



## Sheila Kaye-Smith (1887-1956)

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### Works



Although no longer well-known, at her rather untimely death in 1956 aged 68 Sheila Kaye-Smith (left) was a very popular and highly successful novelist who had published no fewer than 31 novels, plus short stories and several works of non-fiction. Her obituary in *The Times* describes her works as having ‘a quietly challenging veracity’, with a recurring theme of ‘innocence trapped by passion’. Her novels are set in the often thinly disguised towns and countryside of the Sussex Weald and Kent. In *Tamarisk Town* (1919), for example, Hastings becomes the seaside town of ‘Marlingate’, which has many features recognisably situated in Hastings or St Leonards-on-Sea. The *Illustrated London News* 13 January 1923 described her as being ‘for some years.....recognised as one of our leading

novelists of locality’.

In addition to her numerous novels, published almost annually between 1908 and 1956, she wrote a topography of Kent and Sussex, *Weald of Kent and Sussex* (1953). Her books also include works on other authors, including *John Galsworthy*, a biography, published in 1916 and, together with her friend G B Stern, two books on Jane Austen: *Talking of Jane Austen* (1943) and *More Talk of Jane Austen* (1950), very readable discussions about Austen’s novels. Works of autobiography include: *Three Ways Home* (1937), *Kitchen Fugue* (1945) and *All the Books of My Life* (1956). Two children’s novels *The Children’s Summer* and *Selina is Older* are semi-autobiographical, being based on Sheila’s own experience of childhood with her sister Mona and as such give valuable historical insight into the life of a late Victorian middle class child. She also wrote books on a religious theme: *Quartet in Heaven* (1952) and *Saints in Sussex* (1926) as well as poems and short stories.

Sheila’s early novels were of the type parodied in *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons, but as she became increasingly popular her style developed. Her later novels reflect her pre-occupation with Catholicism. All her novels were (and continue to be) of great local interest. She did much to record the local Sussex dialect and accent, now almost lost. An example found in *Sussex Gorse* is typical:



“Oh, I’ve found a way of gitting shut of them rootses – thought of it while I were working at the trees. I’m going to blast ‘em out.”

“Blast ‘em!”

“Yes. Blast ‘em wud gunpowder. I’ve heard of its being done. I’d never dig all the stuff out myself – yards of it there be – willer rootses always wur hemmed spready.”

“Its never bin done in these parts”

“Well, it’ll be done now, surelye”.

(*Sussex Gorse*, 1946, p.43)

Her novel *Joanna Godden* (1921) has been identified as her most popular, being made into a film in 1947 starring Googie Withers, while *The End of the House of Alard* (1923), based on the history of a genuine Winchelsea family, sold most copies.

Her non-fiction works show a different side of Sheila – more reflective, revealing her wealth of knowledge and an intelligent, while at the same time very readable, style of writing. Her autobiographies are written in a particularly interesting way. *Three Ways Home* (1937) takes as its theme three strands of her life – the countryside of Kent and Sussex, her writing and her religious views, culminating together in her conversion to Catholicism. She provides details of her life as well as constructive comments and interesting insights into on her literary works, for example of *The Challenge to Sirius* (1917) she writes:

“It is a long, nervous, chaotic book, aiming at the sky but seldom hitting anything higher than a tree”

(*Three Ways Home*, 1937, p.105)

while of the publication of *The Tramping Methodist* (1908) she reveals that:

“The publisher wanted to see me, and an appointment was duly made; but my pleasure and excitement were a little dashed when I found that my parents absolutely refused to let me go to his office unchaperoned.”

(*Three Ways Home*, 1937, p.58)

In *Kitchen Fugue* (1945) Sheila relates how she had to learn to cook in the Second World War, owing to the lack of kitchen staff, using the device to provide further details of her life both in wartime and previously, revealing a world very different from today (and the lives of most people at that time). She tells how she took six cookery lessons at the start of the war to ensure she knew some basic cookery and that:

“By the time the Germans were in the Channel Ports I had with my own hands made *gnocchi a la romaine*, *bonne femme* soup and *sole Normande*, cooked spinach and cauliflower, roasted and stuffed a joint. I had snatched these acquirements as it were from under Hitler’s nose and I was exceedingly proud of them”

(*Kitchen Fugue*, 1945 p.45)



In *All The Books of My Life*, published posthumously, Sheila writes about books which she has enjoyed, starting from her childhood favourites such as *Black Beauty* and *Alice in Wonderland*, through to the works of Agatha Christie, Conan Doyle and PG Wodehouse as well as those of Freud and Jung. Along the way she presents further autobiographical anecdotes, providing a yet fuller account of her life, including the revelation that she believed in predictive dreams, had an interest in extra-sensory perception and what she terms psychical research – perhaps surprising in a devout Catholic!

## Life

(Emily) Sheila Kaye-Smith was born on 4 February 1887 at 9 Dane Road, St Leonards-on-Sea. She was the eldest of two daughters born to Dr Edward Kaye-Smith and his wife Emily Janet Kaye-Smith, late Maclean, formerly de la Condamine, who had married in 1883. Shaun Cooper notes in *The Shining Cord of Sheila Kaye-Smith* that the de la Condamines had been French Huguenots who had fled France in 1685, settling in the Channel Islands. Later a branch of Sheila's immediate ancestors had moved to Edinburgh.

Her sister, (Frances) Mona followed Sheila in 1889. For both parents it was their second marriage, Edward Kaye-Smith having married Annie Sophia Jones in Bedford in 1867 and Emily Janet de la Condamine having married Alexander Hamilton Maclean in Edinburgh in 1872. Edward and Annie had one daughter, (Annie) Dulcie born on 31 May 1869. Sadly her birth was swiftly followed by her mother's death on 13 June. Emily and Alexander had a son, Robert Duncan in 1873, who died in infancy, followed by Bethea (Thea) Hamilton Maclean in 1875. Alexander Maclean died in 1876. Sheila and Mona therefore had two older half-sisters, Dulcie and Thea, while Edward and Emily had a joint family of four daughters.

In *Three Ways Home* Sheila describes how as a young adult she accompanied her father on a visit to a patient, travelling by means of his "pill box" Brougham. They then went on to visit a home near Westfield, where, at Platnix Farm, she and Mona had spent several summers as small children while her mother and father travelled in Europe, visiting places such as Switzerland. She relates that:

"There was never a time when I did not know and love the countryside outside Hastings – Platnix and the primrose lane by Ireland Farm, where father used to drive us as tiny children to fill our hands with flowers."

(*Three Ways Home*, 1937, pp.11-12)

Platnix was one of several farms Sheila and her sister were left at while their parents took holidays. The experience is described in *The Children's Summer* and *Selina is Older*, in which Sheila and Mona become Selina and Moira, who also stay at Platnix Farm.

Sheila provides a few details about her family history in *Three Ways Home*. Because her parents had married later in life she had no grandparents alive and probably for this reason knew only a limited amount about her family. She reveals that her father was born in India,



the son of an army surgeon, and says that his mother's brother was Sir John Kaye, whom she asserts wrote *A History of the Indian Mutiny* plus "one or two novels".

This information is only partially accurate, as is the case so often with recollections of family history. Sir John Kaye *did* write about the Indian rebellion, but under the title *A History of the Sepoy War*. This was later combined with a work by Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, become Kaye and Malleson's *History of the Indian Mutiny 1857-8*. Further research into Sheila's father reveals that he had been born Edward Kaye Smith on 3 October 1839 at Guntur, Madras, son of Edward Smith, surgeon in the Honourable East India Company and Elisa Letitia Smith, formerly Kaye. He had completed his medical training in 1861, becoming a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1861 and a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians in 1862. His obituary states that he had been a pupil of Marischal College, Aberdeen, a fact confirmed by the college's own records, and a doctor at St George's, Tooting. Edward Smith Snr. and Eliza Kaye had married in Madras on 24 November 1835. Edward Snr had joined the Honourable East India Company as an Assistant Surgeon in 1830, his records showing that he was the son of George Smith, a merchant, and Jane Farquhar, being born in Aberdeen on 13 December 1806. He died on 29 January 1848 at Wallajabad, India, leaving Eliza with her young family in Scotland. Subsequently they moved to Ilfracombe in Devon (see 1851 census) and later Bedford (see census 1861).

Edward (Kaye) Smith moved to St Leonards in about 1882 shortly before his marriage to Emily Maclean. In *Three Ways Home* Sheila suggests that they had met at the marriage of two of their relations. It is possible that the wedding in question was the marriage of Emily's brother, Robert de la Condamine to Edward's first wife's sister, Alice Jones. If this was the case, the couple would have known each other, as acquaintances at least, from 1868. Indeed, Emily's brother, being married to Edward's sister-in-law, would have been Uncle to his child, Dulcie, even before his Edward and Emily's marriage. Edward Smith's will reveals that he adopted the surname "Kaye-Smith" for himself and Dulcie from about the time of his arrival in St Leonards, around the time of his second marriage. Sheila gives the reason for the change in *Three Ways Home* as being that her mother was a 'snob', feeling that the hyphenated "Kaye-Smith" gave better standing than just plain "Smith".



Sheila and Mona grew up at their home at 9 Dane Road, St Leonards-on-Sea (see photo), being initially educated privately by Governesses, often French, giving her a sound grounding in her mother's ancestral language. They then followed their sisters and attended the Hastings and St Leonards Ladies College, where their father was a school Governor. In her last two years at school Sheila is reported to have written thirteen novels – a taste of the formidable output to come in later years. Having decided to become a novelist at aged nine or ten, several unpublished texts were written in the period 1903-1905, which



are located at the University of Texas, at Austin. After a couple of published short stories, Sheila's first published novel, *The Tramping Methodist*, came into print in 1907, when she was just 21.

A curious event which Sheila mentions in *Three Ways Home* occurred in April 1913 – Levetleigh, until earlier the previous month the home of the local Hastings MP, Harvey Du Cros, was burnt down as part of a campaign by suffragettes to advertise their fight for Votes for Women. Sheila describes how she herself, presumed as an author to support the suffragette movement, was accused of having set fire to the house, which was opposite her home in Dane Road : “the evidence was clear – I had sat at the window, mocking the efforts of firefighters and shouting “Votes for Women” (*Three Ways Home*, p.63). The accusations only subsided after the intervention of her father, who was most indignant that his daughter should have been accused. Sheila says that she slept through the event, only hearing of it when she awoke the next day. She must have indeed slept well, for local newspaper reports described the scene as a very busy one. The report in the *Hastings and St Leonards Observer*



of 19 April 1913 tells us that “Several of those first on the scene declare that they heard the noise of explosives going off” and at one point “the roof fell in with a crash and the roar of the fire became terrific to those in the immediate proximity”. At least three sections of the fire brigade were in attendance, together with the Borough engineer and the Police. It seems hard to believe that Sheila could have avoided hearing anything, given the proximity of Levetleigh to her home. The photo

above shows the closeness of Sheila's home on the right and the site of Levetleigh (now flats) to the left.

Between 1914 and 17 Sheila divided her time between London and Hastings, probably at this time meeting with other authors such as Alice Meynell, Marguerite Curtis, Robert Nichols, Trevor Blakemore, Compton Mackenzie, Hugh Walpole and May Sinclair. She also became a life-long friend of G B Stern and with her attended tea parties given by Noel Coward, also a friend and literary admirer. Her friendship with Coward and Stern, together with her later childless marriage and no doubt her friendship with Radcliffe Hall and involvement in the trial following the publication of *The Well of Loneliness* (described in *All the Books of my Life*), has given rise to, probably unfounded, speculation about Sheila's sexual orientation. During the War Sheila undertook work for the War Office.

Religion gradually became a major factor in Sheila's life. In *Three Ways Home* she describes her father as being Church of England and her mother as Presbyterian: she herself came to favour the customs of the High Anglican church. In December 1919 she makes her first confession in the Church of England and begins life as a committed churchgoer. Her future husband, Penrose Fry, was appointed Assistant Priest at the Anglo-Catholic Christ Church, St



Leonards in 1921. Following her father's death in 1922, Sheila's commitment to the Anglo-Catholic movement continued, she made an address to the Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1924, the same year as her sister Mona died of influenza. This year proved to be eventful - following a brief engagement, Sheila married Penrose Fry on 16 October 1924 at St Paul's church, St Leonards (since demolished). Sadly this was speedily followed by the death of her mother in November. As a result of his decision to marry, Penrose had resigned his post at Christ Church, where priests were customarily celibate, taking a post instead as assistant priest at St James Norlands, Notting Dale, W. London. This was followed by a spell as Curate at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road, S. Kensington between 1926 and 1929. Following marriage, the couple moved to a flat at 17 Holland Park, where they enjoyed a busy social life.

The year 1929 was something of a turning point for Sheila, both in religious and personal matters. With the resignation of the incumbent at St Stephen's Penrose was offered another post in Oxfordshire. By this time, however, both Sheila and Penrose were accustomed to attending Catholic services while travelling abroad and Penrose no longer felt able to declare publically his adherence to the tenets of the Church of England, which would be necessary were he to take up the Oxfordshire post. Sheila, too was religiously conflicted, wanting to remain an Anglican but at the same time often feeling unhappy with its beliefs and services. For Sheila particularly, the fact that the Church of England did not recognise Saints after the time of the early church, became a source of concern. She very much admired St Therese of Lisieux, recently canonised thirty years after her death, and stated in *Three Ways Home* that:

"It was not only the beauty of her life, the charm, the wit and sweetness of her recorded words, or the lovely simplicities of her Little Way. It was rather the realisation of that sanctity, that heroic virtue, that sublime love being offered to the modern world."

(*Three Ways Home*, 1937, pp.184-5)

Sheila relates in *Three Ways Home* that *Shepherds in Sackcloth* (January 1930) was her last novel written as an Anglican. She and Penrose decided to take instruction in the Catholic faith and settle in East Sussex, purchasing Little Doucegrove at Northiam, whose estate included Hayes Farm Oast which featured in her novel *The History of Susan Spray* (1931). In October 1929 both Sheila and Penrose were received into the Roman Catholic Church and commissioned work to renovate Little Doucegrove. As their new home was nine miles from the nearest Catholic Church they gained permission to have their own chapel at their new home, provided it was open to any who wished to attend. In the summer of 1930 their new home was completed and they moved in. A chapel was created in an old hayloft with the first Mass said there in December 1930. By 1935 the hayloft chapel had become too small for the numbers attending regular





weekly Mass and work commenced building a new Church at Little Doucegrove, which was dedicated to St Therese of Lisieux (right).

Sheila continued to write prolifically from her new home, both novels and articles. Various articles were also written about her, including “The Sussex Books of Sheila Kaye-Smith, by Gilbert Pass”, published in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1936. *Kitchen Fugue* documents her life during World War Two through the medium of her new found skill of cookery and recipes. She recounts the following tale of a visit to the local butcher to return some kidneys: it gives an insight into Sheila’s character as impetuous and down to earth:

“Haven’t you anything else by way of offal?”

“No, madam, absolutely nothing but these two beautiful English kidneys.”

“Yes, I know they’re beautiful, and it was very kind of you to send them. But I had them last week too (and how many more weeks?). And my husband doesn’t eat them”

This for some reason provoked merriment.

I saw myself going sadly home with my two kidneys, when my eyes fell upon an object – a profile – lying on the slab.

“Haven’t you got a pig’s face?”

A silence could be heard, and then a shocked voice:

“Yes, madam, *but we never thought you ate that sort of thing*”

That sort of remark always challenges me.

“Oh, yes, I do,” I said briskly, though I was beginning to feel doubtful in view of the reverse side of the profile which had now been displayed.

I had accepted the butcher’s challenge and he now accepted mine. He threw in a calf’s foot, and I fled for fear that he might also add pig’s trotters and a calf’s head. My tiny parcel of decent offal had been exchanged for an armful of unsightly horror and I could not help realising that the seven or eight minutes required to grill a kidney had probably also been exchanged for as many hours.”

(*Kitchen Fugue*, 1945, p.114)

After the war more books followed, indeed Sheila was writing up to the time of her death in January 1956, with *The View from the Parsonage*, her last novel, being published in 1954 and *All the Books of my Life*, an autobiographical work, posthumously in 1956. Her much older half-sister, Dulcie, pre-deceased her by only a short time, in September 1955.

Sheila’s will reveals some interesting requests. She wanted to be buried in the churchyard of St Therese de Lisieux at Little Doucegrove wearing the habit of the Dominican order as a member of the secular Third Order of St Dominic. She endowed a Mass to be said on the anniversary of her death in perpetuity. She requested that her executors instructed a Doctor to cut one of her veins to be certain she was dead and would not be buried alive. These



requests were indeed carried out and she was buried in the churchyard at Little Doucegrove, wearing a Dominican habit and holding a rosary, having had her wrists cut post mortem.

## Connections to Battle



To discover the roots of Sheila's connection to the town of Battle one must look back to those of her father, Dr Edward Kaye-Smith. He and his first wife, Annie Sophia (formerly Jones), arrived in Battle from Bedford soon after their marriage, probably in 1867 or 1868, together with two servants, sisters Sarah Maria (cook, photo left) and Mary Ann Manton (housemaid). At that time "Kaye" had not been added to "Smith" and the Doctor was simply known as Dr Edward Smith. The family moved into 22 Upper Lake, where Dr Smith set up practice,

beginning the long family connection to the town. Sadly, Annie Sophia Smith died shortly after their arrival in Battle and is buried in Battle cemetery. The photograph to the right depicts Dr Smith outside his Upper Lake home, seated on horseback.



The widowed Dr Smith continued his practice in Battle after his wife's death in 1868 up to his move to Hastings in about 1882. He travelled to his patients on horseback, keeping three horses at the Chequers Inn, ensuring one was always saddled ready for emergency visits. Sheila describes a fictionalised version of her father's life as a young doctor in Battle at the end of the nineteenth century in her book *The Village Doctor*, published in 1929, just a few years after his death. She confirmed in a letter of 1955 to Lewis Pyke of Blackfriars, Marley Lane, that the book retells some of her father's early experiences in the town, renamed Speldham in the book. She refers to "Dr Green's" visits to a gypsy encampment on the North Trade Road, as well as visits to local farmers and gentry. The book describes the attempts of local farmers to marry off their daughters to the eligible Dr Green – something which may well have been the fate of the eligible widower, Dr Smith.

Of particular interest is the description of Battle's (Speldham's) bonfire night celebrations:

"The fifth of November was a great day in Speldham. From olden times it had been celebrated in a manner that left Christmas but a twilight feast.....Squibs, crackers and fizzigs





exploded everywhere, blazing barrels rolled down the street, and midnight culminated in a solemn torchlight procession bearing the guy to his bonfire on Speldham Green.

The Bonfire Boys were the young males of the district, dressed as Warriors, Red Indians, Zulus, Hindus, Beefeaters, Cossacks, Cooks, Ladies of Quality, Dancing Bears, Arabs Nursemaids – in any style their mothers, sisters and wives could create out of a few yards of calico. The guy was generally some public character who had captured the local imagination – Palmer the poisoner and Mrs Dyer the baby farmer had both been dragged to a supplementary execution on Speldham Green. Daniel O'Connell had suffered impartially with Lord Palmerston, Mr Gladstone with Mr Disraeli. But to be a guy was not necessarily a sign of disgrace...within living memory the Duke of Wellington and the Prince Consort had both been burned as a popular tribute”.

(*The Village Doctor*, 1929, pp.74-5)

The year described can perhaps be dated by a reference to the guy for the year as being Michael Barrett, a Fenian and Irishman, noted as recently executed. Barrett was the last man to be publically hanged in England, on 26 May 1868, suggesting a date of 1868 for the bonfire, soon after Edward Smith's move to Battle. Interestingly the Battel Bonfire Boyes' current website lists 1870 as being the earliest named effigy known of to date, but perhaps the list in *The Village Doctor* may provide the names of earlier ones!

Dr Smith soon became close friends with William Augustus Raper, a local solicitor whose practice was a forerunner of Herrington's solicitors in Upper Lake, next to the churchyard and nearly opposite number 22. William Raper lived at that time with his young family a few doors down from Dr Smith, in what became Pyke House and is now boarding accommodation for Claremont school. The connection lasted through time: Raper and Fovargue dealt with all the family legal affairs, including Sheila's, right up to and including the death of Penrose Fry in 1971.

In addition to his medical practice, after his wife's death Dr Smith threw himself into local Battle life. In 1870 he was appointed a trustee of the Battle Charities, by 1871 he held a Commission in the 1<sup>st</sup> (Cinque Ports) Rifle Volunteers, was elected Parish Warden at the Church (he held the post of either Parish or Dean's churchwarden until 1881), became a surgeon to the Workhouse, in 1873 became a member of the Battle burial board and by 1874 is recorded as the Medical Officer of Health for Battle. As such he was very concerned by an outbreak of typhoid fever in 1880, which Sheila mentions in the introduction to the 1924 edition of *Sussex Folk and Sussex Ways*, by J. Coker Egerton. She writes:

“He talked often of those Battle days, of the “rounds” on horseback – three horses working in relays, so that the beast might have the rest which was impossible to the man...of operations carried out in some cottage bedroom, by the light of a candle held by the labourer's wife....of adventures in roads made impassable by snow and darkness.

.....Many a time I have heard of that (typhoid) epidemic and how it threatened, even after the discovery of its origin, to sweep the whole village. My father attributed its ending to a terrific thunderstorm which washed the place clean”

(*Sussex Folk and Sussex Ways*, 1924. p.ix)



Local newspapers of the time show that the outbreak was in Lower Lake, forming the source of much discussion at the meetings of the Local Health Board meetings of July and August that year. They reveal that the main drain ran very close to a well at the rear of number 3 Lower Lake, which supplied several homes with their water. Dr Smith reported that there had been a number of outbreaks of typhoid fever over preceding years and a current outbreak in six homes using the well. Where inhabitants boiled the water prior to use, the instance of typhoid was lower or absent. In response to Dr Smith's urgings, the water was analysed by order of the board and found to be impure. Dr Smith advised that the nearby drain had been badly laid and its contents had seeped out and entered the well. A tender for £9 7s 6d was accepted from "Mr Comfort the builder" to repair the drain and the outbreak was halted.

The family connections to Battle continued after Dr Smith had moved to St Leonards. The home in Dane Road in which Sheila grew up was given the name "Battle Lodge", a continual reminder for Sheila of the family connection to Battle; Sheila "came out" at the annual Battle Ball, held at the Drill Hall, which stood in the area now occupied by the telephone exchange in North Trade Road. The year was 1906, and she describes the event in *Three Ways Home*:

"That year saw me "come out" at the local Hunt Ball.,,,,,,I stood hopefully at the Drill Hall at Battle, expecting the very best of life and mankind, and wearing a cream lace dress, forget-me-nots and galoshes. The last were an oversight and belonged to the rigours of a two hours' cab drive in January. The lace dress was, I think, quite pretty in itself, though it did not suit me, and I was far too pale to wear forget-me-nots.

I enjoyed the dance, but I did not care for those other aspects of social life to which it was portal."

(*Three Ways Home*, 1937, p.50)

Letters from Sheila written shortly before her death to Lewis Pyke, of Blackfriars, quoted in Michael Bristow-Smith's *A Chronology of the Life and Works of Sheila Kaye-Smith*, recall that:

"as a child I used to be taken as a treat to tea at what is now called 'The Pilgrim's Rest'. But what was then only an ancient cottage which provided 'teas'. A Miss Schnorr lived there then"

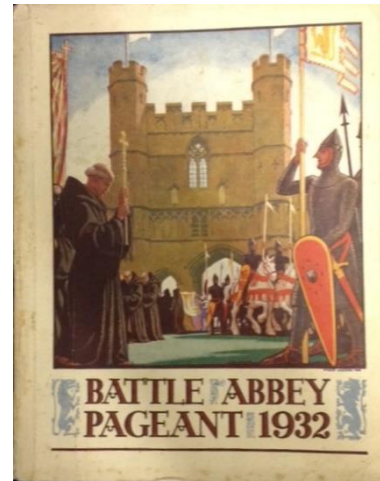
She describes in the same letter how she herself had a friendship with the daughters of William Raper:

"Of course I knew the Raper family very well and often stayed with them and acted in plays with the daughters."

Sheila attended many social events in Battle in the years following her "coming out", often with the Raper daughters, evidenced in local newspaper reports.



Sheila was involved in the spectacular Battle Pageant of July 1932, during which nearly three thousand performers enacted some of the most well-known incidents in 900 years of English history. The *Sussex Agricultural Express* describes the event: it was “a triumph for all connected with its organisation and presentation”, taking place in the grounds of Battle Abbey, “one of the most wonderful settings that can be imagined” and running from 4<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, with performances each evening and matinees twice a week.



Sheila wrote the prologue, which was described by the press as “highly effective”. It was delivered in a Sussex dialect (so favoured by Sheila in her writing) by Albert Richardson of Burwash, better known at the time as the famous wireless and gramophone artist “Buttercup Joe”. He delivered the prologue in a shepherd’s smock while holding a crook, standing with a sheep dog beside a flock of sheep. At the end of the prologue he moved to the side of the arena where he went to sleep, to dream the events of the last 900 years, re-awakening at the end of the pageant. It was described as a “simple scene but most effectively carried out”.

One of her last connections to Battle came with the founding of the Battle and District Historical Society, when Sheila was asked to become an Honorary Vice President, a post which she held until her death.



Sheila’s immediate family are still memorialised in Battle to this day – not only was her father’s first wife, Annie Sophia Smith (nee Jones, d.1869) buried in Battle cemetery, but next to her is the grave of her daughter, Annie Dulcie Kaye Smith (d.1955). Edward Kaye Smith (d.1922), Sheila’s father, is nearby, next to the grave of his daughter, Frances Mona Kaye-Smith (d.1924) shared with her mother, Emily Janet Kaye-Smith (d.1924), together leaving a lasting reminder of the connections of Sheila Kaye-Smith to Battle and the surrounding countryside.

Georgina Doherty

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## **Books by Sheila Kaye-Smith**

### Fiction:

The Tramping Methodist (1908)

Starbrace (1909)



Spell Land (1910)  
Isle of Thorns (1913)  
Three Against the World (1914)  
Sussex Gorse (1916)  
The Challenge to Sirius (1917)  
Little England (1918)  
Tamarisk Town (1919)  
Green Apple Harvest (1920)  
Joanna Godden (1921)  
The End of the House of Alard (1923)  
The George and the Crown (1925)  
Joanna Godden Married and Other Stories (1926)  
Iron and Smoke (1928)  
The Village Doctor (1929)  
Shepherds in Sackcloth (1930)  
Susan Spray (1931)  
The Children's Summer (1932)  
The Ploughman's Progress (1933)  
Superstition Corner (1934)  
Galleybird (1934)  
Selina is Older (1935)  
Rose Deeprise (1936)  
Faithful Stranger and Other Stories (1938)  
The Valiant Woman (1939)  
Ember Lane (1940)  
The Hidden Son (1941)  
Tambourine, Trumpet and Drum (1943)  
The Lardners and the Laurelwoods (1948)  
The Treasures of the Snow (1950)



Mrs Gailey (1951)

The View from the Parsonage (1954)

Non-Fiction:

Richardson (1911)

John Galsworthy (1916)

Saints in Sussex (1923)

Anglo Catholicism (1925)

The Mirror of the Months (1925)

Songs Late and Early (1925)

Three Ways Home (1937)

Talking of Jane Austen (with G B Stern, 1943)

Kitchen Fugue (1945)

More Talk of Jane Austen (with G B Stern, 1950)

Quartet in Heaven (1952)

Weald of Kent and Sussex (1953)

All the Books of My Life (1956)

*Note: In addition to the above Sheila wrote other short stories, many published in magazines and journals*

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The National Probate Calendar available at [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

British Newspapers, including *The Hastings and St Leonards Observer*, available at [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

The Times online available via East Sussex Libraries

Scottish Birth, Marriage and Death records formerly available at [scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

Scottish wills, formerly available at [scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

England and Wales Births Marriages and Deaths available at [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

India Office records available at [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) and via [www.fibis.org](http://www.fibis.org) (Families in British India Society)

References in the Encyclopaedia Britannica available at [www.Britannica.com](http://www.Britannica.com)

Sheila Kaye-Smith Society website available at [www.sheilakayesmith.org.uk](http://www.sheilakayesmith.org.uk)

### Photographs

Edward Kaye-Smith seated on horseback: collection of the *Battle Museum of Local History*

Sarah Maria Manton: family photo collection of Georgina Doherty

Programme for Battle Abbey Pageant – The Battle and District Historical Society Archive

Other photographs: Georgina Doherty

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