

John Stow
The annals of England
London
1592

THE
ANNALES OF
ENGLAND,
faithfully collected out
of the most autenticall Au=
thors, Records, and other Monu=
ments of Antiquitie, from the
first inhabitation vntill
this present yeere
1592

By IOHN STOW citizen
of London.

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Cum priuilegio Regiæ maiestatis.

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..... The chiefe Captains
of the Saxons are sayde to be two brethren, Hengist and Horsius. This Hen=
gist (sayeth Geffrey Monmouth) on a time required of King Vortiger, so
much ground as mought be compassed wyth a thong of a bulles skinne, there=

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vpon to build a place to rest in, which the king granted, where Hengist built a
Castell, which hee called Thong Castell, and therein feasted King Vortiger
with great royalty, and when night was come that the king shoulde go to rest,
Rowen the daughter of Hengist by commandement of her father, came wyth a
cuppe of golde in her hand, and kneeling before the king, said to him, Wassaille,
and he againe, by counsell of an interpreter, answered, Drinke haile: at which
time king Vortiger seeing the beautie of this Rowen, hee was enamoured, and
desired to haue her to wife, which was graunted by her father on condition,
the king should giue him al the country of Kent, for him and his people to dwel
in, which the king willingly, but unaduisedly graunted, and espoused the
Damosell.

Thong Castell in Kent, is now a small village, litle more then halfe a mile
from Sidingborne. The ditches, and the keepe hill of Thong Castell ap=
peare in a litle wood a two flight shoote by south from Thong Church. Thong
is a mile from the mouth of Melton creeke, and about halfe a mile from Mel=
ton towne, if passage were through the Marishes the next way. <Leland>

For the loue that Vortiger bare to Rowen the Saxon, hee was diuorced
from his lawfull wife, by whom he had three sonnes, for which deede, welneere
all the Brytaines forsooke him.

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The Brytaines considering the dayly repaire of the Saxons into this
Realme, shewed to their king the ieoperdy that might thereof ensue, and aduer=
tised him of the danger, but all was in vaine: for Vortiger, by reason of his
wife, bare such fauour to the Saxons, that he would in no wise heare the coun=
sell of his subiects, wherefore, they with one minde depriued him of his royall
dignitie, when he had raigned sixe yeeres, and ordained to be their king Vor=
timer his eldest sonne.

Vortimer pursued the Saxons, and by his martiall knighthoode fought
against them foure battelles, besides diuers skirmishes, vntill at length
he was poisoned by the meanes of Rowen his stepmother, after he had raigned

six yeeres. The first battell Hengist and Horse, who were (sayth Bede) the sonnes of Wiglife, whose father was Vecta, whose father was Woden, fought with Vortimer, and his brother Catigerne in a place called Aeglesthorpe, now Aelsford in Kent: and notwithstanding that Horse was slaine in this battel, yet Hengist bare away the victory. Bede sayth that Horse was buried in east Kent, where his tombe or monument, bearing his name was in his time to be seene. And true it is, that in Kent is a place, to this day called Horstede, about two miles from Aelsford, in the parish of Ch[e]tham, where the people of that countrey say the sayd Horse was slaine. There was also slaine in the same battell at Aeglesthorpe Catigerne brother to Vortimer, whose monument remayneth till this day, on a great plaine heath in the parish of A[e]lsford, and is now corruptly called Cits cotihous, for Catigernes. (I haue my selfe in company of diuers worshipfull and learned Gentlemen behelde it in Anno 1590.) and is of foure flat stones, one of them standing vpright in the middle of two other, inclosing the edge sides of the first, and the fourth laid flat aloft the other three: and is of such height, that men may stand on either side the middle stone in time of storme or tempest, safe from wind and raine, being defended with the bredth of the stones, as hauing one at their backes, one on eyther side, and the fourth ouer their heades. And about one coites cast from this monument lieth an other great stone, much part thereof in the ground, as fallen downe where the same had bene fixed.

The second battaile Hengist and Eske fought with the Brytaines in a place called Cr[e]canford, or Craford in Kent, of the Brytaines many perished by the sworde, the rest of them abandoned Kent altogether, and with great feare fled to London.

The third battaile, Hengist and Eske fought with the Brytaines in a place called Weppedes fleete, that is to say, the fleete of Wepped, where they killed Dukes or Captaines of the Brytaines, with many other, whereas on the partie of the Saxons there was one onely man slaine, whose name was Weped.

The fourth battaile was fought by Hengist and Eske against the Brytaines neere to a moore called Colmore, the which was sore fought by the Saxons, and long continued wyth great danger to the Brytaines, because that the said moore inclosed a part of their hoste so strongly, that the Brytaines coulde not approach to them, being beaten off wyth the enemies shot, albeit in the ende, the Saxons were put to flight, and many of them drowned in the same Moore.

Vortiger obtained againe the kingdome, and shortly after Hengist, which was chased into the Ile of Thanet, entred the land with a number of Saxons, but when he heard of the great assembly the Brytaines had made against him, hee treated for peace, which in fine was concluded.

<This is an excerpt from the first edition of Stow's 'Annals'. Passages printed in grey are substantially the same as in a previous book of Stow's – 'The chronicles of England' (1580) – which he was using as the foundation for this one. The whole stretch of text recurs, word for word and line for line the same, in all subsequent editions of the 'Annals' for which Stow himself was responsible. I have corrected three small misprints – 'Chotham', 'Alsford', 'Crocanford' – which were put right in the next edition. (After 'killed' the word 'twelue' or the numeral 'xii' has dropped out; that mistake was never put right.) Of the passages which were new in 1592, the description of Tonge Castle was derived from Leland's notebooks, of which Stow had made himself a transcript. But the description of Kit's Coty House was based on personal observation. As Stow says here, he had visited the site in 1590, 'in company of diuers worshipfull and learned Gentlemen'. (He was not a 'gentleman' himself: he was a citizen of London and proud of it.) This seems to prove that the 'college of antiquaries' tried organizing excursions, as well as holding meetings in London. – C.F. October 2010.>