

5. The wedge-shaped shield wall

Baudri says that the shield wall was wedge shaped. This is only likely if it was deployed on a spur. The Normans attacked up a steep slope. Hurst Lane is the only spur in the region where the Normans were not able to attack from above, because it is protected upslope by a huge iron ore pit (5b). Visitors can stand on the shield wall on the public footpath at 5a.

6. Devil's Brook

Wace says that one Norman flank was shield charged into a ditch where more Normans died than in the rest of the battle combined. This ditch would have been Devil's Brook, the western boundary stream near where it is crossed by the public footpath (6).

7. The Malfosse

The Chronicle of Battle Abbey says that many Norman horses and riders died after falling into an immense precipitous hollowed-out pit that was adjacent to the battlefield. It was obscured by a surrounding ramp and vegetation. This description uniquely matches the Hurst Lane iron ore pit (7), the surrounding ramp being spoil. The sides and spoil have now slumped into the pit, but it is still a clear and unique match.

8. The first stand

Poitiers says that the English fall back across a valley to rising ground where they make a stand. Some Normans chase across the valley but get shield charged into the valley to their death. The only place matching this description in the region is at (8) on the north rim of the Hurst Lane iron ore pit.

9. The English camp

Carmen says that the English banners are visible from the Norman camp (view from 12). Wace describes the English camp being protected by a 'good ditch' with three entrances. It must have been in the landscape when the English arrived because they were not at the

camp long enough to dig a good ditch. The only matching landscape feature in the entire region is the three huge iron ore mines running west from Hurst Lane. Each was crossed by an access ramp to remove men and ore. They formed the three entrances.

10. Bayeux Tapestry Panel 58



The last Tapestry panel shows the English fleeing in two tiers. It is trying to depict them fleeing along the top and along the base of an iron ore pit with the artist is looking north from (10).

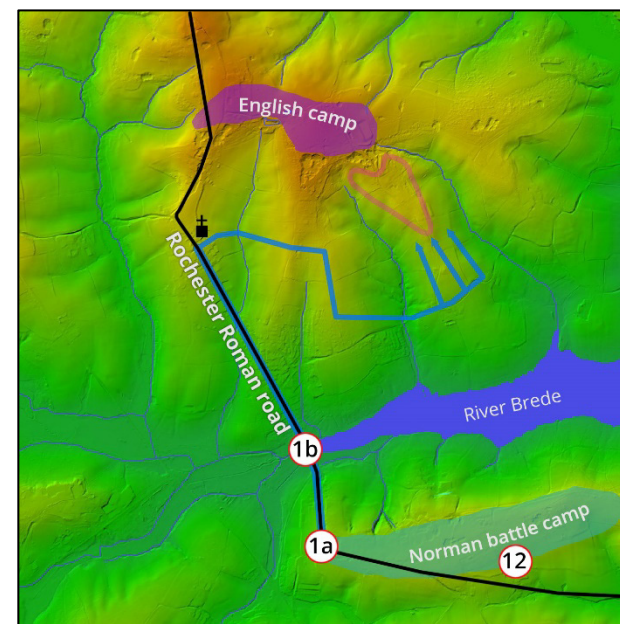
11. The second stand

Poitiers says that the English made a second stand where they were protected by broken ground and a labyrinth of ditches. Poitiers goes on to say that Count Eustace was killed at one of these ditches by a missile thrown from the other side. The Hurst Lane and Killingan Wood iron ore pits are too big for missiles to be thrown across, but the Combe Wood pit (11) is barely 30m across in places. It uniquely matches Poitiers and Orderic's descriptions of the second stand location.

12. View from the Norman camp

Wace, Baudri and Draco Normannicus describe the clear view of an enclosed wedge-shaped English shield wall as seen from the Norman battle camp. The best place to see this view is the Bruderhof Church above Pestalozzi. If it is closed, it can also be seen by walking up the slope to 50.9282, 0.5476 from Brassets Wood public footpath.

SEDLSCOMBE BATTLEFIELD VISITOR GUIDE



Access, toilets & refreshments

The lanes around the battlefield are unsuitable for parking. There is limited street parking opposite the church and around Sedlescombe village green. The Queen's Head and Blackbrooks have good customer parking as well as toilets and refreshments.

*The Queen's Head, The Green, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QA
Blackbrooks Garden Centre, A21 Sedlescombe, TN33 0RJ*

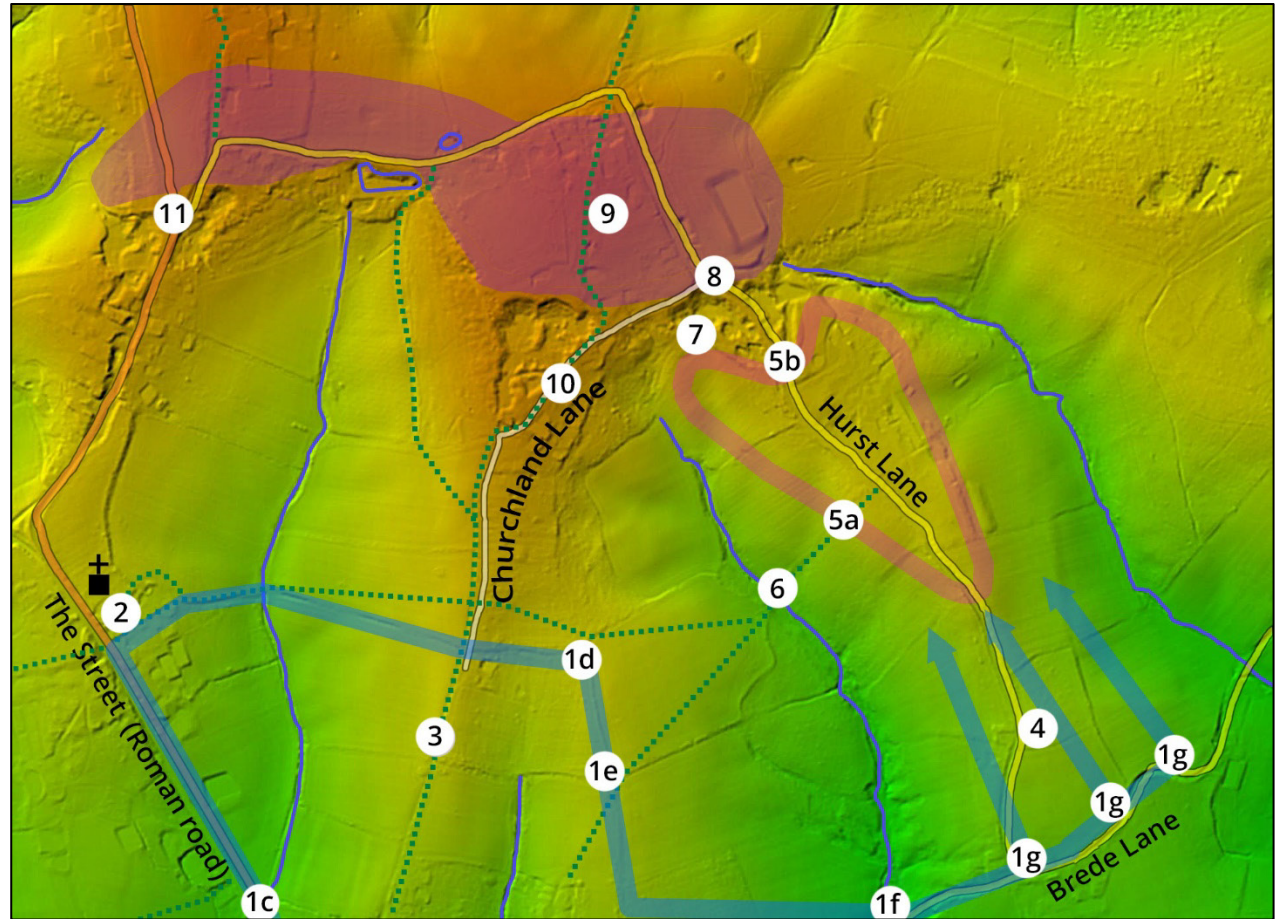
1. The Norman advance

Wace describes the Norman journey from their battle camp (12) to the battlefield as seen through Harold's eyes. He first sees them appear over rising ground (1d). They could only have got there by heading north on the Rochester Roman road, then crossing the Brede on Sedlescombe bridge (1b/c), then heading east at the church (2). According to Wace, they marched along a ridge crest (1e), crossed a stream (1f), then wheeled into three groups below the battlefield hill (1g). This description uniquely matches the geography from a Norman battle camp at Cottage Lane to a battlefield at Hurst Lane.

2. Bayeux Tapestry Panel 48



Tapestry Panel 48 depicts William standing outside a Romanesque church as the Norman army move to the battlefield. The only likely Romanesque church in the region would have been part of the Rameslie cell of the Abbey of Fécamps. Its most likely location is beside the Rochester Roman road, taking tolls from passing traffic. Beryl Lucey recorded that the current John the Baptist Church at Sedlescombe was built on the site of a Saxon era church. Sedlescombe is listed with a church in Domesday. It is the only known church near the Rochester Roman road. William was therefore probably standing outside the Fécamps Abbey church on the site of John the Baptist (2).



3. Harold & Gyth scouting location

Wace says that Harold and Gyth go out alone at dawn on the day before the battle to scout the Norman battle camp. From a hill, they see Norman tents, armour and banners, they hear Norman horses neighing. The only place in the region where they would have felt safe to be out alone and still have a clear view and be that close to the Norman battle camp is Balcombe Green (3), where they were protected by the estuarine part of the River Brede.

4. Bayeux Tapestry Panel 54



Tapestry Panel 54 depicts the battlefield hill with the English fighting back-to-back. The artist would have been standing on the little knoll at (4).