

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. 140

Winter 2025/2026

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL REQUEST for 2026

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.

£12 (individual) / **£20** (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.

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 - Queries to archives@felhs.org.uk

FELHS CENTRE is now closed until March, but can be visited by arrangement - contact Facebook or Website

PLEASE NOTE: Eynsford Village Hall is not taking bookings for 2026 so if you have already picked up a programme, there are some changes in the 2026 Programme to note from March onwards.

2026 PROGRAMME

Please note there are some changes in date and venue (noted below) from earlier printed programmes for 2026

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.

2026

Friday 13 February

Farningham Village Hall

Jennifer Godfrey

Suffragettes of Kent

Jennifer's talk is based on her book 'Suffragettes of Kent'. She has researched tours of Kent by the Women's Suffrage League, militant and arson attacks in the county, forcible feeding in Maidstone prison. She has found out who in Kent signed the very first mass petition for votes for women in 1866 and who boycotted the 1911 census.

Friday 27 March

Farningham Village Hall (change of venue)

Ed Thompson

Swanley to Bat & Ball railway line

Ed Thompson, a well-known Otford resident, has a vast collection of photos and early sketches of Otford, Sevenoaks and surrounding villages, which he has used to produce some fascinating books. He has long been interested in the local railway line and has researched it in depth.

Friday 24 April

Farningham Village Hall

Dr Janet Clayton

Scadbury moated manor, Chislehurst

Janet is Chairman of the Orpington and District Archaeological Society (ODAS), which has for many years been conducting a research project at the scheduled site of Scadbury Moated Manor, Chislehurst. The site is within Scadbury Park Country Estate owned by the London Borough of Bromley. She has researched the ancient Hundred of Ruxley - her thesis leading to a doctorate.

Friday 22 May

Farningham Village Hall

FELHS AGM

details to be announced in due course

September 25

Venue to be announced

Dr Anne Sassin

Further digs at Lullingstone Castle

Anne has been keeping us up to date with the community digs in and around Lullingstone organised under the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership, which has now been completed. This final talk will disclose the results of further exploration in the area of the former moat alongside Lullingstone Castle, which takes the history of the manor house back hundreds of years.

October 23

Farningham Village Hall

FELHS film night - details to be announced.

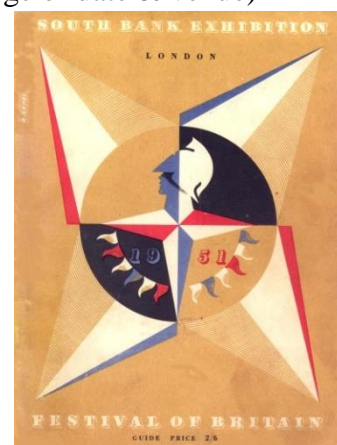
November 27

Farningham Village Hall (change of date & venue)

Alan Williams

The Festival of Britain 1951

Alan lives in Otford and is a Lecturer, and a very active member of the 1940s Society in the village. He expressed an interest in the 1951 Festival of Britain - hence the invitation to give this talk. The Festival of Britain was a national celebration held to boost morale after the Second World War and showcase British achievements in science, arts, and design. It aimed to provide a "tonic for the nation" and usher in a new era of modern design and innovation amidst post-war austerity.



FELHS 40th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

The Society celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the October meeting this year. The co-founders were the late Paul Parmenter of Farningham and Wilf Duncombe of Eynsford. They wanted to keep alive the rich heritage of both villages along with Maplescombe, Lullingstone and Crockenhill, the latter once being part of the ancient parish of Eynsford. Paul and Wilf called a public meeting from which FELHS was born. It aims to study, research and record the history of the area and to share the results within the communities it serves. As a result of its efforts the Society has produced over forty publications - its most recent being *Eynsford - Past & Present*. Members receive updates on new findings and research three times a year in *The Bulletin*. The Society now holds a large collection of historical items in the Centre it has developed between the Common Meadow and Riverside Club, Eynsford. This collection is available to local people, and to those with family, local or related interests. The Centre has been widely acclaimed by other village communities, who envy the range of local subjects, artefacts, images, maps and other items which can be seen there. Many of these activities were show-cased at the Open Meeting, which was appreciated by all who came. Helen, Vikki and Ann arranged some delicious refreshments, with a FELHS cake which was cut by Peter Jones. Peter offered to be project manager, and underwrote the expenses of converting the Centre from its previous use as public toilets. Being the director of a plumbing company meant that he had the expertise at hand. He also persuaded a fellow businessman to install the electrical fittings free of charge. Without the generosity of Peter and his friend, FELHS would have struggled to raise the full amount of money needed to set up the Centre twenty years ago. We had some excellent volunteer manpower to set up the Hall and to help clear away - so a big thankyou to Barry, Jason, Keith, John M and John L.



FELHS 40th Anniversary cake close-up.

Peter Jones cutting the cake,
3 October 2025.





Helen and Ann overseeing refreshments.



Vikki overseeing greeting members and visitors.



John, Jason and Barry watching a film on the stage screen.



Display of 2nd World War items from FELHS collection.

RESEARCH REPORT

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

Online News

- **Historic England** has launched its new **Local Heritage Hub** (historicengland.org.uk/local) which includes pages for every county, district, city, major town and national park. Aerial photos, listed buildings, archive material, videos, podcasts and local stories can now be accessed in one place.
- **The British Newspaper Library and Findmypast** are to add about 70,000,000 more digitised pages over the next five years.

Bower House, Eynsford, as Workhouse

The Poor Law Act of 1834 set up Union Workhouses to replace local parish workhouses. Eynsford Parish lay within the Dartford Union. Eynsford Workhouse in Bower House continued into the 1840s until the new Dartford Union Workhouse was built. The minutes of the Dartford Union relate what then happened to Eynsford Workhouse:-

29/8/1846

Order to churchwardens and overseers of poor to convene a meeting of ratepayers of Eynsford to obtain consent to Guardians of the Poor selling a messuage or tenement with yard and garden thereto in the parish of Eynsford.

8/9/1846

Resolution with form of notice convening meeting and certificate of Minister, churchwardens and overseers annexed agreeing sale of Eynsford Workhouse.

19/9/1846

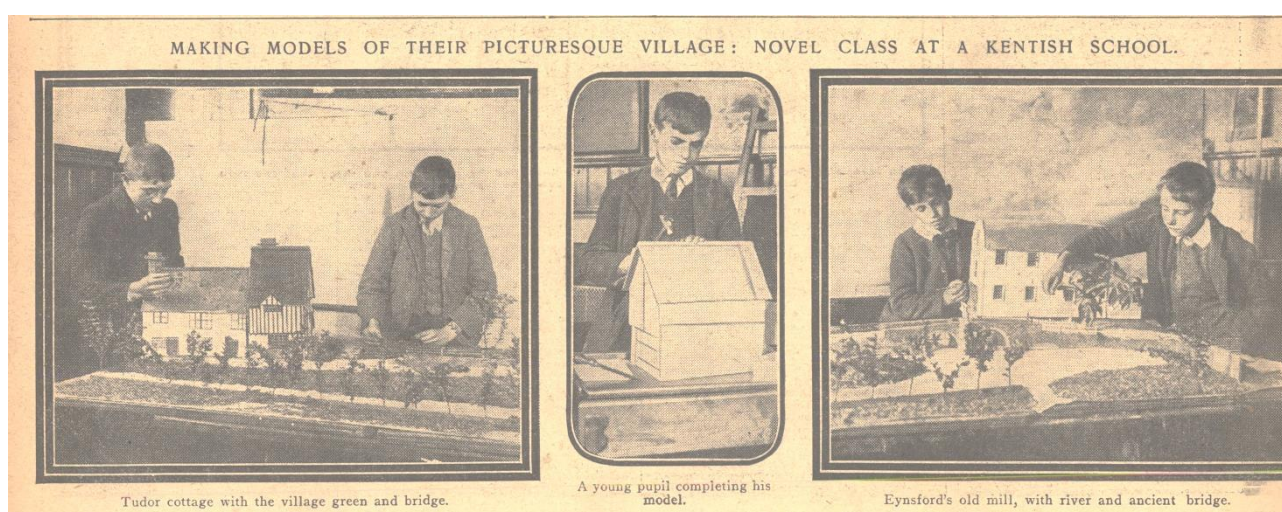
Order to proceed with sale of Eynsford Workhouse.

26/9/1846

Thomas Sargent (Sargent) of Eynsford agreed to purchase Eynsford Workhouse for £200. (See previous Bulletin no.139 about the Sargent family and Bower House)

G/Da/AM6 Dartford Union Minutes

Making models of their picturesque village: Novel class at a Kentish School



Originality is fostered at the village school at Eynsford where the boys are allowed to make models of anything their fancy dictates. Edward Hutt has made a model of the Tudor cottage and the green, and George Vidler and G. Whiffin have between them reproduced the village mill, green and bridge. All three boys are twelve years of age. *Daily Mirror* 29/10/1912. (Sent in by Peter Jones)

'Lucy Box' -Electrical Distribution Box, High Street, Eynsford



This interesting piece of street furniture is to be found on the pavement near the Eynsford Village sign. It has been restored by the Parish Council and more information related to Eynsford box has been found, so the plaque is due to be updated. 'Lucy Box' is a generic term for an electrical distribution box, because the Lucy Electric Company was an early manufacturer of the product from the 1870s. However, Eynsford's box was made by Hardy and Padmore Ltd. Co. of Worcester, which was incorporated in 1893 and dissolved in 2015. Eynsford's nearest power station was built in Dartford in 1898, but this supplied electricity to Dartford town only. In 1929 a scheme to supply the whole of Dartford District (in which Eynsford lay) was begun, and included 8 substations. The power supply reached Eynsford in 1931, but cables were not laid through the village until 1935. It might have been at this point that the electrical distribution box was required to meet local demand. The box is sited below the wall of the former Eynsford County Primary School (the old school railings are still visible above). The amount of electricity required by the school was calculated in 1946, and electricity supplied to the school in 1948. The school might have been linked to an existing distribution box or the box installed at that point to bolster local supply when the school was added to the grid.

S.K. Keyes, Dartford Historical Notes; Excerpts from Joseph Larter's diary (FELHS collection); Diana Beamish, Anthony Roper Primary School.

Eynsford in 1837 (Gentleman's Magazine vol. 3)

The inaccuracy of the description in the article leads one to think that much of it was not written from experience. We are told that in the 'street' lie the ruins of a Norman castle on the right and the Norman church on the left, and 'before us lies the fine old English mansion of Lullingstone, with its ivied gate, its moated towers ...' Recent archaeological excavations of the moat along with C18th evidence indicate that moat and inner wall with towers were removed several decades before 1837. Dr Anne Sassin points out that the moat was not shown on the 1802 estate map, and pottery in the moat fill dated to about 1800. The magazine was an American publication, and if anyone can access it on-line please save it for the Society. I have looked up vol. 3 and cannot find this article in it. The article mentions an engraving of 'the happy valley' of Eynsford with castle and church, which would be interesting to see. The people of Eynsford are described in a condescending way:-

The people of the village are intelligent - and, consequently, polite - beyond their stations in life; the superstitions of the country side are unknown to them, a sturdy honour characterises their conduct, and the valley in which they live is famous for its health, its honesty, its happiness. This desirable state of affairs is attributable to the paternal character of the gentry, and the zealous care bestowed by the clergy of the place on the education of the rising race.

CHALLENGE - How does this compare with the people of Eynsford today!??

Farningham's lively past, *Kentish Times* 2/3/1989

Des Clark wrote an article on this theme, but did not give his sources.

- Marianne Farningham (1834-1909) recalled her horror at first seeing a young woman riding a bicycle. She confessed to being a young fogey, but eventually learnt that it was unnecessary to be miserable in order to be good!
- Mr Colyer was a legendary recluse in Farningham House. It is uncertain what caused him to seek isolation - a disappointment in love or remorse for accidentally knocking down and killing a villager. He left the house only once from the date of the accident, to see a fire which destroyed some buildings near *The Chequers*.
- Sir Irving Albery of the Manor House presented the site for a village hall which was built and equipped by means of a £400 grant from the Carnegie Trust, a £300 loan and £530 raised by the parish. It was designed by Jessica Albery, daughter of Sir Irving, and built and equipped by local talent.

Farningham is described as having changed from a lively important stage-post to a sedate country village. Is that still a valid description??!



Fire damage to *The Chequers*, Farningham - so far undated.

Joseph Larter's diary - Swanley to Bat & Ball line

Joseph Larter came to Kent from East Anglia in 1887, and from his diary entries, which go up to 1938, it appears he worked at Eynsford Station.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 3-10-1904 | Alterations started at Eynsford Station |
| 12-7-1905 | Charles Smith killed at Eynsford Station |
| 4-12-1905 | Mark Groover killed at Mays Sidings |
| 25/26-4-1908 | New bridge erected at Shoreham Station |
| 21-8-1910 | Peter Kaney killed in the Eynsford tunnel |
| Oct 1910 | Mrs Birchall accident at Swanley Station |
| 5-8-1913 | South E C Railway supplied men with whistles |
| 6-5-1914 | Smash up at Eynsford Station |
| 7-8-1914 | Went on guard at Eynsford viaduct when the war started with Germany |
| 19-11-1915 | James Leigh accident at Eynsford Station |
| 27-9-1919 | Railway strike started - ended 5-10-1919 |
| 23-12-1920 | Charles John Wise killed at Otford Junction - buried 29-12-1920 |

15 & 28-1925 New bridge at Eynsford Station
 1/6-3-1925 New bridge at Preston Farm road Shoreham
 Sun 6-1-1935 Electric train service ran at Eynsford for the first time

Working on the railway seems to have been hazardous and there must be some tragic stories behind these basic statements.



Eynsford viaduct as Joseph Larter would have known it. FELHS has a 'Salmon' postcard showing the station before 1925 when the footbridge was erected between the platforms, but it is under copyright.

Farningham entries in Joseph Larter's Diary

Joseph Larter noted random events which were significant to him. The fatal motor accident of 1909 to the Gouldings might have been the earliest recorded in Farningham.

- 16/11/1904 Mr Broad accident Farningham died 18th
- 23/5/1909 Fire at Chimham's farm, Mr Moss tenant
- 1/9/1909 Fire near Roper's Charity haystack
- 26/9/1909 Motor fatality at Farningham. Mr Goulding killed, Mrs Goulding died of injuries
- 24/1/1924 William Loft accident Farningham
- 12/2/1911 Motor mishap at Gorse Hill Farningham
- 1/2/1912 Frank Wallace Farningham died Thursday 9 o'clock
- 25/9/1929 Mr H. Jackson Auction sale Beesfield
- 10/11/1929 Motor accident at Farningham between a Maidstone District bus and a private car, four persons injured
- 11/11/1929 Doctor Ashurst Farningham died aged 97
- 25/7/1930 John Dollings killed near Goss (?Gorse) Hill Farningham aged 78
- 27/7/1930 New ambulance at Farningham
- 16/8/1930 Mr Greffeth Fort Farningham buried at Eynsford
- 26/4/1931 William Shutter Farningham found dead in bed aged 73
- 10/5/1931 Albert Barber Council houses Farningham received head injuries by motor car at Eynsford
- 28/12/1932 Walter Frederick Roberts Asprington met with his death by a motor car and his motor bike colliding near the filling station Farningham, died first day of New Year, aged 57

22/7/1933
4/2/1937

Aeroplane down on Fred Barnard's field, friend of D Rodgers Farningham
Louis John Larking met with an accident at Farningham and died at Dartford
Hospital, buried at Farningham aged 56



Chimhams, new farmhouse built in 1886 to replace the old uncomfortable house. It was designed by architect St. Pierre Harris ARIBA occupying 'a fine position on the hills between Farningham and Wrotham'. *The Building News* 17 December 1886

Giant Frogs star in film; Dragon lost in Kent; Mouse-eating toads

In 1938 Dr. F.M. Haines, an Eynsford resident and lecturer in physiology, kept a variety of reptiles and amphibians in his house. Once a monitor (giant lizard) disappeared, but was found up the dining room chimney. The biggest thrill was the escape of a dragon - a harmless water lizard with a fiery front, large claws, and a crested head. Eynsford villagers were alerted, and children enthusiastically joined the hunt. After a week of wandering it was found sitting disconsolately on a doorstep a quarter of a mile away.

Sunderland Daily Echo & Shipping Gazette 25/5/1938 - sent in by Peter Jones



Tudor Cottage, Eynsford Riverside, 1941



Archibald Ross-Thomas, for some time resident of Hextable, was the artist of this woodblock print. After the war he became Director of the British Institute in Mosul, and some of his woodcuts of Middle Eastern scenes are in the V & A. He and the Wiltchers, donors of the image, were friends and he was known to them as Uncle Ross. In 1965 he wrote to them about the block which he cut in the middle of the Blitz.

'It was used by the American, Mrs Stamper, who used to live in St. Mary Cray, as a receipt for the American Friends of Britain Spitfire Fund. She had a receipt form overprinted on the right hand corner and 'There'll always be an England' on the left.

It seems it tickled the American's fancy at the time for it collected several thousand dollars for the funds. They kept sending for more copies and each time - a donation.'

ARCHIVE REPORT

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

The team at the Centre, comprising Ann Cornwell, Vikki Saunders, Helen Smith, and Keith Turner have been hard at work since March on Monday mornings (9.30 am - 12.00 pm). We have been preparing for our October meeting when FELHS celebrated its 40th anniversary. We opened the Centre on August Bank Holiday Monday to coincide with the event on the neighbouring Cricket

Meadow, and our stand outside attracted attention of passers-by and some came inside to look around.

Index for Bulletins after 2018 - Volunteer needed to update the Index, which is a useful tool to access the Bulletins on the website. A few hours on the computer would get the job done, and the current Index would serve as a template. This is a task that can be done in the comfort of your home and in your own time - please consider doing it.

WANTED - A folding table about 75cm x 92cm (2½ x 3ft) - this as a guidance for size. We often need extra table top space which can be put away when not needed. Any offers of a suitable table would be welcome.

Family History Enquiries

Hever family - Ricky's great grandfather was Marmaduke William Hever, born in Southwark, but with father James Hever baptised in Eynsford in the 1840s. He wanted to know more about family links with Eynsford. I put him in touch with Philip, who was following the same line, and sent him the catalogue entries for Darenth Hire Service run by Monty Hever in the 1940s and 1950s.

Private Edward Wilfred Mills - Robert asked about the 1st World War service record of his grandfather from the London Regiment. He lived in Rablus Place, Farningham. FELHS has a newspaper cutting dated 18/1/1918, with poor quality photograph, reporting Edward's being severely wounded in both legs at the Cambrai front. He had been sent to a hospital in Bath.

The Sharp family of Farningham and beyond - Colin has recently written up his family history and provided the Society with a copy. The family has appeared in several Bulletins as bricklayers/builders (including *The Bricklayers Arms*) and as parish officials.

General Enquiries

Eynsford Parish Council - Percy Pilcher Memorial maintenance; 'Lucy' box history.

Cobham Parish Council - Advice on setting up a village history centre.

Tudor Cottage and *The Plough*, Eynsford - Peter read in Christopher Rayner's *Sevenoaks Past* that Tudor Cottage was once part of *The Plough*. As the 1941 woodblock above shows there was a gap between the buildings, which on a plan once housed a urinal. No evidence has been found to link the cottage with the pub.

Local servicemen killed in 1st World War - Michael requested a list because he was researching those with awards for bravery. FELHS publication *Commemoration of Wars in Crockenhill, Eynsford and Lullingstone* is available via the website. Research into Farningham's fallen is available on line with details on the Noticeboard page of the website.

For DRIPS - The filing cabinet catalogue entries for the river Darent and the Darent Valley were provided.

The Quadrangle, Shoreham - James, on behalf of the owner, was trying to discover the architect of this model dairy farm set around a courtyard. It was built for the Mildmay family in 1870. I located the Mildmay archive deposits and suggested contact with RIBA.

Sketch marked Eynsford 1919 - Rob allowed us to copy a sketch which had been in his parent's home for years. It turned out to be of New Barn Farm off Lullingstone Lane. FELHS had no other old images of this. The picture was framed so difficult to copy to avoid light reflections, but in the original the classical style barn frontage is clear. Perhaps, this was newly built in the C18th when the money was also invested by the Lullingstone estate in new farmhouses e.g. Home Farm, Eynsford, Wested Farm and Park Gate Farm, Crockenhill, and Cockerhurst, Shoreham. The artist's name is indecipherable, but Rob believes it to be by a family member.



New Barn Farm 1919

Acquisitions

Stephen Archer - Bound copy of St. Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard and Church monumental inscriptions, Farningham - each memorial transcribed and photographed.

Ian Macknelly - A box of archives from his father, George, covering Farningham, Eynsford and Lullingstone churches. George wrote FELHS short histories of all three churches, and the box contained his research notes and related correspondence.

Ross Wilcher - Woodblock print of Eynsford Tudor Cottage in 1941 by Archibald Ross-Thomas. (see above).

Shireen West (Marden) - 'Miss Farningham' sash won c. 1967/1968. Mick Martin has donated a photograph of her being awarded the sash, but it is under copyright.



Looking north up (towards A20) Farningham High Street, with *The Lion* - probably 1890s horse-drawn transport, but after telegraph installation.