

# The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

*A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee  
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Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society established 1985. Registered Charity No. 1047562)

## **Bulletin No 77** **March 2008**

### **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM will take place at Farningham Village Hall on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm (doors open 7.30pm)

The Agenda is as follows:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last AGM/matters arising
4. Adoption of Accounts
5. Setting of the Subscription level for 2009
6. Election of officers and committee
7. Any other business

**Nominations for officers or committee members should reach the Secretary by 1st May 2008**

### **Forthcoming Talks and Events**

| <b>2008</b> | <b>Details</b>  | <b>Where</b> |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| 9th May     | AGM (Memories of childhood)   | Farningham   |
| 19th Sept   | 40 years of Axstane Players - Barrie Payne<br>(A look back over the last 40 years of the Players)                                       | Farningham   |
| 31st Oct    | Halloween supper with spooky food ( Tonbirdge Mummies<br>& Hoodeners entertain us with spooky tales)<br>7pm for 7.30pm - £10 per ticket | Eynsford     |
| 21st Nov    | Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes - Alan Stockwell<br>(Amusing stories from the life of a puppeteer)  | Eynsford     |

Unless otherwise stated all Meetings are held on a Friday evening from 730pm, talk commencing 8pm. (Note: front row seats can be reserved for members with hearing or eyesight difficulties and hearing loops are now available on request)

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Barbara Cannell 864253)**

How time flies by, seems like I've only just finished the last report and here I am wondering what I can write about again!

The dark days of winter are at last becoming a memory (*well they were when Barbara wrote this report - editor*) and we will soon be able to plan visits to those places that we've been reading about. Many of the local attractions that have been closed for renovations will be opening their doors to us once again. I'm looking forward to a walk around the gardens at Hall Place and Danson Park and I always find something of interest in the programme of events held at Hall Place during the year. Nearer to home is Lullingstone Castle and Tom's World Garden which I have seen many times but not in the Spring, so this year will be my first visit of the season. We will have to wait a little longer before the Roman Villa invites us inside to look at the alterations that have been made.

Recently I was able to visit the British Museum to see a small display of the remarkable Terracotta Warriors and some of the interesting artefacts that were found buried with them. This exhibition is open until the 27th April and I would recommend a visit if at all possible

There is plenty to see and do not too far from home so enjoy the opportunities on offer.

### **PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)**

With the closure of Farningham Post Office we have lost another outlet for our publications. I would like to thank Phil on behalf of the Society for stocking publications relating to Farningham and for selling them to visitors who were interested in the history of the buildings and people of the village. Martin Finch of Wadard Books has a small selection of publications for sale and Wards the estate agents in Eynsford High Street have copies of the Eynsford Castle guide. Before Lullingstone Roman Villa closed for alterations copies of the Eynsford Castle guide were available there and Jan was very thoughtful to have our publications on sale if they were in any way suitable for the villa programme of events. If any members can think of other outlets for our publications perhaps they could let me know.

One recent enquiry that pleased me came from America. A lady writing an article on 18th and 19th century seedsmen and nurserymen in the USA and the UK required a copy of our publication *Cartwheels and Chrysanthemums* as she was researching the work done by Henry Cannell. This delighted me as it was always a great disappointment to my husband that the name of his great grandfather was not remembered in the world of horticulture. I hope that the book and the information that I send will be helpful to her and it would be lovely if she was able to send me a copy of her finished work.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT ( Elaine Ruby 862241)**

As you can see from the forthcoming programme, we have a full year of meetings and events planned for 2008. Our thanks to Jan Wilkes who has put together a really varied

programme and we hope we've included something for everyone. Over the last year we've been encouraged by the feedback received from members, listened to your suggestions and have put the programme together with the aim of maximising attendance at these meetings. With this in mind, we look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to our events this year. The next being the AGM on Friday 9th May at Farningham. Our thoughts that evening will be childhood and after the business of the AGM there will be a buffet, raffle and a chance to reminisce about childhood with an exhibition of toys and games from the past.

Thank you if you've already returned your annual subs. However, if you found a red slip attached to your copy of the Bulletin it's a reminder that you still need to renew your subscription as soon as possible please.

### **RESEARCH REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923)(website [www.felhs.org.uk](http://www.felhs.org.uk))**

I am at the writing up stage of my PhD with strict deadlines to meet so if some of my reports for the Bulletins in the next eighteen months have fewer snippets than usual, I apologise and hope you will bear with me. On the plus side, it is because I have been doing so much research albeit for Tudor and Stuart deer parks that I have fortuitously come across interesting items for our patch.

### **Disruption at The National Archives**

The Family Record Centre has been moved to Kew so major reorganisation is underway. The move was carried out before the new building for it was started so the present building is in shambles and will be so for many months to come. The advice is to check before you go, because seats and some of the records might not always be available.

### **New Publications**

**Herbert Randall DCM by Frank Coppins** (68 pages fully illustrated)

**My Childhood at Wested by Jack Randall aged 77, August 2006** (46 pages illustrated)

Both cost £3 + postage

Jack and Frank are brothers-in-law, but Frank has done the hard graft of research.

Herbert Randall was Jack's older brother, who was killed in the final days of the First World War. His name appears on the war memorial in All Souls' Crockenhill. Frank has done a marvellous job in discovering Herbert's war record and recreating it through the regimental diary and the memories of other soldiers who fought in the same battles. Jack Randall's childhood memories cover the period of the 1920 to 1940s.

Contact: Frank Coppins/ 5 Longpark Place/ Livingston/ Scotland/ EH54 6TU

### **Names on Farningham 1st and 2nd World War memorial**

Kyle Tallett, a First World War historian, whose family originated from Farningham has researched the names on the war memorial. His research is available on his website: [www.royalnavalddivision.co.uk](http://www.royalnavalddivision.co.uk) He has given the Society a CD copy of his work.

### **Patience Strong in Farningham**

Having now read her autobiography 'With a poem in my pocket', I discovered that Patience did not live in Farningham during the Second World War. She and her husband lived in a flat in the former public house, 'The Bricklayers' Arms', for a year in the mid 1930s, until they found a more permanent home. This is what she wrote about Farningham:

Two memories of our year in this strange place stand out in my mind: a Victoria plum tree in the garden so heavily fruited that it bent to the ground under the weight of the branches and I shall never forget how a nightingale sang from the honeysuckle hedge from dusk to dawn on the night before we left.'

### **Lullingstone Airport update**

After a lapse of several years John King has resumed his interest. He already had much detail on the airport proposals of the 1930s, but was less clear about how these linked in with the early Green Belt Act and with the plans for an orbital road from the Dartford tunnel. He also wanted to discover whether there had been any local opposition. He now has many of the answers and I, for one, am looking forward to the Society being able to publish his findings.

There seemed to have been little protest about the airport, but loud protests about the road which would have run along the Darent Valley, roughly along the line of Sparepenny Lane and, south of Eynsford, between the river and the A225. Three beauty spots were threatened Farningham Wood, Sparepenny Lane and Lullingstone Park. Mr A. E. Rogers, chairman of Farningham Parish Council, called the proposals 'appalling'. He said if the road was built through Farningham Woods, which had only recently been purchased by Dartford Rural District Council, 'it will be murdered as a beauty spot'. Lady Hart Dyke described how the road would cut through the lovely mulberry plantation and completely spoil the picturesque sandy walk. It would have divided Lullingstone Castle from the lodge gates. Sir Oliver Hart Dyke called it 'a disgusting proposal.'

### **1931 Census in the Dartford Rural District Planning Scheme**

|                         |            |                 |                      |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Eynsford (Eynsford Ward | 3544 acres | 4191 population | £8881 rateable value |
| (Crockenhill Ward       |            |                 | £3893                |
| Farningham              | 2739       | 1579            | £10014               |
| Lullingstone            | 1557       | 118             | £971                 |

### **More about early Baptists in Crockenhill and Eynsford**

(From Rev. Thomas Timpson, Church History in Kent, 1859, p.540-541)

A Christian gentleman of Dartford regarded Crockenhill as 'sitting in darkness and the shadow of death'. He felt greatly concerned for their evangelisation; and being visited, in 1798, by a minister from London, he proposed to him to preach at Crockenhill. They went together, and his friend preached. 'The Lord of the harvest' gave them favour in the sight of some who heard the word, opening a door for the Gospel of Christ. Several of the West Kent Association of Ministers visited and preached in this place, until a blacksmith's forge was hired and fitted up as a chapel. This house was dedicated to God on 20 May 1801, when the Rev. Mr Meffin of Dartford and the Rev. Mr Fowler of Sheerness, preached on the occasion, to the profit of many in the two adjoining parishes. This place was afterwards enlarged by the addition of a commodious school-room ... Some of the earliest attendants on the gospel at Crockenhill resided at Eynsford,. They, receiving benefit by the truth, originated a preaching station in their village on 2 July 1799; therefore a small chapel was opened, and this led to a flourishing congregation in Eynsford.

N. B. The original chapel in Crockenhill was located in what now is 'Old Chapel Road'. A plan exists, as do some of the original seating books, but as the building was set back off the road, I have been unable to find a picture of it. The foundation stone of the new chapel (still in use) was laid on 24 August 1869.

### **Edward Hasted, famous Kent historian, in Farningham**

While living at St. John's, Sutton-at-Hone, Hasted rented a house at Farningham. For about 2 years from 1763-1765, he hired Mrs Pratt's house at the rent of £11/15/00d a year.

(Archaeologia Cantiana CX, 1992, p.121, by Shirley Burgoyne Black)

### **Thoughts on the habit of smoking by a foreigner, 1596**

Paul Hentzner wrote of his travels in England towards the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and he commented on the unusual habits he observed. His description would be enough to put anyone off I should have thought:

The English are constantly smoking tobacco; and in this manner – they have pipes on purpose made of clay, into the farther end of which they put the herb, so dry that it may be rubbed into powder, and putting fire to it, they draw the smoke into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils like funnels, along with it plenty of phlegm and defluxion from the head.

(Travels in England by Paul Hentzner)

### **Grant to cut wood in Farningham, 1601**

Indenture from Roger Hackett DD parson of North Crawly, Buckinghamshire, to Cuthbert Hackett, dyer of London, to cut and carry wood from lands in Horton, Dartford and Farningham for 20 years.

(British Library Add.Mss 23782)

### **Three spinsters accused of grand larceny, Lullingstone, 1603**

Grace Williams, Jane Holgate and Edith Harrys spinsters of Lullingstone indicted that on 26 April 1603 they broke into the house of Henry Shawe, labourer of Lullingstone, and stole a red petticoat (worth 2 shillings), a fustian waistcoat (sixpence), a pair of sheets (2 shillings), 3 ells of holland cloth (3 shillings), 3 silk girdles (sixpence) 6 falling bands (2 shillings) and 2 smocks (2 shillings). Found not guilty.

(Kent Assizes, September 1603, no.160)

### **What was going on in Eynsford in 1450?**

Inquiry held at Dartford on 20 October 1450 found that Sir John Sutton, Baron of Dudley, with others on 18 June 1450 had broken in the house of George Barton of Chipstead and taken away some valuable items. Among the jurors was John Myche of Eynsford, against whom the accused obviously had a grudge, because on the same day in June Sir John Sutton and others:-

Gathering to them many unknown evil-doers and disturbers of the peace to the number of 2000 persons had forcibly assaulted John Myche of Eynsford at Eynsford and beat, wounded and ill-treated him so that he despaired of his life; and took away 46 shillings and 8 pence in cash, together with 4

pairs of sheets and one coverlet. Further Sir Robert Wingfield also gathering many evil-doers on the same day forcibly assaulted the same John Myche beat, wounded and ill-treated him and cut off his right ear; to the damage of £100.

I wonder what was behind all this? Two of the ring-leaders were courtiers whose removal from the House of Commons had been demanded. More I have not enquired into.

(Archaeologia Cantiana xviii, 1964, pp.241/2)

### **More trouble in Eynsford in 1312**

Complaint by William Inge brought before the King against 33 named men who broke the gates, doors and windows of his manors at Eynsford, Ightham and Stanstead, felled his trees, carried away his trees and goods, drove away the oxen, cows, sheep and swine found on his manors, and detained them so long, not permitting them to graze, that a great part thereof perished from hunger.

(Calendar of Patent Rolls)

### **Website for *The Illustrated London News***

[www.iln.org.uk](http://www.iln.org.uk) - this will open various indexes e.g. for certain years or search for places. May 1876 includes pictures of Eynsford and the church, Shoreham, Franks and a yew tree in Horton Kirby.

### **Enquiries**

- **Photos of old Crockenhill** - for a new resident to put on her wall
- **Henry Cannell** – an antiquarian bookseller specializing in horticulture and horticultural history is writing a book on leading seed and nursery firms in the USA and UK. She was thrilled to be put in touch with Barbara Cannell and to learn of our publication ‘Cartwheels and Chrysanthemums’
- **Land between the M20/A20/A225** – KKC is trying to establish the ownership of this land.
- **Wellard/Weller** – from 1672 when Thomas Weller married Elizabeth Whiffin at Meopham

### **ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923)**

The filing cabinets complete with files in drawers are now in the back storeroom. James Alexander has kindly donated another 4-drawer cabinet, which will replace one from Horton Kirby which in moving has a jammed bottom drawer. Clive Curtis has brought one desk from storage, but we await the second. When both are in the front office space I will be able to sort out book shelving and book collection.

### **Acquisitions**

- **Article from Kent Life, December 2007, about James R. Alexander** as an unsung hero for his recording of the weather for the past 57 years – the last 17 of which he has acted for the Met. Office.
- **Eynsford Village Analysis with map** by Ian T. Lawrence for Commerce Special Study carried out by Ian in 1966/7 when he was 16. His family used to live in Malt Cottage, near the Plough.
- **Farningham war dead** – CD of names researched from Kyle Tallett
- **The Lullingsstone Excavation** – from Brian Philp, Kent Archaeological Review,

Winter 2007, with memoirs of Brian Philp.

## Remembering Sue

As most of you know Sue Fenlon lost her battle with cancer in February and she has left a gap in many peoples lives, one being mine. I worked with Sue for three years at the roman villa and did we have a laugh, with her enthusiasm and constant chatter when she was on a roll she left visitors totally worn out but laughing.

Sue never took no for an answer always going and doing it anyway regardless of what was said. After being told don't climb on a chair and then on the cupboard to clean the windows, did she take any notice, of course not. When told don't walk along that ledge she just said 'I'll be fine' and did it. On one instant we have an abandoned car in our car park, it smelled of petrol and it was all I could do to stop her breaking into it to see who it belonged to.... anyway when we finally got it sorted in typical Sue fashion she went and wooed the firemen and I got the grumpy pick up driver.....

Ever since I have known her she has encouraged me to join this and that and get out there and make a difference. My friend Sue certainly made a difference, she loved Sean Bean, King Richard and dancing, not necessarily in that order and she loved Eynsford. always working in her various guises to enrich the lives of the people who live here.

Jan Wilkes

I know I speak for everyone of the committee when I say we are sad at the loss of Adrian (who will be missed on stage in Riverside productions) Margaret Hilling (who for many years worked with the Parish Council efficiently and effectively) Ethel Derby (who lived to the wonderful age of 110) and of course Sue, our thoughts go to their families. These peoples will no longer part of our present or our future, but now become part of our past and as long as there are photographs, documents, deeds and memories they will be remembered...

## **and finally**

We are now well into 2008 and our first evening meeting was a charming stroll through Kent village as captured by photographer Harolde H Camburn, we looked at over 100 slides during the evening. Unfortunately we have had to postpone the 1066 and all that quiz because the week before there are two quizzes on the same night so we thought perhaps ours was just one too many, we are working to rearrange this and will let you all know as soon as we have a firm date. I am now working on next years evening meetings and events and will reveal all in the next bulletin.

**Jan Wilkes (Editor) 865122**

## WHAT'S ON 2008/2009

### **Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society**

**2008**

No information on future meetings available at this time

All meetings are held in the Village Hall, South Darenth from 8pm. If you require further information contact Keith Sanderson (01322 862056) (Remember your membership card)

### **Shoreham & District Historical Society**

**2008**

No information on future meetings available at this time

Meetings held in the Village Hall Shoreham from 8pm. Members who wish to attend these meetings are advised to contact the Secretary Joy Saynor (01959 522713) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

### **Hextable Heritage Society**

**2008**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 24th April | The weather in Kent - Bob Ogley  |
| 22nd May   | AGM plus John Meakins with local photographs                             |
| 26th June  | Visit to St John Baptist Church Sutton at Hone (details to follow later) |
| 24th July  | Gales, Greenhouses and global warming - Ian Currie                       |
| 25th Sept  | A Laugh at true life in humorous verse - Mrs Silvester                   |
| 23rd Oct   | Naval Heritage - Richard Walsh   |
| 27th Nov   | Talk on clocks - Adrian Herbert  |

All meetings are held at the Hextable Heritage Centre off College Road. 7.15pm for 7.30pm start. If you require further information please contact Barbara Cannell (01322 864253)