

Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

(Original Society founded 1985 Registered Charity no 1047562)

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee

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Bulletin No. 137 Autumn/Winter 2024

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL REQUEST for 2025

If you have completed a membership form in the past, you do not need to fill out a new one unless your contact details have changed - then please let us know.

£10 (individual) / **£15** (family) membership

Life Membership: £100 (individual) / **£150** (a couple)

You can pay

- ✦ by cheque payable to **Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society (do not use initials)**
- ✦ by BACS (sort code 20 25 42 account 13275752)
- ✦ by standing order (sort code 20 25 42 account 13275752)

Please let **Mrs Alison Marshall**, Membership Secretary, 83 Hever Avenue, West Kingsdown, TN15 6HQ, Kent (alisondukes@btinternet.com) know that you have paid remotely or send her your cheque.

At the same time please let us know if you wish us to collect Gift Aid for recent years and for future years. Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made.

MORE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR SUCCESSION. PLEASE COME FORWARD AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP.



The last 14 houses in Bower Lane, Eynsford, were built in 1930 at £320 each, after the water company had agreed to supply water to the top. Before that building stopped after 12 houses.

2025 PROGRAMME

The dates are all Fridays. Doors open 7.30 pm for talks at 8.00 pm. The evening includes refreshments and a display of items from FELHS collection.

Friday 21 February Eynsford Village Hall

Giles Wolfe Percy Pilcher

Giles will share his research into this pioneer of early flight, including his experimental flights at Upper Austin Lodge, Eynsford.

Friday 14 March Farningham Village Hall

Stuart Robinson London 1666: Plague, Fire & War

Stuart specialises in the history of London and leads historical walks round the city. This talk looks at the events, the people, and the contrasting fortunes of the city of London and the village of Eyam in Derbyshire at the time of the Great Plague of 1665/66, and how the communities were affected.

Friday 11 April Eynsford Village Hall

Rod Le Gear Chalk mining in Kent

Rod is a leading figure in the Kent Underground Research Group, and has vast experience of Kent chalk mines, of which there are some 1,184 cavities. Sink holes occur in the chalk around Eynsford and Farningham and more understanding of them is of local relevance.

Friday 9 May Eynsford Village Hall

AGM - followed by

Nick Fothergill Lullingstone's Dummy Airfield

Learn more about the Dummy Airfield laid out in Lullingstone Park to distract German bombers from Biggin Hill in the Second World War.

Friday 12 September Farningham Village Hall

James Holman Report on the Excavations at Harrow Meadow

James, project manager and senior consultant for Canterbury Archaeological Trust, will discuss the archaeological discoveries made during the excavations in Harrow Meadow, Eynsford and how they fit in with other local sites.

Friday 3 October Eynsford Village Hall

FELHS 40th Anniversary Evening - details to be announced

Friday 14 November Farningham Village Hall

Tom Hart Dyke Growing up in Lullingstone Castle

Tom has yet to decide on a title, but he says part of his brief will include The World Garden.

FELHS FACEBOOK @felhs.1985 From Vikki and Helen:

FELHS Facebook Page @felhs.1985 where everyone can share items from the archive and other matters that relate to the local history of the area. We have posted photos and articles that are of interest to our followers, or that have arisen from queries. Do search us out and give us a Like. If you have any suggestions on items that you would like to see on the page please email us at info@felhs.org.uk

FELHS WEBSITE www.felhs.org.uk -

Any queries to archives@felhs.org.uk

NEWS

The film night showing a coloured film with commentary of Eynsford's 1977 Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee and a shorter black and white film by Hynard and with his commentary raised nearly £800 for the Eynsford Village Hall fund. It was an enjoyable evening and the films much appreciated - about 6 members of the audience features in the 1977 film.

FELHS publication 'Eynsford Past and Present' largely compiled by Helen Smith is now on sale. **IDEAL FOR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT**. It was published by Canterley Publishing and can be ordered via www.canterley.co.uk or call 01580 766428. £9.99 plus postage. FELHS also has copies for sale - contact Alison Marshall, details in box on p.1 of this Bulletin.

RESEARCH REPORT

Susan Pittman, 01322 669923, archives@felhs.org.uk

Crime during Oliver Cromwell's Interregnum 1649-1659

Eynsford

338 p.62: Dinah William of Eynsford, widow, for burglary. On 3 June 1650 she burgled the house of William Nott of Eynsford with the intention of stealing his goods and put Elizabeth Nott, his wife, in fear of her life.

Ignoramus. (i.e. claimed to know nothing about this)

636 p.116: Joan Stepney, wife of John Stepney of Eynsford, labourer, for burglary. On 24 March 1652 she burgled the house of Elizabeth Homewood at Ryarsh and stole 5 ells of flaxen cloth (£1), a cloth petticoat (12 shillings) and 3 silk laces (2 pence).

Not guilty.

Farningham

173 p.33: Benjamin Robottom of Farningham, labourer, for burglary. On 28 Nov. 1649 he burgled the house of Thomas Godfrey at Farningham and stole 30 shillings in money.

Not guilty.

573 p.102: Anne Miller of Farningham, widow, for grand larceny. On 10 March 1652 at Farningham she stole 4 sacks (8 shillings) from George Miller.

Upon evidence given she is pardoned.

Calendar of Assize Records - Kent Indictments 1649-1659

Eynsford Branch Library that never was

After his fascinating talk about Dickens in Kent Christoph Bull asked whether FELHS collection included anything about KCC setting up a branch library at Eynsford. He has researched the following:

1928 to about 1939 - Volunteer library at Bower House

1952-1959 - Library in Village Hall at annual payment of £20

May 1975 - Plans to convert old primary school at Eynsford into a permanent branch library and Sevenoaks Divisional book store

BUT There was adverse reaction at a parish meeting held to discuss the proposal, so the project did not go ahead. (KLMA minutes 13 October 1975)

1974-1980 - Library part-time in Village Hall

1980 - Mobile library began

Christoph would like to know why Eynsford villagers did not support the proposal for an Eynsford Branch Library.

Please get in touch if you can help.

Fake or Fortune? Horse Fair at The Plough, Eynsford 1897 - Verdict Fake

Donna from Texas sent a copy of an oil painting on board entitled 'The 1897 Eynsford Horse Fair' at The Plough, and requested more information about Eynsford Horse Fairs. Helen, who received the image via FELHS Facebook page, thought the side view from the Plough car park looked as it is now. I was suspicious about 'The 1897 ..' thinking an artist then would not have used that form of title. Helen compared the current building line from the car park with frontage, also depicted on the painting, and they were identical. She then found a photo of the main building being extended from three windows to four on the upper storey and to five on the ground floor (as shown in the painting). I looked on line for paintings entitled 'Horse Fair', and found one by James Howe (1780-1836) of a horse fair in Edinburgh – elements which included a white horse with man standing by its neck, which also appeared in Donna's painting. Helen conveyed this disappointing news of a fake to Donna, who was philosophical. 'As with any artwork we purchase, it's the love of the piece... I will print out your information and attach it to the back, lest my children one day think they are inheriting a windfall art collection!' No evidence of horse fairs at Eynsford has come to light, but livestock fairs were held in Farningham. A piece about those was sent to the Trident for inclusion in October 2024 issue, and follows here.



The Plough with horse and cart in front - to its left old cottages which were bombed in the Second World War - now entrance to car park, early 1900s. So there was no way a horse fair could have been held alongside The Plough in 1897.

Cattle Fair in Farningham, 1877

The annual fair was held in Farningham Fair-field on Monday. It drew dealers and visitors from all parts of North and West Kent. The stable yards of the village hostelrys were crowded with vehicles. When these were full many were relegated to the roadway and fair-field. The display of sheep and neat cattle (i.e. ready for slaughtering) was small, but of horses there was a plentiful supply. Nearly 400 spectators were fascinated by the hurdle jumping at the lower end of the field. The side stalls included providers of gaiters, fried fish, whips, nuts, sweets and penny time-keepers (warranted accurate). There was 'a select assembly of gentlemen with dubious apparel and busy eyes who seemed to have come with many purposes in general and none in particular. The strong force of police on the ground was sufficient to prevent any grave mishap or breach of the peace.'

Dartford Chronicle 20 October 1877

Farningham Fair



Farningham Fair, 1900-1920s.



Lullingstone oak in St. Andrew's Church, Lower Road, St. Mary Cray

The church was built to serve the growing population of this part of the Cray Valley and was consecrated on 24 May 1893. 'The very handsome choir stalls with their beautifully moulded poppy heads were carved in oak cut down in Lullingstone Great Park and six given by Sir William Hart Dyke.'

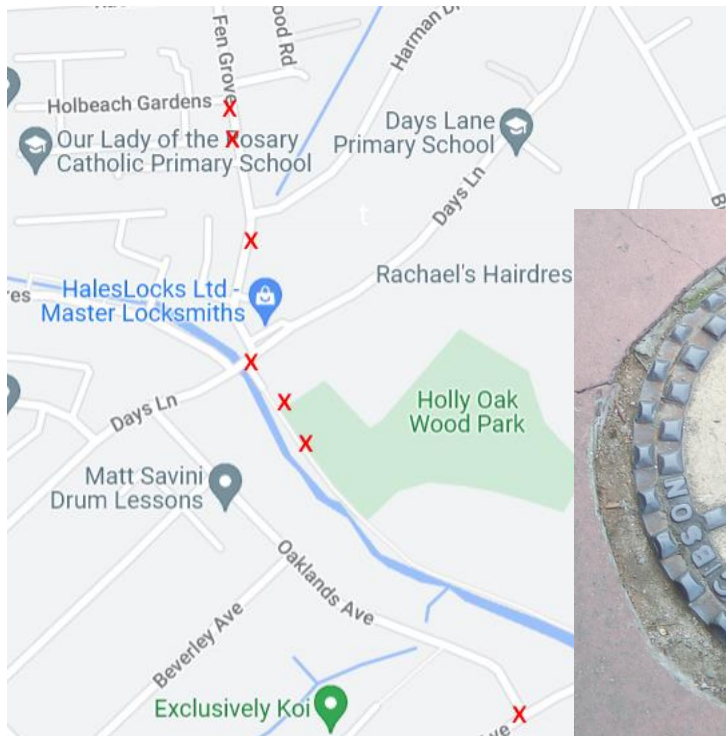
From the church website

Cold War Bunker at Gravesend

Victor Smith, in KAS Newsletter no.122 Summer 2024, has written a detailed article with plan, and photographs of the bunker at Gravesend. 'Preparing for Armageddon: The Story of Gravesend's Cold War Bunker' priced £2.50 (20 page illustrated booklet), is available via visit.gravesend@gravesham.gov.uk or sandrasoder@yahoo.co.uk - Whether the one at the Waterworks in Eynsford is similar in scale only those privy to its secrets will know.

Gibson Foundry manhole covers

Peter has renewed contact by sending photographs of Gibson Foundry covers and grilles he has found in Sidcup, and one in West Wickham. He wanted to know whether there were known examples in Bexleyheath. I recommended he purchase FELHS publication (2012) WG Duncombe *Gibson Family of Eynsford and Farningham: Blacksmiths and Ironmongers*. It lists all the Gibson street furniture then known about.



Map showing location of Gibson covers in Sidcup, with a photograph of one of them.

Zion Chapel, Priory Road, Dartford

The exertion and generosity of John Wellard of Eynsford, a papermaker in Dartford, in 1777, led to the opening in 1794 of Zion Chapel. This was associated with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, a Calvinist society. The chapel closed in 1821, and in 1826 was used as school. In the C20th it reopened as a Strict Baptist Chapel. It is a listed building. Geoff Porteus *The Book of Dartford* (1979) pp.48-49

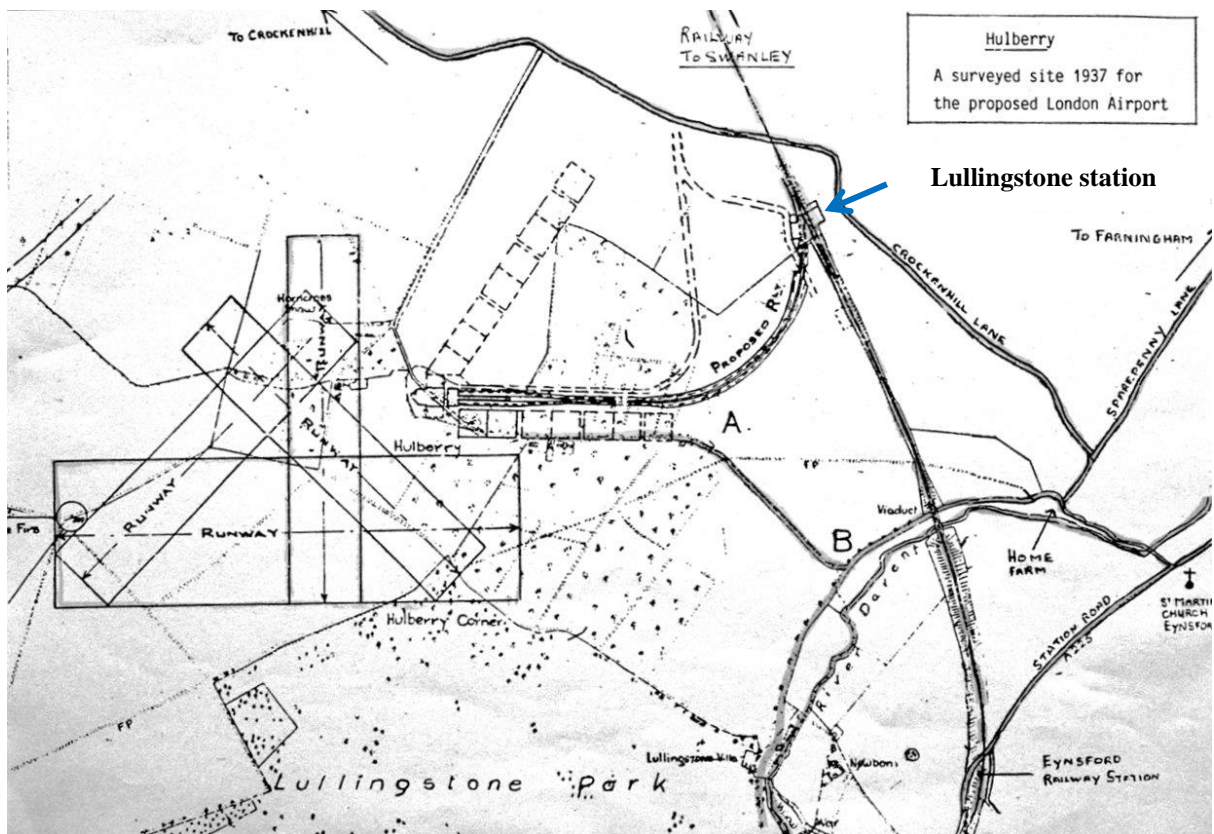


Zion Chapel, Dartford, founded by John Wellard of Eynsford. It is now a listed building.

Idea to extend Bakerloo line to Lullingstone Airport

Ed Thompson has produced a U-Tube video on vague proposals which he has come across to extend the Bakerloo underground line in the 1930s and 1940s to Lullingstone Airport. Look through your search engine for 'The Unbuilt Tube Line to an Imaginary Airport'.

Much information is available about the plans for an airport at Hulberry to replace fog-bound Croydon airport, the premier airport for London in the 1930s. Lullingstone Station was built nearby to link the proposed airport via the electrified line to Victoria. The plan for an airport was aborted and the station demolished in the 1950s, so the Bakerloo extension was a non-starter. In any case the plan to use underground trains alongside main-line trains would have been fraught with technical difficulties. To learn more about the very sketchy idea link with Ed's YouTube film.



Plan of 1937 showing layout of runways, a railway line extension from Lullingstone station to the terminal.

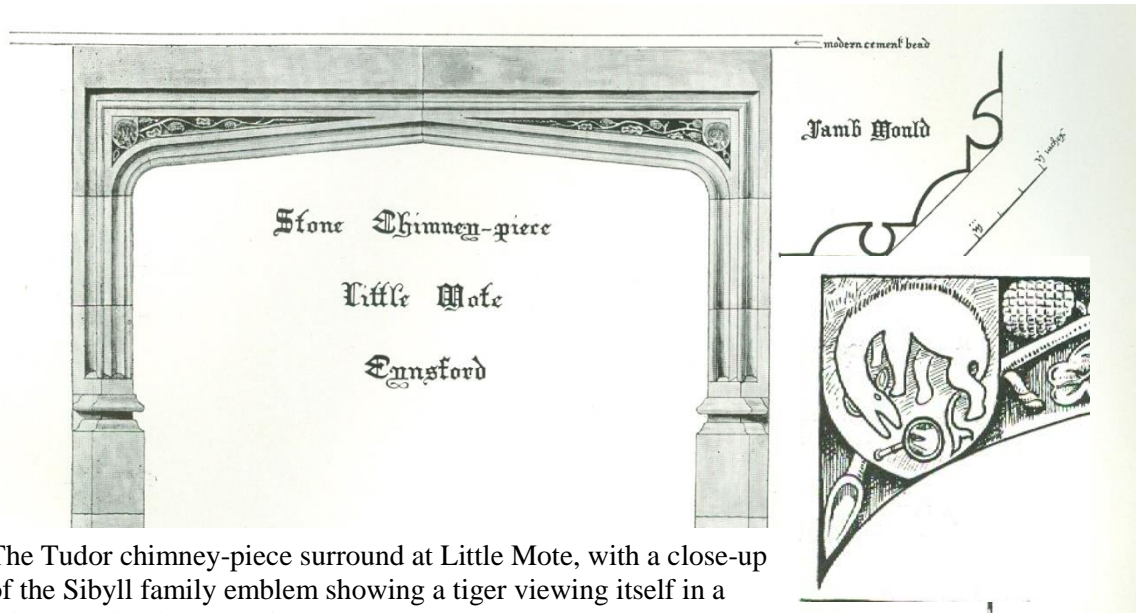


Looking towards Eynsford along the railway line to Eynsford from the top of the tunnel near Swanley, 1954.

More Local Ghosts

- **Eynsford - FELHS Visit to Little Mote, 1998 - Gloria Gee**

Gloria Gee wrote her memories of this visit, which her son, John, found in her diary. The Society was entertained in the oldest room where the fireplace had a moulded Tudor chimney-piece. Later the group was shown round the part of the building renovated by Elliott Downs Till, including the main staircase, which had been brought from Clive of India's house. The large bedroom was beautiful with a magnificent oak beamed ceiling.



The Tudor chimney-piece surround at Little Mote, with a close-up of the Sibyll family emblem showing a tiger viewing itself in a mirror, which is carved in the spandrels. (*Archaeologia Cantiana*)

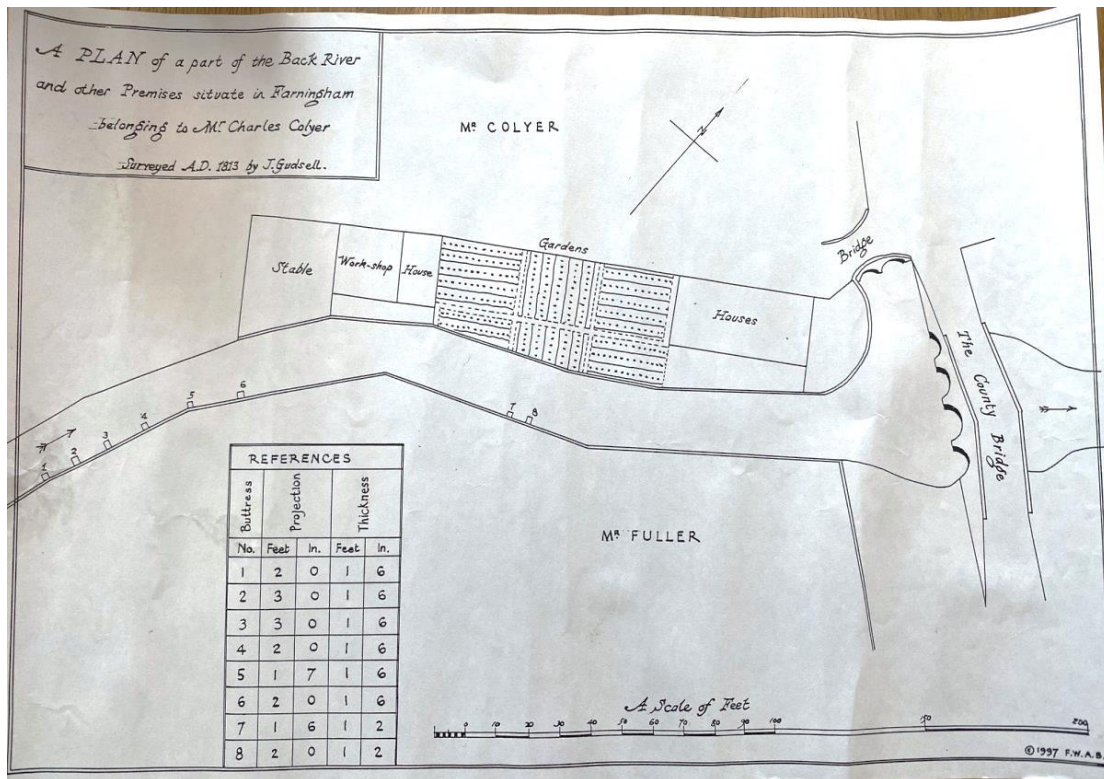
'After a delightful morning we were escorted outside by Dr. Lawrie and as we reached the far end of the house I looked back at the oldest part of the building. I suddenly let out a shriek of dismay and clutched my husband's arm. I had seen a ghost! An apparition had walked from the oldest room across the path and disappeared into the garden wall. The look of pity from everyone said it all - I was a gibbering idiot! Dr Lawrie then turned to me and said, "Oh yes, that is the grey Lady but it is very unusual for her to go outside!"

- **Farningham - The Pied Bull (now The Bull)**

One wall of the inn was moved several feet so that the ancient roadway lay within the walls of the Inn. Where the wall has been moved outwards, the sound of coach-and-horses has been heard, apparently so close that visitors have hurriedly moved from their comfortable seats by the window ... the ghost coach-and-horses, it seems, runs where the old road ran *Ghosts of Kent* by Peter Underwood (1984)

Another Gudsell plan to add to the list

This plan of 1813 showing the bridge at Farningham was in Hilary Harding's collection. 'A Plan of a part of the Back River and other Premises situate in Farningham belonging to Mr Charles Colyer.' Gudsell is buried in Farningham churchyard.



Help required!

Perhaps dated between 1975 and 1985 - can anyone pin down the date of this lorry crossing the ford at Eynsford?

ARCHIVE REPORT

Susan Pittman, 01322 669923, archives@felhs.org.uk

The team at the Centre, Ann Cornwell, Vikki Saunders, Helen Smith, Keith Turner and for a couple of sessions, Simone Laidlow, have worked tirelessly to put the Centre back into full working order after the upheaval of the burst pipe and subsequent redecoration. We have gone through the various collections checking items against the catalogue and updating, amending the catalogue where necessary. I was delighted to have two sessions with Alex, a Sixth Form student from Tonbridge School. He wanted experience of cataloguing and archiving. None of the new artefacts had been catalogued since 2019 we spent the time adding them to the collection - giving catalogue numbers and wrapping them in archival tissue etc. Alex is studying A-Level History, and according to his mother was surprised 'how much cool stuff' there was at the Centre', including the Roman ring from Farningham. It is a pity more members do not visit us to see all the 'cool stuff' we hold on behalf of the local community. The Centre is now closed until March, but queries can be answered through the website or Facebook, and appointments made to visit.

James Alexander's film collection

With the permission of the Alexander family and Eynsford Village Society the films have now been deposited in the Screen Archive South East at Brighton University (<https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk>), which can store them in the correct environmental conditions. Only one film from a television programme, which was in an unusual format, has not been included. To open it requires special equipment, which even Brighton University could not track down. Enquiries are continuing. Brighton University provided further digital copies and linked sound tracks with images, although most films are silent. FELHS was also provided with the catalogue entries for the films. Copyright has been retained by FELHS, but the archive is available to researchers and films from it can be shown by the Screen Archive, with permission.

General Enquiries

Guidance on research topic for the Darent Valley - Geoff is studying for a History MA with Open University and wanted to base his dissertation on the Darent Valley. He visited the Centre and after discussion about the farm surveys of the 1910s and the 1940s, which would have required detailed local knowledge to analyse, we agreed that a topic based on Dartford Union archives would be more practical. His interest lies in vagrancy.

Hore-Belisha, former Minister of Transport - I sent Margaret the items held at the Centre about him.

Marianne Farningham's hymn 'Just as I am, Thine own to be' - Brian requested a copy of this poem to compare with Charlotte Elliott's 'Just as I am, without one plea'. I found a copy in our collection to send him, so his request as 'a long shot' paid off!

Harold James Coles - Keith came across his Commonwealth War Grave in St. Martin's churchyard and noted that he died aged 23 on 12 November 1918 - the day after Armistice. Keith wondered about the circumstances of his death, but this is not mentioned in FELHS publication (2011) *The Commemoration of Wars in Crockenhill, Eynsford and Lullingstone* p20. As his headstone is here it is likely that he died in England rather than overseas - perhaps of a wound or he fell victim to the flu' pandemic while serving his country. Keith wanted to know the number of flu deaths locally, and also whether there were village statistics about Covid deaths. I was unable to help, except that two flu deaths are known in Crockenhill. I will include a piece about the impact of the 1918 flu' pandemic in the next Bulletin.

Farningham Mill Estate - Colyer family - Greg is a resident in the Farningham Mill complex and wanted information about the estate and family. I sent a copy of the relevant section of the catalogue, and he visited the Centre. He was also interested in the Roman remains nearby. Coincidentally, KAS was about to hold a day of lectures on archaeological sites in the Darent Valley, including the Farningham Roman villas, and he was able to book a place.

Riverdale House - A photograph of the original house on the site was mentioned at a meeting. A past and present photograph are included in the *Eynsford: Past and Present* publication.

Family History

Cais - Edward's father spent time in Farningham Home for Little Boys in the 1920s and was trying to purchase a copy of Greg Dexter's book 'A History of The Homes for Boys in Hextable'. I directed him towards Swanley History Group. There is also information on contacts and books about Farningham Home for Little Boys, and its linked home in Hextable, on the Noticeboard of FELHS website.

Sandom - Geoff's ancestor was a blacksmith at Gibson's Foundry. I was unable to track the surname, but recommended FELHS publication (2012) by Wilf Duncombe *Gibson Family of Eynsford and Farningham: Blacksmiths and Ironmongers*.

The Reid family of 'The Lion', Farningham - Audrey was at school with the son of the licensee in the 1960s, but could not remember his surname. FELHS publication (1996) by Hilary and Wilfrid Harding *The Pubs of Farningham* p.16 has the following:-

By the 1950s Mrs Munro had taken over as manager, to be followed by her son Michael (Mike) Reid, who with his wife Eve and four children, was the last licensee to live in the German End. They were a very popular family. Mike became the Farningham District Councillor and ran the pub with great style; his open smoked salmon sandwiches in the bar are still remembered.

Booker - Jo has traced her ancestor's (Jasper Booker) marriage to Ann Price in Farningham in 1821. She believes Jasper was born around 1796 and is trying to trace the family further back into the C18th. I found Jasper as a widower with family in Beesfield in both 1841 and 1851 censuses, but have been unable to help further, apart from suggesting the possibility of wills. There are several Booker family trees in the Centre, but none that I can link to Jasper.

Pocock - Peter posted on Facebook a wedding photograph of Alfred Hussey and Nellie Pocock outside Mayfield, Farningham, and wanted to know its location. Helen thought it was by the A225 and now called Woodside. Vikki took a photograph and though the house has altered was able to confirm that Mayfield is now Woodside. Peter was delighted.

Mayfield at the time of the wedding was the home of Mr and Mrs O'Mara. Peter provided names, but not the date, though it would be simple to look up.





Pocock wedding group by Mayfield, Farningham, 1910. far back: Harry Pocock, Mary Jane Keithley?- main row left to right: George & Emily (Parker) Pocock?, 2 unknown, parents of Fred Hussey, hidden figure behind Mrs Hussey, Alfred Hussey (groom) & Nellie Pocock (bride), ladies with white stoles Annie & Elizabeth Pocock?, Kate Pocock. seated left: Eliza Dunkly & William Pocock, boy Herbert George Pocock? -seated right: Abraham & Mercy (Mary) (Peacock) Pocock.

Acquisitions

Diana Beamish - Brownie dress from late 1980s; Guide badges 1990-1994; Paxwood Camp badge 1991; Blackland Camp badge 1994.

Farningham St. John's Ambulance Brigade memorabilia - Terry Hutchings has deposited this collection on behalf of the Brigade. Unfortunately, most photographs are undated and people unidentified. 1977 50th Jubilee of Farningham Brigade; Shield from KCC for sterling services during Operation JIB (when served during strike of NHS ambulance staff); Minute book 1981-1984, Signing on for duty books 1981-1984, 1984-1987, 1987-1990; Divisional register 1984-1992; St John's Ambulance Brigade certificates 2011 Attending incident at Superbikes event, Brands Hatch, 2022 District Manager's Commendation to Farningham Brigade.

Pamela Mason - 2008 photographs of bell coming to Farningham Church, Swanley Girl Guides c.1960, St. Botolph's Church; Pamphlet by Col. Meates 'Lullingstone Roman Villa, 1958.

Gerald Roome - Water colour of Farningham Church by L.H. Hodsoll, 1971 on back; PO Savings book (RE Roome) 1958-1968; Driving licence, Roberta Elizabeth Roome, 1966; 1964 Union of Post Office Workers diary; 1964 cheque, St. Martin's Bank, Farningham.