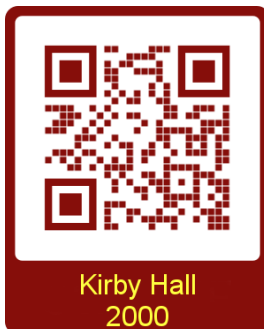


## Hundreds and Thousands, 2000-2009

Commentary by Paul Murphy

The turn of the millennium was a time of reflection, and we played our part in that with a drama-documentary appearance in 1000AD, which looked at the life of an Anglo-Saxon household at the end of the previous millennium. Filmed at West Stow, and with around 30 society members involved, this was shot in 1999 and shown in 2000. Featuring Tony Sayer as the Viking leader, it serves as a reminder of several members who are no longer with us.



English Heritage continued their *History in Action* event at Kirby Hall, with the 2000 programme featuring us, *Conquest* and others to portray the Norman invasion of 1066. The EH video of the event has limited coverage of the battle and camp, but shows the society marching in the grand parade, led by Tony in his white trousers.

The year 2000 also saw the first Hastings mega event, with over 1500 re-enactors on site and audiences of over 25000 to watch us stage the battle on a very large scale. With almost 100 cavalry and close to 100 archers, the battlefield was reckoned to have 1100 combatants on it and the entrance of each army seemed to stretch forever as the warriors just kept coming. This was also a truly international event, with guests from the US and Canada, most countries in Europe including Russia, and a small contingent who came all the way from Australia and New Zealand.



Not to be outdone, the 940<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006 was even bigger, and rumours put the battlefield strength at over 2000, with the site hosting 3500 re-enactors. Commanding the Norman left, my unit alone had 320 in it, forcing us into working nine ranks deep in three units of three ranks each, and taking turns to hit the English at the top of the hill. With a society registration total of 478 members, this remains our biggest ever attendance at an event.

Other events of note were the series of festivals at Amlwch on Anglesey, famous for longships both on water and on fire, and for the memorable sound of the 'corpse' snoring as he lay 'dead' on the longship during the parade, while visits to Brockhole in the Lake District, Amble in Northumbria and Watchet in Devon made sure we covered most of the country in addition to our regular events in Old Sarum, Whitby and Largs.