,  
Off in a tantrum the two of them went:  
Said Hengist "Good lor, sir,  
I'm sick of you Horsa!"  
Said Horsa "For you, sir, I don't  
care a cent!"  
Then crosser and crosser  
Grew Hengist and Horsa,  
And each said a little bit more than  
he meant.

PAUSE

WOMAN:  
/singer/  
"He came all so still there His  
Mother was  
As dew in April that falleth on  
the grass".

PAUSE

NARRATOR: Who was the first person to speak  
of Christ in Britain? Probably a  
Roman. Christianity was the official  
religion of the Empire as early as the  
middle of the fourth century. St.  
Alban, the first British martyr or man  
to die for the faith in Britain, was a  
victim under the persecution of an  
earlier Roman Emperor in the third  
century. Christianity was also  
persecuted by Decius and Diocletian in  
that century, and not until Constantine  
the Great was the faith officially  
accepted. But, on the whole, the  
Romans tolerated the first Christians  
and reserved their antagonism for the  
Druids whom they exterminated  
ruthlessly whenever they could. In  
the trade of war, the Romans would  
exterminate recalcitrant tribes, but  
they drew the line at human sacrifices.

Enter a CHILD carrying  
a sword. Enter ST. ALBAN  
who takes the sword from  
him and holds it with the  
blade downwards. He holds  
up the sword. Both exit.

Indeed, the Druidic religion had  
nothing to recommend it except so firm  
a belief in the after-life that a Druid  
would accept an I.O.U. to be repaid in  
the next world, an arrangement, one  
might think, calculated to encourage  
conversion to that religion.  
I am sorry to have to tell you that  
our forefathers in Sussex, together with  
the Jutes who got to the Isle of Wight,  
were the last to be converted to the  
Christian faith.

COMMENTATOR: "When almost every principality in the land" wrote Henry of Huntingdon the chronicler in impeccable Latin "even to the extreme North, had its Episcopal See, the South Saxons were still wrapt in an ignorance of Christian Truth as deep and as dense as their own huge forest of Anderida" -

NARRATOR: which stretched, by the way, for 120 miles over Kent and Hampshire. Even when Saint Augustine founded the Metropolitan See of Canterbury in A.D. 597, when pockets of Christianity were flourishing in several parts of the Kingdom "Darkness covered the land and gross darkness the people". Our ancestors were ignorant, it seems, of the dramatic arrival of St. Augustine; we quote from James Elroy Flecker's poem The Dying Patriot.

Enter ST. AUGUSTINE and his  
CHAPLAIN, carrying a cross.

COMMENTATOR: Day breaks in England down the Kentish  
Singing in the silence of the meadow-  
hills  
footing rills  
Day of my dreams, O day,  
I saw them march from Dover, long ago,  
With a silver cross before them, singing  
low,  
Monks of Rome from their home where  
the blue sea breaks in  
foam,  
Augustine with his feet of snow.

NARRATOR: But by this time, as we might put it in humbler verse, the first tide of Christian invasion had begun many years before -

COMMENTATOR: All along our Western seas,  
In tiny cells and oratories  
From Cornwall to the Clyde,  
News of the Cross had broken  
Like a rose on wild stock open,  
And the good news was spoken  
Of the Saviour crucified.

ST; AUGUSTINE and  
CHAPLAIN go out.

NARRATOR: And so we come to the man whom we surely should rightly call the hero of our Selsey story: St. Wilfrid. He comes but twice into our history. The first time for a few hours, the second time, twenty years later, for six years when he became the Bishop of Selsey. We cannot trace his stormy and saintly passage through a long life here, except in so far as he affects our history. He was born about A.D. 630 in Northumbria, and as a young monk, he was educated in the great missionary college of Iona on the west coast of Scotland founded by St. Columba where, after learning at the feet of the great St. Aidan, he went to the monastery of

Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, off the coast of Northumbria. From here he took /I quote/ "his athletic body, unclouded cheerfulness and blessed mind" to Rome and to Lyons. For St. Wilfrid was determined to obtain the authority of the Pope in all he did. What the great saints of the Celtic Church from Ireland, Wales and Scotland - St. David, St. Patrick, St. Ninian, St. Columba, St. Cuthbert, St. Aidan and others - what they had left undone /and of necessity it was very much indeed/, Rome completed, or began to complete, in the arrival of St. Augustine: and it was this need of unity, a unity which lasted till the Reformation, to which Wilfrid passionately dedicated himself.

WOMAN: That's all very interesting, Historian, but what's it got to do with us Sussex folk?

NARRATOR: Nothing whatever. You wouldn't have understood a word of it. You were the last remaining heathens in the kingdom, or should I say in Ununited Britain. In the year 665, St. Wilfrid, on his way back from Compiegne in France, where he had gone to be consecrated Bishop of Northumbria by the Pope, was driven on this inhospitable shore by a gale. His friend Eddi in his biography tells the story:-

COMMENTATOR: "A great gale blowing from the South-East, the swelling waves threw them on the unknown coast of the South Saxons. The sea left the ships and men, and retreating from the land, left the shore uncovered and retired into the depths of the abyss.

NARRATOR: And the heathen, coming with a great army, intended to seize the ships, to divide the spoil of money, to take them captives forthwith and to put to the sword those who resisted. To whom our great Bishop spoke gently and peaceable offering much money, wishing to redeem their souls".

Enter from one side  
ST. WILFRID, carrying a cross which he plants firmly in the ground; from the other, a ragged army who stand with spears poised. St. Wilfrid entreats them /in mime/ to put down their weapons. He points to the sky above and kneels to pray. His followers enter and support him.

COMMENTATOR: "But they with stern and cruel hearts like Pharaoh would not let the people of the Lord go, saying proudly that "All that the sea threw on the land became as much theirs as their own property".

The HEATHENS cry out  
"Surrender, surrender, all  
that you have is ours, is  
ours, is ours!"

NARRATOR: "And the idolatrous chief priest of  
the heathens, standing on a lofty  
mound, strove like Ballaam to curse the  
people of God, and to bind their hands  
by his magic arts".

COMMENTATOR: Then one of the Bishop's companions  
hurled, like David, a stone, blessed by  
all the people of God, which struck the  
cursing magician in the forehead and  
pierced his brain, whom an unexpected  
death surprised, as it did Goliath;  
falling back a corpse in sandy places.

This is acted in mime.  
The CHIEF PRIEST curses the  
people making mumbo-jumbo  
signs. A "stone" is found  
and blessed by St. Wilfrid  
with the sign of the Cross.  
It is thrown at the Chief  
Priest who collapses.

NARRATOR: "The heathen therefore, preparing to  
fight, vainly attacked the people of  
God. But the Lord fought for the few,  
even as Gideon by the command of the  
Lord, with 300 warriors slew at one  
attack 12,000 of the Midianites.

COMMENTATOR: And so the comrades of our holy Bishop,  
well-armed and brave, though few in  
number /they were 120 men, the number  
of the years of Moses/ determined and  
agreed that none should turn his back  
in flight from the other, but would  
wither win death with glory or life  
with victory. So St. Wilfrid with his  
clerk fell on his knees and lifting  
his hands to Heaven again sought help  
from the Lord his God. Thrice these  
few Christians repulsed the fierce and  
untamed heathen; routing them with  
great slaughter.

REPEAT IN MIME; The  
palaver of both sides  
each in circle round their  
chief. THREE ATTACKS are  
made and repulsed.

NARRATOR: Then did the great priest Wilfrid pray  
to the Lord again and the tide came in.  
And the rising sea covered with its  
waves the whole of the shore and  
floated the ships. And Wilfrid and  
his fellow-Christians sailed away,  
glorifying God, and with a south wind  
reached Sandwich, a harbour of safety".

MIME; WILFRID prays.  
Someone notices the rising  
tide and points off the  
stage to the floating ship.  
They CHEER and RUN OFF. Wilfrid  
blesses his enemies and follows.

NARRATOR:

That account was written by St. Wilfrid's friend, Edda. And it does not reflect much credit on our Saxon ancestors. Yet Wilfrid bore them no malice. He came again. And for the account of this second visit we are indebted to the Monk of Jarrow, the Venerable Bede; from whom, indeed, comes most of our knowledge of the period and of St. Wilfrid. He may even have heard of Sussex from St. Wilfrid himself. He is the first historian to mention the region, and that he tells us so much about the early history of the county suggests that its notoriety must have been considerable, for Jarrow was very far away, quite a week's march then in fact. St. Wilfrid, having obtained on his visit to Rome permission to appoint Bishops of his own choosing, returned to Northumbria and was imprisoned by Egfrid the King and Archbishop Theodore, who hadn't agreed with him. In 681 he was expelled from his Bishopric and exiled and it was then he came again to Sussex, where, as Bede says . . .

COMMENTATOR:

"He could not be restrained from preaching the Word of God".

NARRATOR:

He found the people of Seals-ey /or the Island of Seals/ at what must have been the lowest ebb of their historical existence. They were starving, famished by a prolonged drought, for no rain had fallen in that province for three years. A drought in those days /and indeed for centuries afterwards/ was one of the causes of a poor harvest and our ancestors depended on the harvest for their very survival.

COMMENTATOR:

But Bishop Wilfrid, by preaching to them, not only delivered them from the misery of perpetual damnation, but also from an inexhaustible calamity of temporal death. Very often forty or fifty men, being spent with want, would go together to some precipice or to the seashore and there, hand in hand, perish by the fall or be swallowed up by the waves.

STARVING and SUICIDAL population enter and MEN march as to the edge of a cliff, while WIVES try vainly to restrain them. Wilfrid, carrying fishing-nets and the Cross, enters and stops them.

NARRATOR:

With the consent of King Ethelwalch, he then baptised generals, soldiers, priests and everybody else. "Standing in the midst of the heathen", says Bede, "he told them to Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand".

MUSIC. "Turn back O man,  
forswear thy foolish ways"  
Gustav Holst. Songs of Praise  
329.

COMMENTATOR: Turn back, O man, forswear thy  
or SINGER: foolish ways.  
Old now is earth and none may count  
her days,  
Yet thou, her child, whose head is  
crowned with flame  
Still wilt not hear thine inner God  
proclaim -  
"Turn back, O man, forswear thy  
foolish ways!"

As WILFRID BLESSES his converts  
the SOUND OF RAIN is heard.  
The People kneeling, hold up  
their hands and praise God and  
Wilfrid.

NARRATOR: And Wilfrid, who had been sent as a  
fisher of men, taught the people of  
Selsey to fish in the sea for something  
better than eels.

COMMENTATOR: Come rise and follow me -  
Cast these nets into the sea.  
The Lord shall your needs provide  
With the incoming tide.

And they FOLLOW WILFRID  
OFF towards the sea.

COMMENTATOR: By this benefit the Bishop gained the  
affections of them all, and they  
began more readily at his preaching to  
hope for heavenly goods, seeing that by  
his help they had received those which  
are temporal.

NARRATOR: And Wilfrid seems to have been able to  
walk, or work, with kings, too, without  
losing the common touch. Ethelwalch,  
King of the South Saxons, received him  
hospitably in his palace - if that it  
can be called - at Selsey.

COMMENTATOR: To our revered prelate, who had brought  
us with the Gospel of Christ a new  
purpose in life, we grant the land  
enough for eighty-seven families in the  
place called Selesea which is in the  
island of the Sea-calf or seal. Bishop  
Wilfrid having this place given to him,  
founded therein a monastery which his  
successors possess to this day.

NARRATOR: So wrote the Venerable Bede. Naturally,  
the first act of Wilfrid would be the  
erection of a church or cathedral for  
his see, and of a habitation for his  
clergy. But no vestige of the church  
or cathedral which he must have founded  
remains. In the words of a Victorian  
poet -

COMMENTATOR: The sea now rolls in triumph o'er the  
ground  
Where once thy sacred edifice was  
reared.

NARRATOR: It certainly does. It is said that the foundations of the ancient cathedral are visible among the sands at low water: but where the saint and his clergy lived we do not know.

Building of first church  
and monastery - and raising  
of the Cross by WILFRID, MONKS  
and VILLAGERS, to the accompaniment  
of CHANTING and PLAINSONG /to be  
repeated down the ages/

NARRATOR: But Bishop Wilfrid was not to remain long. In the year 685 he was restored to his see at York and left his monastery and church not to return. So he who had been received with anger was let depart in tears.

COMMENTATOR: But the tears were not tears of wrath but of sorrow.

WILFRID and his friend, EDDI,  
and the CLERK carrying a Cross  
enter from one side, the men and  
women of Sussex from the other.  
They kneel, Wilfrid blesses them.  
They remain kneeling, many weeping  
and watch till he and his clerk  
disappear.

COMMENTATOR: He has gone like a ship to the sea.

NARRATOR: And left us with our Faith, the Faith  
he brought to our shore.

PAUSE - MUSIC as Wilfrid goes.  
The people remain kneeling until  
he disappears - then rise. EDDI  
lifts the Cross high and, chanting,  
half the crowd follows him off.

NARRATOR: The see remained vacant for about  
twenty years after Wilfrid's departure  
in 686 and there was a relapse into  
paganism.

The CHIEF DRUID appears and  
the rest of the crowd,  
debauched or lazy or just bored  
with being good, turn to him.  
EDDI and his followers reappear,  
and respective religions on  
opposite sides of the stage  
and gradually more and more of  
the people return to the Druids  
till Eddi is left alone.

COMMENTATOR: Kipling has written how Eddi, left  
alone,  
Held a midnight service all on his own.

During the poem an ox and an  
ass enter from R. & L. EDDI  
MIMES the action of the poem.  
Ox and ass walk off together.  
SAXONS watch the action and  
mock Eddi at the close of the  
poem.

COMMENTATOR: Eddi, priest of St. Wilfrid  
In his chapel at Manhood End  
Ordered a midnight service  
For such as cared to attend.  
But the Saxons were keeping Christmas  
And the night was stormy as well.  
Nobody came to service,  
Though Eddi rang the bell--

NARRATOR: "Wicked weather for walking"

COMMENTATOR: Said Eddi of Manhood End.

NARRATOR: "But I must go on with the service  
For such as care to attend".

COMMENTATOR: The altar-lamps were lighted -  
An old marsh-donkey came,  
Bold as a guest invited,  
And stared at the guttering flame.

The storm beat on at the windows,  
The water splashed on the floor,  
And a wet, yoke-weary bullock  
Pushed in through the open door.

NARRATOR: "How do I know what is greatest,  
How do I know what is least?  
That is my Father's business"

COMMENTATOR: Said Eddi, Wilfrid's priest,

NARRATOR: "But - three are gathered together -  
Listen to me and attend.  
I bring good news, my brethren!"

COMMENTATOR: Said Eddi of Manhood End.

And he told the Ox of a Manger  
And a Stall in Bethlehem,  
And he spoke to the Ass of a Rider  
That rode to Jerusalem.

They steamed and dripped in the chancel,  
They listened and never stirred,  
While, just as though they were Bishops,  
Eddi preached them the Word.

Till the gale blew off on the marshes  
And the windows showed the day,  
And the Ox and the Ass together  
Wheeled and clattered away.

And when the Saxons mocked him,  
Said Eddi of Manhood End

NARRATOR: "I dare not shut his Chapel  
On such as care to attend".

The country was absorbed into the  
rising kingdom of Wessex, and it  
wasn't until the year 709, when  
Edbricht became the first Bishop of  
Selsey after Wilfrid, that the pagans  
were finally routed and the Cross  
planted firmly in the soil of Selsey.  
Bishop followed Bishop, and Selsey was  
a flourishing centre with wealth, power  
and prestige. After Wilfrid the first  
Bishop was Edbricht and from 709 until  
after the Conquest there were about two



dozen of them - Edbright, Ella -

ACTION onstage - first  
Bishop enthroned in great  
splendour.

COMMENTATOR: Must we have a long list of names,  
Historian? With respect to their  
Lordships their names don't mean a  
thing to us now. Can't we get on to  
1066 and all that?

NARRATOR: Not so fast. I don't mind waiving the  
Bishops -

COMMENTATOR: Yes please. Wave them farewell, do.

NARRATOR: But we mustn't overlook the great  
strides in civilisation which were made  
from Anglo-Saxon till Norman times. Up  
to and including the complete conquest  
of Britain by William of Normandy, first  
the Saxons, then the Vikings, the  
Norsemen and the Danes, each inflicted  
on the other the miseries they had  
themselves suffered and but for  
Christianity we should still be ruled  
by gentlemen - or, of course, the  
descendants of gentlemen with names  
like Eric Bloodaxe, Harold Wartooth  
and Wolf the Unwashed.

#### TABLEAU

We owe our very existence to the Cross  
and that is not a pious statement,  
ladies and gentlemen, but a hard fact  
of history. Our conquered island  
absorbed her conquerors when, in the  
words of G.K. Chesterton in his Ballad  
of the White Horse:

COMMENTATOR: The Northmen came about our land  
A Christless chivalry;  
Who knew not of the arch or pen,  
Great, beautiful half-witted men  
From the sunrise and the sea.  
Misshapen ships stood on the deep  
Full of strange gold and fire  
And hairy men, as huge as sin  
With horned heads came wading in  
Through the long low sea-mire.

NARRATOR: We have no record that any example of  
that vivid picture took place here, as  
well it might have done, but we do know  
from the pages of the Anglo-Saxon  
Chronicle that a Danish army, repulsed  
from Exeter, harried the South Saxons  
near Chichester in 895 and were put to  
flight by the citizens and many of their  
ships taken. Another account informs  
us that a fleet of Danes had sailed  
from East Anglia, disembarked in  
Devonshire, and were routed by King  
Alfred when they tried to plunder  
Chichester. How can we doubt, then,  
that Alfred the Great was known to the  
people of Selsey?

COMMENTATOR: There was not English armour left  
Nor any English thing  
When Alfred came to Athelney  
To be an English king.



WOMAN: You remind me of my great-grandmother.

NARRATOR: I've no doubt that your great-grandmother was a most estimable lady, but what on earth had she to do with it?

WOMAN: She once saw outside a Victorian school a placard advertising the place as an "Academy for Young Ladies, the Daughters of Gentlemen only"

COMMENTATOR: What, no mothers?

WOMAN: You get the point. There's hope for you. Women in the Dark Ages! Poor things! Here are three of them. One is Emma, Queen of King Canute. She and her ladies made vestments and embroidered in cloth of gold and silver.

Churn, churn the milk in the drum  
As in Kingdom past so in Kingdom come.  
Honour these hands that mended and made,  
Hands that the will of God obeyed,  
That made and mended not maimed nor  
The gold wheat garnered, the honey  
jarred.

Rock, rock the cradle in faith,  
A boy is born in defiance of death  
Serf or slave, no lord is he  
Mother of God, no lady she/  
The women will glean where the corn  
  was sown,  
And the grass grow green on her grave  
  unknown.

Weave, weave the song unsung  
Of the hands of a queen long dead when  
Cloth she wove of a golden sheen, young,  
/Quietly working sits the queen/  
And her fingers will speak in golden  
Of peace triumphant when war is dead. thread

NARRATOR: And now we come to William the Conqueror: William the Bastard who smote us into greatness. Why was William illegitimate? Well, this is the perfectly true story of how it all began.

On mention of William I  
Enter WILLIAM, crowned; or  
knight bearing royal arms on  
a banner. He remains standing  
till "feast of Pecamp" when he  
exits.

ACTION on stage -  
poem is MIMED;

COMMENTATOR: Robert, Duke of Normandy on a summer  
morning  
Was riding near his capital, the town  
of Falaise  
When he saw a pretty girl washing linen  
in a stream  
And he begged her to come to his castle  
at Falaise.

WOMAN: "I will only come by daylight and riding  
on a palfrey,  
And I want the drawbridge lowered and a  
room prepared for me,  
Arlette is my name" she said  
"I'm a master tanner's daughter".

COMMENTATOR: But Arlette the mother of the  
Conqueror was to be.

WOMAN: Arlette, Arlette, what a pretty name!  
Arlette was the mother of our Conqueror  
to be.

COMMENTATOR: How very different  
Our history would have been,  
If she had stayed indoors that day  
And done a bit of spinning, say,  
Instead of washing linen  
In a stream!

NARRATOR: We pass on to 1066 and all that.  
When, I wonder, in August 1066, did our  
ancestors here in Selsey become aware  
of William and his 7000 men; his  
Norman knights clad in long coats of  
ring mail and helmets with steel nose  
pieces, armed with lances and swords,  
mounted on powerful chargers /Harold  
had none/ and preceded by archers and  
crossbowmen greatly superior to those of  
Harold. In four years William had  
conquered and occupied the whole of  
England. Only West Wales held out for  
another ten years. We in Sussex had  
"had it" before William was crowned at  
Westminster at Christmas 1066, and  
built the first Tower of London to show  
that he meant business. Within three  
months of his Coronation and six months  
after his landing, he was in complete  
control. And William was not only  
powerful - he was pious - according to  
his lights. His invasion had the full  
authority of the Pope. He had marched  
up to meet Harold behind a consecrated  
banner, and he was followed by chanting  
priests to the battle. On Whitsunday  
1068, William's Duchess, Matilda, was  
crowned in Westminster Abbey. Matilda  
had every reason to be grateful to  
Lanfranc, the great Archbishop of  
Canterbury, who had got the Pope's  
permission for her marriage to William.  
But Lanfranc did something which made  
him very unpopular indeed with the  
inhabitants of Selsey, who basked in the  
glamour and prosperity attendant on a  
Bishop's Court - self-important, smug  
and reasonably pious.

ACTION on stage,  
comings and goings of  
messengers, etc.

In London in 1075 his Council provided  
that the Bishops of Lichfield, Selsey  
and Sherborne should move their seats  
to Chester, Chichester and Salisbury.  
This was implementing a decree of the  
Pontiffs forbidding Episcopal sees to

exist in country places, and followed the lead of a move to Exeter by the Bishop of Crediton. We can be sure our Selsey ancestors didn't like it - all that is, but Stigand, the last Bishop of Selsey and first of Chichester.

Enter an extra-splendid KING'S MESSENGER, who faces us, and hostile population, and READS from a SCROLL.

COMMENTATOR:

M'Lord the Bishop, clerks in holy orders, lay clerks, nobles, freemen, cottars, villeins and serfs, and all whom it may concern - In accordance with decrees of our Sovereign Pontiff Damasus /Who's he?/ and our Sovereign Pontiff Leo. /Never heard of him!/ and of the Councils of Sardica and Laodices /Boo-oo!/ it is forbidden for Episcopal Sees now to exist in country places /Shame!/ It is therefore commanded by our Sovereign Lord Duke William's kingly munificence /Parley-vous, parley vous!/ and the authority of the Synod /What's that?/ for our servant Stigand, Bishop of Selsey to remove to Chichester and there to build a cathedral in honour of St. Peter. Hic edicto Regis Willelmi Bastard /Loud jeers/ Conquestoris Anglii. /Boo!/ On the day of Pentecost in the year of our Lord 1070. Rex spud Windesoram /Talk English can't you!/. The King at Windsor creates Stigand Bishop Suth Saxonum /Eh?/ Bishop of the South Saxons /That's us - no it ain't, we're all Normans now. Here's to good old William, parley-vous/ SILENCE or I'll have all your right feet cut off.

MESSENGER rolls up his scroll and walks off with as much dignity as he can command. Rage and consternation of POPULATION - BISHOP and his COURT depart and the 1st RECTOR takes his place.

NARRATOR:

And now all the glory and glamour of Selsey was swallowed up in Chichester and the seat of power was the beautiful Cathedral which Bishop Luff started to build in 1091 and which remains to this day. We can well imagine, though, how bitter this must have been for our ancestors in Selsey, and the many and acrimonious discussions which must have taken place. Perhaps there might have been a crumb of comfort in the fact that it is possible that Selsey may have made a real contribution to the fame and glory of Chichester Cathedral if - as many people believe - the magnificent wall-carvings in the South Aisle are Saxon and came from the See's first Cathedral - Wilfrid's in Selsey! But this is by no means certain, and back in 1070 Selsey "towering in her pride of place" as the Cathedral town

and seat of the Bishops, was reduced and humbled, almost overnight as you might say, to an insignificant fishing village. "How are the mighty fallen!"

ACTION on stage -  
BELL tolls - villagers  
and squire /& son/ and  
wife assemble, rector  
takes up position.  
At the end of the service and  
before poem - villagers  
disperse leaving Baron  
and son.

For close on 800 years Selsey appears to have been pretty well "out of the world" - just one of the hundreds of villages set like jewels in "England's green and pleasant land". But Selsey was not entirely forgotten. In 1085 the great historic document, the Domesday Book, had been compiled in one year. Selsey is mentioned in Domesday. The entry states that the Bishop of Selsey /or Chichester/ holds Selsey as his domain and lets out parts to tenants. On the Bishop's home farm were two teams of 8 oxen each, 16 villeins - or tenants of the manor - valued at £12/ 11 cottagers and 2 serfs or slaves. And we can be reasonably sure that the village enjoyed a measure of peace and prosperity when it was ruled over by such Squires as Kipling's Norman Baron.

COMMENTATOR: "My son," said the Norman Baron, "I am dying, and you will be heir  
To all the broad acres in England that  
William gave me for share  
When we conquered the Saxon at Hastings,  
and a nice little handful it is  
But before you go over to rule it, I  
want you to understand this:-

"The Saxon is not like us Normans. His manners are not so polite.  
But he never means anything serious till he talks about justice and right.  
When he stands like an ox in the furrow with his sullen set eyes on your own,  
And grumbles "This isn't fair dealing!"  
my son, leave the Saxon alone.

"You can horsewhip your Gascony archers,  
or torture your Picardy sp ears;  
But don't try that game on the Saxon;  
you'll have the whole brood round  
your ears.

From the richest old Thane in the county  
to the poorest chained serf in the  
field,

They'll be at you and on you like  
hornets, and if you are wise you  
will yield.

But first you must master their language,  
their dialect, proverbs and songs.  
Don't trust any clerk to interpret when  
they come with the tale of their  
wrongs.

Let them know that you know what they're  
saying; let them feel that you know  
what to say.  
Yes, even when you want to go hunting,  
hear 'em out if it takes you all day.

"They'll drink every hour of the daylight,  
and poach every hour of the dark.  
It's the sport, not the rabbits they're  
after /we've plenty of game in the  
park/  
Don't hang them or cut off their fingers  
That's wasteful as well as unking,  
For a hard-bitten, South Country poacher  
ma kes the best man-at-arms you can  
find.

"Appear with your wife and the children  
at their weddings and funerals and  
feasts.

Be polite but not friendly to Bishops;  
be good to all poor parish priests.  
Say "we" "us" and "ours" when you're  
talking, instead of "you fellows" and  
"I".

Don't ride over seeds; keep your temper;  
and never you tell 'em a lie!"

NARRATOR:

There were, moreover, plenty of  
pa rochial pleasures and domestic  
comedies and tragedies.

VILLAGERS begin to gather and  
TOWN CRIER enters.

COMMENTATOR:

In the year of our Lord 1125, Henry I.  
King of England by the grace of God,  
Grants to Seffrid Bishop of Chichester  
the privilege of a Fair to be held in  
Selsey annually on the Even of St.  
Lawrence the Martyr for 3 days.

LOUD CHEERS.

PROCESSION of tumblers, etc.  
led by AUTOLYCUS - type  
figure - Lord of Manor and  
Lady honour Fair - Constable  
Dull in evidence, also rector,  
villagers, etc. Men bring in  
MAYPOLE, set it up near Cross.  
Children DANCE.

NARRATOR:

At the close of the 12th Century was  
built the second and lasting church to  
replace St. Wilfrid's drowned cathedral.

CHOIR - Summer is i-cumen in.  
WRESTLING  
HUCKSTERS  
COUNTRY DANCE

Time passed. Things were seldom as  
they should have been. There was  
poaching in the Manor Park and the  
first whisper of smuggling at Selsey.  
Sports and high jinks ran riot; so  
much so that in 1363 a Royal Proclam-  
ation was issued which read as follows:

Re-enter KING'S  
MESSENGER, who reads

COMMENTATOR:

Royal Proclamation of 1363  
Football, throwing the hammer, handball, Club ball, queue or hopscotch are to give way to the all important sport of archery. Wrestling has of late given much trouble to coroners owing to fatal bouts, and chess has of late been noxious inordinate and dishonest in the playing thereof. On no account is wrestling to be practised in the churchyard, nor the holding of dances or base or dishonest games which provoke lasciviousness. Above all, we forbid the holding of numerous scot-ales or church-ales in the church, and church-ales drinkings in aid of the fabric in the church and churchyard must be conducted in a seemly manner.

NARRATOR:

One cannot resist a certain sympathy for both parties. On the one hand was the Court with its passion for proclamations, Bishop William Rede nobly rebuilding and repairing Selsey church, and the Lord of the Manor being equally attentive to the stocks and the ducking-stool -

STOCKS, DUCKING STOOL and PILLORY brought in and set up. Two men hauled out of country dance, brought before J.P. /Squire/ and punished.

- and on the other the people of Sussex refusing to be "druv" and using the churchyard and even the church for spiritous as well as spiritual purposes on occasion. At Selsey, as in most of our country churches, lie the rich merchants and Lords of the Manor, men like John Lewes whose tomb is in the chapel here at Church Norton. But the Court had often less respect for the Lord of the Manor, the Bishop and the Squire than for the common folk. "Be polite but not friendly to bishops", says Kipling with his unerring intuition as we have heard. The Crown could be ruthless. Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries and his daughter Elizabeth, who had much of Old Harry in her, pounced on the Manor of Selsey and took it over. One did not argue with the monarch in Tudor and Elizabethan days. There was little on the menu for those who did but a choice between a chop and a stake. The Monarch was not Constitutional - he or she was the Constitution. Elizabeth the First never left England - she had enough to do to guard her. And of all the tides of invasion that have washed and washed again our Heaven-protected shores, none - till our own day - equalled the one which she had to face. The little scene which we imagine enacted, as no doubt it was, by boys of Drake's day, will need no setting in words.



A BOY dressed as Drake prepares to bowl. Another stops him and points seawards. Drake bowls /mime/. Others join him.

Yes, of course, the Spanish Armada. It was the first great scare since the reality of the Conquest. The Armada consisted of about 120 huge, top-heavy stately Spanish galleons. They were military transports rather than ships of war, and even if they had evaded the British fleet, and mastered tides unknown, Elizabeth had an army of 20,000 men mobilised. These were the words she used to her troops at Tilbury .....

WOMAN:

"My loving people, we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed now we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom; and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which, rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know, already for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and we do assure you, in the word of a prince they shall be duly paid you."

NARRATOR:

Nevertheless, the Armada, sailing up the Channel in a huge crescent moon, intending to force a landing on the Essex coast, must have presented a formidable and alarming appearance as she cruised eastwards at the mercy of wind and tide.

In 1587, the year before the rout of the Armada, the Selsey peninsula was surveyed with a view to fortification. The report said the lands near Selsey

COMMENTATOR:

"Have need of Trenches or Flanckers artificially found to be reared in most convenient partes for small shotts".

NARRATOR:

And at the moment the Armada was sighted a couple were being married in Sidlesham church.

PROCESSION and TABLEAU. A couple are married by a priest. They leave the church and see the distant ships, in which they are less interested than in each other.

NARRATOR: That day a Spanish galleon was wrecked off West Wittering. Her name was Cartegena, and from the timbers the couple or their children built a house and named it Carthagenia.

TROOPS muster. VILLAGERS gather to see them off.

NARRATOR: A strange sight must have greeted that young couple as they emerged from the church, and beheld units of the Armada half hidden in the smoke of battle, as Drake bore down on them under a press of canvas; while all along the coast, pikemen and musketeers, regular soldiers and the Home Guard of the day, marched eastward alongside the Spanish fleet sailing to a rendezvous at Calais, where they faced fireships and final disaster.

Return of the TROOPS.  
General rejoicing. CHILD dressed as ELIZABETH I enters and knights BOY DRAKE while DANCERS go into action and FAIR gets under weigh again.

COMMENTATOR: To matchwood and driftwood half the great Armada came,  
"God blew and they were scattered"  
/England made no other claim/  
By tides and tempests shattered; by shot and fireships burned,  
Yet however bruised and battered proudly half to Spain returned,  
Over sixty-nine proud ships were lost, six thousand men had died,  
But the rest - their eyes were lit with fire, their heads held high in pride.

INTERVAL.

COMMENTATOR: James the First /1603-1625/. The French called him "The Wisest Fool in Christendom". His humour was coarse but genuine. His personal habits and appearance were unattractive. He disliked tobacco and when travelling on the Underground always went into a non-smoker -

NARRATOR: Thank you, Commentator. Your local colour of the period is unreliable. We are concerned with James I for two reasons only - the Authorised Version of the Bible - his greatest achievement - and his support of the Drama. He was not a devout reader of Shakespeare as his son Charles I became, but the complete plays, in the First Folio, were not published until 1623, two years before his death and seven years after Shakespeare's -

COMMENTATOR: And what did the people of Selsey know of Shakespeare in 1606? The year when Elizabeth Egley -

NARRATOR: Of course, yes, I was forgetting. Twice in the same year - makr that, gentles all - one Elizabeth Egley, the wife of a churchwarden /mark that too/ was ducked in the sea in Selsey parish ducking stool as a common scold. Before this year, 1606, Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew had been written and produced. Of Katherine the Shrew, Petruchio says "I know she is an irksome, brawling scold". Note that word "brawling", gentles all. One can only brawl in a church. Is it not possible that Shakespeare had heard of Elizabeth Egley?

COMMENTATOR: Most unlikely.

NARRATOR:      You'd prick the bubble of my fair  
  conceit . .  
Which i' the bright and balmy Selsey air  
The truth reflects. Behold her as she's  
  ta'en  
Down to the hungry and unweary sea  
To be immersed for the second time!

COMMENTATOR: Think you that will suffice?

ELIZABETH is dragged on.  
Audience boos. She  
scowls and puts her tongue  
out at them.

NARRATOR: I doubt it.  
She has been warned that if again she  
dare  
Henpeck her lawful spouse, she shall be  
ducked  
But once more only, when bubbles mighty  
fine

Shall be seen rising upwards through the  
brine.

The wife who can't behave  
Deserves a watery grave.

ELIZABETH is  
dragged off seawards  
and ducked.

NARRATOR: Selsey can boast of one of the earliest  
references in history to the noble game  
of cricket. The following incident  
occurred at the Arundel Quarter Sessions  
in 1647.

JUDGE of the period  
sitting. MARGARET  
AND in the witness  
box.

WOMAN: Yes, m'lord. My brother Henry Brand  
received a wound in the head inflicted  
by the prisoner, Thomas Hatter of the  
parish of Selsey. Shortly afterwards he  
died - my brother, not the prisoner.

COMMENTATOR: With what implement did your brother say  
the wound was inflicted?

WOMAN: A crickets bat, m'lord.

COMMENTATOR: Ah yes. Crickets has been played for the  
past ten years, I am informed; by the  
scholars of Winchester School. Crickets  
would seem to be likely to rival, if not  
out-rival, morrice dancing, cudgel-  
playing, stool-ball, and many other idle  
and lascivious sports. Nevertheless, the  
nature of the implement used in this  
bucolic and bawdy pastime is immaterial;  
the wound was fatal, that is enough.  
There are, however, mitigating circum-  
stances connected with this case. After  
the luncheon interval I will pronounce  
sentence. The court is adjourned.

HE rises, bows to  
the court and leaves  
with MARGARET;  
HORSES' HOOVES approaching  
and fading.

NARRATOR: In 1696 - Pagham Harbour was declared  
Crown Property - after many proposals  
for the enclosure and reclamation of  
same - one argument in favour being the  
prevention of SMUGGLING.

COMMENTATOR: "Until the younger Pitt reduced the high  
duties" writes G.M. Trevelyan in his  
English Social History "the scale on  
which smuggling was carried on was  
prodigious. In 1784 Pitt calculated  
that 13 million pounds of tea were  
consumed in the Kingdom of which only  
5½ million had paid duty". As Kipling  
has written -

HORSES & RIDERS cross  
stage and exit.

WOMAN: : Five and twenty ponies  
Trotting through the dark -  
Brandy for the Parson  
Baccy for the Clerk:  
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,  
Watch the wall, my darling, while the  
Gentlemen go by!

NARRATOR: Smuggling, like poaching, was the  
sporting hazard of the day, and when  
practised without violence added cash  
and colour to a drab life. In Sussex  
and the South as much wool was smuggled  
out of the country as tea and spirits  
were smuggled into it. But that was  
big scale stuff. Small scale trans-  
actions had even the benefit of clergy.  
"Brandy for the parson" no doubt, and  
more often tea. Let us quote what that  
truly good and respectable man Parson  
Woodforde recorded in his diary on  
March the 29th 1777.

PARSON WOODFORDE, in his  
nightgown and nightcap,  
enters yawning and carrying  
a lighted candle. A low  
whistle sound /off/. ANDREWS  
the smuggler enters below. He  
carries a large bag of tea.  
Woodforde blows out candle and  
opens the window /mime/. He puts  
his finger to his lips and leans  
out. Bargaining ensues and the  
tea is bartered for money and  
a bottle of gin.

COMMENTATOR: "Andrews the smuggler brought me this  
night about 11 o'clock a bag of Hyson  
Tea 6 pound weight. He frightened us  
a little by whistling under the parlour  
window just as we were going to bed.  
I gave him some Geneva and paid him for  
the tea at 10/6 per pound".

Hyson, in case you are as ignorant as me  
is a sort of green Chinese tea,  
Like Twanki which is the same,  
Hence came pantomime the Widow ..or..  
Dame.

Cue for song and dance?

NARRATOR: No thankee, this isn't a pantomime.  
The fact is that not only were Holland  
and France equally guilty of smuggling  
but our own magistrates and officers  
of seaport towns were too, and only  
when violence was involved and people  
got murdered did reaction set in. For  
instance a year after two innocent men  
named Galley and Chater had been  
foully murdered, seven of the murderers  
were tried at Chichester on January  
16th 1749 and all found guilty and  
sentenced to be hanged on the following  
day. They were taken in a cart to a  
place called the Broyle near Chichester..

A CART containing seven  
men, bound and manacled  
passes across.

NARRATOR:

... and executed in the presence of a vast concourse of spectators. The body of one of the smugglers was hung in chains close to the scene of poor Galley's resting place, on the roadside near Rake; another on Rook's Hill near Chichester, and two others on the sea-shore near Selsey Bill, from whence they could be seen at a great distance and where they had often landed their goods.

But we are indebted to Miss Denman for a lighter note on which to end the Selsey smuggling story. She well remembers a nice old man named Mant whose grandfather had been prevailed upon to bury some kegs of brandy in his garden and plant cabbages over the spot. The Preventive Men were not allowed to disturb growing plants. No doubt this practice was common elsewhere.

Enter MANT'S GRAND-  
FATHER with a keg of  
brandy on his head,  
and on the top two or  
three cabbages.

COMMENTATOR:

For the English kitchen garden  
Is worthy of respect,  
For who beneath the cabbages  
Would contraband suspect?

If cabbages were camouflage  
To hide our Selsey bales,  
We can be sure that even more  
Were brandy "leeks" in Wales.

DRUMS - "Boney was a  
warrior" - sung off.

NARRATOR:

Boney was a warrior indeed; as a  
master of war the greatest ever. As a  
man,

COMMENTATOR:

"He remains" said H.A.L. Fisher, writing  
in 1912, "the great modern example of  
that reckless and defiant insolence  
which formed the matter of ancient  
tragedy and is at war with the  
harmonies of human life".

NARRATOR:

Nelson, in 1805, put paid to his dream  
of invasion of our shores once and for  
all. But it was no dream in 1803 and 4.  
His enormous army of over 200,000 men  
collected at the Channel ports was  
plain to see: so were his 1500 flat-  
bottomed boats at Boulogne - not nearly  
enough but still a formidable array.

COMMENTATOR:

Rumour begat rumour. Warning beacons  
were fired when nothing but a laden  
fishing fleet was descried through the  
morning mist and the silver of fish  
scales was mistaken for the flash of  
the sun on bayonets. And, of course,  
Napoleon the Corsican Ogre was a monster  
incarnate. As Thomas Hardy has it in  
The Dynasts -

WOMAN:

I can tell you a word or two on't. It is about his victuals. They say that he lives upon human flesh, and has rashers of baby every morning for breakfast. He should have the washing of 'em a few times; I warrant 'e wouldn't want to eat babies any more.

NARRATOR:

It would seem much to the military credit of Selsev that the Selsey Volunteers were formed as early as 1798.

DRUMS.

COMMENTATOR:

Captain Soutor, Lieut. Copis, Sergeants Jones and Woodman. One corporal, two drummers and 36 privates. During the year Ensign Rusbridge was commissioned and there were 8 drummers. The number of privates rose to 85. The unit lapsed in 1802, but was revived in 1803 when Sergeant Woodman got his commission and 2nd Lieut. Charles Denby joined.

A ROLL OF DRUMS. The VOLUNTEERS march on: some in uniform carrying replicas of long-barrelled rifles: some in mufti, with badges on their arms and carrying pikes. They are a "fine body of men" and soldierly. The Sergeant halts the squad, stands the men at ease and brings them to attention when SOUTAR enters and inspects them. The Captain marches them off and follows them off, marching at ease and singing with orchestra and choir the following contemporary song.

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Bonaparty:  
If he won't sail, lest the wind should  
blow!  
We shall have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty:  
If he be sea-sick, say "No, no!"  
We shall have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty:  
Never mind, mates, we'll be merry -  
though  
We may have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

NARRATOR:

And march for nothing they did, which was just as well for Napoleon, for the Selsey Volunteers were not along, and the whole country would have risen to resist and destroy him. Tides of invasion must ebb as well as flow.

SUSSEX VOICE: What about that dratted Pagham harbour?

COMMENTATOR: You may well ask!

SUSSEX VOICE: They've been at it for well over 300 years, enclosing it here and draining it there, but the sea allus wins!

COMMENTATOR: Why should the sea always win? Is there any really good reason why most of Pagham Harbour should not be reclaimed and cows replace sea-horses?

SUSSEX VOICE: I shouldn't care to be one of them cows, that I wouldn't.

COMMENTATOR: I know in Selsey it's an endless struggle against the sea, but there's one body of men who don't let the sea win all the time, and that's the crew of our lifeboat, the Canadian Pacific. They're all fishermen and always have been. Allow me to introduce you to our Cox and a young friend.

Enter COX with SMALL BOY who carries a model of a lifeboat. He runs it down the ramp.

SUSSEX VOICE: Faster than that, Jimmy. At high water the boat should enter the sea at about 17 m.p.h.

CHILD: If the water's low the boat must hit the sea with a bump!

SUSSEX VOICE: It does, and it may shake the crew, but a big splash does no harm to the boat.

CHILD: Mr. Cox, how long has our lifeboat been going?

SUSSEX VOICE: About 100 years, rather more. The R.N.L.I.....

CHILD: What's that?

SUSSEX VOICE: The Royal National Lifeboat Institution. They gave us our first lifeboat, and the Society of Friends the necessary £180 for it. It was 35 feet long and it rowed 12 oars. Our present boat, the "Canadian Pacific" needs only a crew of eight, but she can take 70 people aboard, and in a rough sea too.

CHILD: I bet she cost more than £180 to build.

SUSSEX VOICE: She did that, exactly £8,234 more. And she's only one of many fine diesel-engined boats with a wheelhouse and a cabin and much else. Most lifeboats are built in the Isle of Wight by J. Samuel White and Co.Ltd., at Cowes; but some, now, by William Osborn at Littlehampton. Indeed, Sussex can claim to be the home of the lifeboat industry. But we in Selsey are only one of 150 lifeboat stations all along the coast line of Great Britain.

CHILD: Mr. Cox, has the R.N.L.I. saved many lives since it started?



SUSSEX VOICE: Yes, Jimmy, about 8,500.

CHILD: 8,500! Ph-ew: that's a lot.

SUSSEX VOICE: Of course, some stations rescue more lives than others because of where they are, the nature of the coast line, and the danger of rock and tide. The Cornish, for instance, and St. Ives in particular. But lifeboats are not always rescuing the crews and passengers of ships in distress. They take off sick and injured seamen and others, or take out doctors to deal with emergencies or do quite modest services like rescuing bathers. Why, only on July 28th last year the "Canadian Pacific" was launched at 9 p.m. and took the dinghy "Fame" in tow with two young men aboard, two miles east of Selsey Bill. And lifeboats do humdrum but necessary jobs like escorting fishing boats in heavy seas, and answering calls from say, the Owers Light ship here at Selsey. Once, in October 1933 it was, there was a call from the Owers in a gale, to come to the rescue of the crew of a Greek cargo boat carrying granite. In the searchlights she was seen to be sinking with her funnels leaning over the side. The bowman threw a rope, but the panicking crew didn't secure it properly and when they tried to get over the side of the boat they all fell in a heap - fortunately into the lifeboat. The captain and the crew of eight were all rescued, and that was only eight of the 253 lives rescued by Selsey lifeboats over the years out of 349 launches on service. I am not boasting, Jimmy, many stations have done much more, but I don't think it's anything to be ashamed of. And now, would you like to meet some members of my crew?

CHILD: Yes, please.

Enter members of the crew. They gather round Cox and boy and go off. Boy leaves the lifeboat model on stage and comes back to fetch it. During the above -

NARRATOR: As Sir Winston Churchill said of the R.N.L.I. in 1942, at the centenary of its foundation ...

COMMENTATOR: ...It drives on with a mercy that does not quail in the presence of death; it drives on as a proof, a symbol, a testimony, that man is created in the image of God, and that valour and virtue have not perished in the British race.

NARRATOR: But as the centuries, like the sea, have rolled endlessly on, and the people fail to recognise the saints of today working by their side, so they have tended to forget the Giver and "Maker

of all things near and far" and they pay him, at best, lip-homage at the great Festivals. And of course it wasn't made any easier here by the fact that by the middle of the nineteenth century Selsey Village had grown up - two and a half miles away from its Parish Church.

A CHURCH BELL. Enter from L. Preb.H.Foster. He looks at his watch, crosses and looks off, shakes his head and goes back into church. A few parishioners of different social classes enter R. They are tired and dishevelled after walking for two miles. They sit, mop their brows and try to compose themselves. A child begins to cry.

COMMENTATOR: Why is that child crying?

WOMAN: Can you wonder, poor little mite.

The CHILD HOWLS.

COMMENTATOR: He does not appear to be ordering himself lowly and reverently in the company of his betters, or with sufficient self-restraint. Nor do they, for that matter, appear to be in that state of composed spiritual anticipation meet and right in those about to enter a place of worship.

EXEUNT CONGREGATION to Church.

WOMAN:/laughing/ Yes, that's just the way they talked. All the same, we must remember that that pathetic apology for a congregation has walked two miles or more to this windswept site with the prospect of walking two miles more to get back home. I don't suppose that the memory of the Sunday trudges of his early years will make that child want to go to church when he's grown up? Credit that little band deserves - credit in abundance. Something will have to be done about it.

NARRATOR: And something was done about it. Almost exactly a hundred years ago, on July 1st 1864, a fateful Parish Vestry Meeting took place under the Rector, a glimpse of whom we've already had, Prebendary H. Foster. But what made that possible? Well ...

REV.FOSTER comes in and sits dejectedly at a table, his head in his hands.

...You see before you a man in the depths of Job-ian gloom and dejection. How can a church take up its pews and walk? The clouds are big enough but are they big with promise? Will they break with blessings on our poor Prebendary's head? He prays less for

pounds than for patience.

COMMENTATOR: Thou knowest what we can't afford  
We can but pray instead,  
It is for lack of patience Lord,  
That we are in the red.

NARRATOR: And then the Prebendary has an idea for  
a petition - an idea so obvious he  
wonders he hadn't thought of it before.

COMMENTATOR: Lord, Lord, Thou knowest that there is  
one  
/An angel to be frank/  
With the will to see Thy will be done  
With - er - bullion in the bank.

NARRATOR: And scarcely has this thought escaped  
from his lips than there's a ring at  
the rectory door.

A DOOR BELL RINGS; A  
MAID comes in and whispers  
to the Rector. He shouts  
"Mrs. Vernon-Harcourt!" and  
leaps to his feet. The maid  
announces "Mrs. Vernon-Harcourt"  
from the door and she sweeps  
in. She is a regal lady plainly  
dressed in the fashion of the  
period. The rector bows over  
her hand and ushers her to a chair.  
They converse, and Mrs. Vernon-  
Harcourt opens her reticule and  
hands the Rector a cheque. He  
rubs his brow and glances upward,  
muttering with clasped hands, while  
Mrs. Vernon-Harcourt tactfully  
looks elsewhere. She rises, they  
shake hands, he escorts her to  
the door and goes out with her.

NARRATOR: The Parish Vestry Meeting on July 1st  
1864, attended by only eight persons  
/and the Rector/ must have been a  
joyful occasion indeed.

RE-ENTER the RECTOR, who  
mimes the following narration  
where appropriate.

We can imagine with what pleasure he  
produced Mrs. Vernon-Harcourt's cheque,  
and with what conviction he said

COMMENTATOR: "My friends, we are not going merely to  
pull the old church down we are going  
to build it up again on a site within  
reach of the congregation. . . There has  
already been an outcry from antiquaries  
of the baser sort, but praise God, they  
are few who would prefer to see our fine  
old Early English church lapse into ruin  
sooner than move it. I discovered such  
a one in the church only yesterday. He  
was making notes and sketching; a highly  
suspicious combination of activities.  
He had a magnifying glass.

Enter an ANTIQUARIAN.  
He looks rather like  
Sherlock Holmes in his cape.

He had not removed his cap. This furnished me with an excuse to speak to him. With a singular lack of reverence he tossed his cap into a pew and proceeded to point out some masons' marks, alleging that if the church were moved - in his view an act of vandalism - the marks could not be said any longer to apply.

BUSINESS as ABOVE

I pointed out that by law we may not remove a chancel, to which I regret to say he replied "Thank God for that". He said he had rather the church become a noble ruin open to what he called, with an ignorance appropriate to his kind "the dayspring from on high", than a removed and restored edifice sacred only in name. I pointed out that a church without a congregation is precisely that. He produced a list of signatures protesting against the removal.

BUSINESS

It was little use my pointing out that every good thing in the way of fittings found in the old church will be retained in the new, including the old font which, so tradition holds, was taken out of the old cathedral before it had "gone to sea". "Gone to sea" he said "I'd rather the place went to pot than see it uprooted and replanted to suit the needs of a lazy and lubberly congregation of vandals". We stood chin to chin, gentlemen, engaged in mutual recrimination which I most sincerely now regret.

BUSINESS on stage.

Finally he stumped out leaving his cap behind. I regret to add that I threw it after him as he left. I was so exhausted by this encounter, gentlemen, that I fell asleep in the bishop's chair. And it seemed to me that some words which I cannot recall came to my memory in praise of those mediaeval masons in whose hands these stones -

WOMAN:

.. Were tried and wrought to fitness  
In scorn of fire and sword  
And stand to bear the witness  
Of men who praised the Lord.

A mediaeval MASON enters  
and follows with his eyes  
the action of the words.

Of wealth and fame and power  
These masons did not know  
"Let's build" they said "a tower  
Square to the winds that blow".

So came each beam and rafter,  
Each winged flight of stone;  
Their deathless work lives after,  
Their names were never known.

Here, for a workman's wages  
This glass so surely stained  
Down the long aisles of ages  
In glory has remained.

As brother works with brother  
The glaziers worked to paint  
The blue robe of the Mother,  
The red robe of a saint.

Proud heads lie here disowning  
All but a dropping Head;  
Whole hands worked here atoning  
For open Hands that bled.  
Full hearts and living voices  
A broken Heart proclaim,  
Life after death rejoices  
And after silence, fame.

The MASON has stood looking at  
the sleeping figure in the  
chair. He dips a handkerchief  
in the /imaginary/ font and  
bathes the parson's forehead.  
He then goes out.

COMMENTATOR: "I awoke refreshed: I had almost said  
regenerated. I had had a strange dream.  
I must tell you about it sometime...  
Well, gentlemen, I feel sure you will  
agree that we shall by this means have  
the best of both worlds. We shall have  
the old church in a new place, and the  
living stones shall rise again as they  
have done in the past and the present."

MUSIC.

NARRATOR: And so the old Selsey Church was rebuilt  
on its present site and reconsecrated  
on April 12th 1866.

CARTS CARRYING blocks  
of stone in replica begin to  
pass across accompanied by  
villagers and workmen.

ACTION CONTINUES.

NARRATOR: Everybody lent a hand - and a cart if  
they had one! If not - a wheelbarrow,  
a go-cart, a pony-trap or a donkey with  
baskets slung across its back. The  
strange collection of vehicles might  
remind a present-day spectator of a  
motley fleet which sailed to Dunkirk on  
another great rescue operation - of  
bodies then - of souls in 1865.

ACTION of rebuilding of  
church accompanied by choir  
singing original 8th century  
chant.

ACTION culminates in projection  
of church on back-cloth. The  
Cross is illuminated again and  
the Church re-dedicated and re-  
consecrated.

Contemporary account of same?

HYMN SUNG by all - led by

Rev. Foster.

Congregation disperses - to  
original chant.

NARRATOR:

Best remembered, perhaps, among the minor characters of Selsey a hundred years ago, was that King of all Trades - I really cannot call him a Jack - Colin Pullinger. Contractor, Inventor, Fisherman, Mochanic and almost everything else. Imagination boggles as to what his junk shop and home must have looked like. How carefully must his assistant have threaded his way on a dark morning as he opened the shutters.

A TABLE and TWO CHAIRS.

ASSISTANT picks his way to a bow window facing audience and removes imaginary shutters.

A SHOP BELL RINGS. Exit

Assistant and enter Victorian Lady - right - and Colin Pullinger - left. He puts her ceremoniously into a chair. She gazes at various articles through her lorgnette and reacts appropriately as he demonstrates.

NARRATOR:

Pullinger was the maker and inventor of a great number of strange objects. There was, for instance, his Improved Horse Hoe, and here you won't wonder why he is suppressing almost uncontrollable mirth when the lady observes that she did not know that horses could be hoed. No, madam, this large hoe is drawn by horses.

BUSINESS.

WOMAN:

And what is this?

LADY RISES and picks up an imaginary object.

NARRATOR:

That, madam, is Pullinger's Improved Bird Scarifier -

He RATTLES IT - the lady is almost deafened.

But the real object of the lady's visit is to buy his most famous invention, his "Automaton and Perpetual Mouse Trap Made on a Scientific Principle", where each one caught re-sets the trap to catch its next neighbour, requires no fresh baiting, and will catch them by dozens". The lady appears to doubt this. Ah, I thought so.

Exit PULLINGER to re-appear with trap full of mice. Lady screams and climbs on to a chair. Enter ASSISTANT /who had done this before/ and exits with full mouse trap. Pullinger goes through the motions of wrapping up and selling mouse trap to the lady and sees her out. He collects paper, pencils and drawing board and sits at table.

NARRATOR:

I wonder what he is inventing now. His Rat Trap that will Catch Rats and Put them into the Trap? His model of a Vessel to cut asunder Chains put across the Mouth of a Harbour? His Machine to Tar Ropes or his Improved Velocipede? He had served at sea in the four quarters of the world as seaman, cook, steward, mate and Navigator, and as he offered to send crabs, lobsters and prawns to Any Part of England he must often have closed his shop early when the tide was out and gone fishing in pursuit of sea-food. But we mustn't say Goodbye to Pullinger with the idea that he was no more than an ingenious inventor. Nor must we, incidentally, think that the Church of England in Selsey was the only mansion in our Father's house. A Mr. Phillipps, a lay preacher of West Wittering, used to hold services in the open and preach from a chair. And when he inherited a substantial sum of money, he built the Fish Lane Chapel, which was moved to High Street at the same time as the Parish Church removal, to accommodate a growing congregation. A year later the present Methodist Church was built under the supervision of Mr. Pullinger, who acted as a kind of Clerk of the Works. So let us salute Colin Pullinger as he leaves our scene, united with the Methodists in pursuit of something rather more important than sea-food.

Action during above;  
enter a Methodist minister in  
cassock and bands who greets  
Pullinger and Assistant and  
goes off with them.

NARRATOR:

The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway Company was incorporated in 1896 and officially opened at Chichester on the 27th August 1897. The train carrying the passengers from Selsey was an hour late.

SUSSEX VOICE:

So you've come at last. We've been waiting for the Mayor and Councillors for a good hour and they've only just arrived. What happened?

NARRATOR:

Well, you know, Station Master, it was stated in the original prospectus that it was never intended to run trains on this single line at express speed.

Enter the MAYOR, robed.  
He sits angrily and folds  
his arms.

There was nothing wrong with the train but everything with his Worship the Mayor. Can you believe it, the pompous old pedagogue actually wanted to drive the train himself!

SUSSEX VOICE: Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one. Of course, you didn't let him.

NARRATOR: We did not, but he forced his way on to the footplate, and we had to allow him to pull the whistle.

The MAYOR does this in mime with immense satisfaction.

A further delay was caused at The Canal Bridge to allow Councillor Fielder to take a photograph.

The MAYOR POSES, centre.

The Mayor moves. SUSSEX VOICE: We can't see the engine-driver!

COMMENTATOR: We can't see the Engine!

SUSSEX VOICE: Well, I'm glad you've got here at last. Hello, the Mayor's going to speak. Do you know what he's likely to say?

The MAYOR MIMES the following speech.

NARRATOR: I think I can guess.

COMMENTATOR: Ladies and gentlemen of Chichester and Selsey. On this historic occasion of the opening of the Selsey Tramway Company line, the train will shortly commence its inaugural journey from Chichester back to Selsey calling at Hunston, Hoe Farm, Chalдар Farm, Mill Pond Halt, Sidlesham, the Ferry, Selsey Golf Club, "Fore!" Selsey Bridge, Selsey Town for Selsey Beach - /I do like to be beside the seaside/ Don't we all, especially on a balmy evening such as this. I now have the honour to declare...

He goes on talking in mime throughout the following, finishes his speech, doffs his hat and exits.

COMMENTATOR: The track was single, but there was a passing loop at Sidlesham. The canal was crossed by a drawbridge which could be raised to allow the passage of ships.

SUSSEX VOICE: Like Tower Bridge in London?

COMMENTATOR: Er - yes, but on a somewhat smaller scale. It jammed for several days after the opening.

WOMAN: Did the line prosper?

COMMENTATOR: Yes, up to World War I - no mean achievement considering the railway had 7 steam engines to maintain. After the War, several derailments and one serious accident in 1923 when the fireman was killed, the introduction of road buses and the heavy expense of maintenance, the gallant enterprise came to an end.

MAYOR crosses with bowed head, carrying his hat.



It died in the high Roman fashion with no Dr. Beeching at its bedside. Its capital but not its courage was limited.

A PORTER CROSSES carrying red and green flags at halfmast on a pole.

NARRATOR:

Such goings-on served to highlight very pleasantly the everyday life of Selsey, but made little alteration to it. For seven hundred and fifty years - no change: in fifty years - transformation! First - WAR! The menace of the Prussian eagle, the shadow of the Kaiser and the Zeppelins hovering like great slugs in the Sussex air.

German flags - posters of the Kaiser and Zeppelins appear across the back.

Selsey made its contribution to the war effort: its sons and daughters, its money and materials.

Representatives of 1st War local regiment, nursing corps, Special constables, Coastal Defence, Land Army, etc.

CHILD'S VOICE: "Oh, where are you going to, all you  
Big Steamers  
With England's own coal up and down the  
salt seas?"  
"We are going to fetch you your bread and  
your butter  
Your beef, pork and mutton, eggs, apples  
and cheese"  
"And where will you fetch it from, all  
you Big Steamers,  
And where shall I write you when you  
are away?"  
"We fetch it from Melbourne, Quebec and  
Vancouver,  
Address us at Hobart, Hong Kong and  
Bombay".  
"But if anything happened to all you  
Big Steamers,  
And suppose you were wrecked up and down  
the salt sea?"  
"Why you'd have no coffee or bacon for  
breakfast,  
And you'd have no muffins or toast for  
your tea".  
"Then I'll pray for fine weather for all  
you Big Steamers,  
For little blue billows and breezes so  
soft,"  
"Oh, billows and breezes don't bother  
Big Steamers,  
For we're iron below and steel rigging  
aloft".  
"Then I'll build a new lighthouse for all  
you Big Steamers,

With plenty wise pilots to pilot you  
through"  
"Oh, the Channels as bright as a ballroom  
already,  
And pilots are thicker than pilchards at  
Loce".

"Then what can I do for you, all you  
Big Steamers,  
And what can I do for your comfort and  
good?"  
"Send out your big warships to watch your  
big waters,  
That no one may stop us from bringing  
you food.

For the bread that you eat and the  
biscuits you nibble,  
The sweets that you suck and the joints  
that you carve,  
They are brought to you daily by all us  
Big Steamers,  
And if anyone hinders our coming, you'll  
starve".

The German flags, etc.  
retreat and disappear.

NARRATOR: 1918 - the Armistice - the end of the War  
to end War! Twenty years of uneasy peace  
followed. Life in Selsey returned to  
normal: little seemed touched or changed.  
Indeed, the air of Sussex seems resistant t  
to change, and Sussex men "won't be druv"

SUSSEX VOICE: Some folks as come to Sussex  
They rackons as they knows  
A darn sight better what to do  
Than silly folk like me and you  
Could possibly suppose.  
But them as comes to Sussex,  
They mustn't push and shove,  
For Sussex will be Sussex,  
And Sussex won't be druv.  
Mus' Wilfrid come to Selsey  
Us heaved a stone at he,  
Because he reckoned he could teach  
Our Sussex fishers how to reach  
The fishes in the sea.  
But when he dwelt among us,  
Us gave un land and love,  
For Sussex will be Sussex,  
And Sussex won't be druv.  
All folks as come to Sussex  
Must follow Sussex ways,  
And whenthey've learned to know us well  
There's no place else they'd wish to  
dwell  
In all their blessed days.  
There ain't no place like Sussex  
Until you goos above,  
But Sussex will be Sussex,  
And Sussex won't be druv.

Country and seaside  
everyday noises fade in.

NARRATOR: Silly Sussex.

SUSSEX VOICE: Silly doesn't mean stupid. It's an old  
Saxon word meaning blessed.

COMMENTATOR: Blessed are the sillies! "I love a fool" wrote Charles Lamb.

NARRATOR: Aren't we all?

COMMENTATOR: I'm a Methodist. Our leader, Dr. Soper used to go to the seaside with his family when a boy. "Find out where the Methodist church is children, when you've found it you may go to the shore" his father used to say.

NARRATOR: Pity there aren't more like him.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm a Roman Catholic, as you would call me, or a Papist.

NARRATOR: Like St. Wilfrid - don't forget that!.... Well, we've a Methodist and a Catholic church in Selsey, and Heaven knows we've need of both.

WOMAN'S VOICE: We had a temporary church right back in 1922 served by a priest who came from Chichester. Three years ago this was replaced by the fine stone building you see now, dedicated to the Mother of God and St. Wilfrid. It is good to know that people from the other churches were at the dedication service.

COMMENTATOR: That's what I call fellowship.

NARRATOR: So be it, for ever and ever, amen.

Countryside and seaside  
everyday noises fade in  
again - whirr of harvester,  
cows lowing, children playing,  
lawn mower, church bell, piano  
record of 1938 popular song, etc.

German flags and swastikas  
appear across back, and  
Horst Wessel songs and  
Hitler speeches blast out,  
drowning peaceful noises.

NARRATOR: Again War! Again invasion threatened.  
In fact, England was invaded by a hostile  
force - from the air. William the  
Conqueror, Philip of Spain, Bonaparte -  
had never envisaged such a method of  
storming the island fortress.

MISS HARRIS enters.  
SOLDIERS bring chair and  
table. She sits and writes.

NARRATOR: Many must be the war diaries of the years  
'39 to '45. L.H. Harris' record of  
impressions at Selsey vividly and  
poignantly covers the period. We quote  
a few extracts -

WOMAN /1/: Lord, when the darkness falls  
And over the earth Thou made  
The powers of darkness stalk  
May I be unafraid.

- WOMAN /2/: May 29th 1941, the siren's going again, third time this morning. The military occupying the house opposite are building a proper citadel of sandbags with openings for guns along the whole front of the house. It seems funny to remember that the building of sandcastles is a popular pastime here in normal times.
- WOMAN /1/: June 1st. The papers this morning exploded a bombshell; all clothing is rationed from today, including stockings and shoes.
- COMMENTATOR: Including stockings! So as early as 1941 the horrors of war were brought close to us!
- WOMAN /2/: No doubt Lord Haw-Haw will proclaim to the world that the English are in despair.
- WOMAN /1/: It doesn't worry me. I expect I shall find the coupons allowed, 66 per year, quite sufficient.
- COMMENTATOR: Did she?
- NARRATOR: Of course not. But she didn't complain. On the same day she wrote -
- WOMAN /1/: I have exhausted my coupons up to the end of the year. I succumbed to the lure of a new coat which took eighteen coupons. I didn't really need it.
- WOMAN /2/: Sunday December 19th 1941. Every form of science is being used to destroy the beautiful things that it has taken centuries to build up, many of which can never be replaced.
- WOMAN /1/: It seems but meet that clouds should fill  
the heaven  
To spread a veil before its Maker's face,  
Lest, gazing on the earth He made so  
lovely,  
So filled with blessings for our mortal  
span  
He should behold the work of these His  
children  
And feel regret that He created man.
- WOMAN /2/: Day after day, day and night, boats, river steamers, lifeboats, pleasure boats and private yachts went to and fro, in the face of never ceasing attack, bringing our men home.
- WOMAN /1/: Three years later. January 26th 1944. Everywhere now the rush of jeeps and the march of American feet. Everyone speaks well of them.
- WOMAN /2/: It is strange to think that on this South Coast Mecca of holiday-makers of ours is growing up a generation of toddlers who have never paddled in the sea or played on the sands.

WOMAN /1/: April 5th 1944. Thousands of planes in the sky, day and night.

WOMAN /2/: A ceaseless passing of lorries, tanks, armoured cars .....

WOMAN /1/: Something stupendous is in the air.

WOMAN /2/: June 3rd 1944. There is a feeling of tension everywhere. American sailors today were paid in French money. Loads of ammunition are passing. The sea off here is full of fort-like erections stretching from the shore almost to the horizon...

COMMENTATOR: ...Sections of the Mulberry Harbour which were assembled off the East Beach...

NARRATOR: And so Miss Harris' journal continues with never a dull moment until ...

WOMAN /1/: Tuesday May 8th 1945. Victory Day. After nearly six years the Germans have surrendered unconditionally.

WOMAN /2/: There was a service at Church on Tuesday evening, it was crowded, chairs had to be brought in. How can we help thinking when we read of the sufferings and tortures of nearly all the European people?

WOMAN /1/: Our curtains drawn aside, stir gently in the breeze, and so we sink in dreamless sleep. We hear the rustle of the leaves,

WOMAN /2/: The war is ended and the night is beautiful.

Enter a CARAVAN or CAR from which a family of visitors emerge and lay out a picnic. Behind, a portion of pre-fab is erected to suggest the building of a temporary church. A youth, reclining, opens a copy of the Sussex Campaign magazine at Pages 10 & 11. A girl, with the help of the young man, amuses herself by counting the new churches required and those requiring enlargement.

COMMENTATOR: What on earth's going on down there?

NARRATOR: I haven't the slightest idea. It's not at all what I expected.

COMMENTATOR: And what did you expect?

NARRATOR: Well, a grand finale to this historical and instructive entertainment. A panorama of all that's gone before: the death of paganism, the dawn of Christianity, the rejection and acceptance of St. Wilfrid culminating in the triumph of the Faith, and the whole cast

and congregation of spectators in this /ahem/ crowded open air theatre singing some appropriate hymn like "O Faith of England" or "City of God how broad and Far" and all you give us is a party of very ordinary visitors picnicing and a boy staring at a map.

WOMAN: Say not, the struggle naught availeth  
The labour and the wounds are vain  
The enemy faints not nor faileth  
And as things have been they remain  
...Say not that.  
Nevertheless, I can't think what those  
two young people are staring at with  
such interest.

CHILD: Why, it's the green map in the Sussex  
Campaign magazine thing, mummy. All the  
little pointed blobs are where new  
churches need to be built and the ones  
with weathercocks on them, like the one  
at Selsey, represent churches that need  
to be enlarged.

NARRATOR: Has anyone here got a copy of this  
"magazine thing"?

CHILD: You're sitting on it, sir.

NARRATOR: So I am. That's the worst of living in  
the past, one's inclined to ignore the  
present.

CHILD: I counted 27 new ones needed and 17  
enlargers, 9 new halls needed and one  
school.

COMMENTATOR: Only one school?

CHILD: Quite enough, and that's in Crawley,  
hardly in Sussex at all, so what does  
it matter?

NARRATOR: Nyetimber, Aldwick, Middleton, Goring-  
by-Sea, Worthing, Shoreham, Telscombe  
Cliffs ... Pagan lot these South Coast  
towns and villages, I don't wonder St.  
Wilfrid had quite enough of 'em at  
Selsey and went North.

SUSSEX VOICE: Enough of that, mister. You're for-  
getting all you've told us about the  
history of Selsey and of Sussex.

NARRATOR: I've not forgotten that in 1075 William  
I shifted our Cathedral to Chichester ...

SUSSEX VOICE: You've got a long memory, mister. You  
must be older than you look.

COMMENTATOR: Now, now you two. No brawling about  
our Cathedral, please. It's the most  
typical English Cathedral and one of  
the loveliest.

NARRATOR: And what's happening to it? Sinister  
cracks in the window arches, the walls  
slowly widening, the graceful flying  
buttresses tilting. It won't be long

NARRATOR: Who wrote that into the script? It's  
blackmail!

By this time the CARAVANERS  
have finished their picnic  
and fallen asleep. PAUSE.  
Choir SINGS the Bach chorale  
"Wachet auf", beginning softly  
and growing in volume.

WOMAN: If hopes were dupes, fears my be liars,  
It may be in yon smoke concealed  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And but for you possess the field.

Enter ST. WILFRID, disguised as a fisherman. He carries a fishing-net. The picnickers wake and excitedly crowd round him. They put the picnic things back into the caravan. Wilfrid is left alone, centre.

Enter 4 servers from Selsey Parish Church in cassocks and surplices. One carries a chasuble, another a mitre, another a crozier, the fourth a cross. They take off St. Wilfrid's fisherman's overalls, revealing him in cassock and abb, and robe him. They conduct him to the upper stage, leaving the fisherman's clobber lying where it falls.

The picnic party enter from caravan. They see the fisherman's gear lying and are worried. They rush out towards the sea. Then the two young people look up and see St. Wilfrid standing. They point to him and exclaim "Our Fisherman"! Gradually, and as far as possible in historical sequence, the forestage is filled with the characters of the story. They stand with their backs to the audience and stretch their arms out towards the saint. He raises his hand in blessing. They kneel.

WOMAN:

And not by eastern windows only  
When daylight comes, comes in the light.  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright!

The entire cast turns,  
facing the audience.

COMMENTATOR:

And now, my friend and colleague, now  
that we understand what this is all  
about a little better perhaps, we  
might adopt your suggestion to sing  
"City of God, how broad and far"

NARRATOR:

I can only say Amen to that.

Everybody SINGS the hymn  
/which could be printed on  
the back of the programme/  
St. Wilfrid, preceded by his  
Chaplain carrying the Cross,  
exits. The cast follows.  
The stage is left empty.