

The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

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Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society established 1985. Registered Charity No. 1047562)

Bulletin No 78 June 2008

Forthcoming Talks and Events

2008	Details	Where
19th Sept	40 years of Axstane Players - Barrie Payne (A look back over the last 40 years of the Players)	Farningham
31st Oct	Hallowe'en supper with spooky food (Tonbirdge Mummings & Hoodeners entertain us with spooky tales tickets £10)	Eynsford
21st Nov	Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes - Alan Stockwell (Amusing stories from the life of a puppeteer)	Eynsford
2009		
20th Feb	My Life - The Royal Parks - Jim Buttress (Jim a familiar figure at Lullingstone Castle)	Farningham
24th April	Evening of Magic with Roy Marsh (An entertaining evening with magician Roy Marsh including buffet and wine bar tickets £10)	Farningham
9th May	AGM	Eynsford
25th Sept	100 Years of Dartford Museum - Chris Baker	Eynsford
16th Oct	Silent Auction (details to be confirmed)	Eynsford
20th Nov	Welcome to the Manorial Hall - Jean Stirk	Farningham

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)

With Elaine, secretary, Susan, research and Jan, Editor, giving reports on past and future meetings, snippets of local news found in various books and newspapers, enquiries received from people researching their family history, updates on the archive centre etc. I am as usual at a loss for something to write about that will not be mentioned elsewhere in the Bulletin

I looked in my Thesaurus at the word 'bulletin' for a possible clue to help me with this problem and some of the definitions given were very interesting. The first, communications of knowledge, was exactly what we, as a Society, expect to find in our copy when we read through the pages. Others included something to tell and fresh news. So with this in mind I felt that I could write about something that I did on a very wet Saturday morning. You may remember that the Shoreham Aircraft Museum have undertaken to dedicate memorial stones for six pilots who lost their lives within a 10 mile radius of Shoreham whilst defending this country during the second world war. Stone number four was revealed and a thanksgiving service was held on the 17th May at Court Lodge Farm, Chelsfield for Sergeant John Ellis aged 21 years who died on the 1st September 1940 when his Hurricane crashed into a field in front of the farm. Although as I have said it was a very wet day many people came to honour the occasion but sadly because of the poor weather conditions the customary fly past could not take place. Later in the year I intend to return and stand before this memorial and look out over the fields at a view that was hidden by clouds and rain. I would recommend a visit to Chelsfield to see this stone and also the museum at Shoreham if you have not been there. You can find more information about these RAF memorials and other events by visiting www.shoreham-aircraft.museum.co.uk. They need our support for ongoing memorial projects.

PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)

As there hasn't been any new publications there really is nothing for me to report!. Sales of existing titles rely now on enquiries from the website and all our outlets have closed apart from Wards the estate agents in Eynsford High Street who have a small number of the Eynsford Castle Guides for sale. It would be nice if we could have at least one new publication this year. I keep hoping! (*since Barbara wrote this an order has been received from Lullingstone Roman Villa who will be once again open to the public from end July*)

SECRETARY'S REPORT (Elaine Ruby 862241)

Around thirty members this year attended the AGM on 9th May. Before the meeting got underway, we took a trip down memory lane and amused ourselves with an exhibition of board games and pastimes from bygone days. Following the completion of the business, Mary Turner produced another of her lovely buffets washed down with a glass of wine. It was a pleasant evening and we try to keep the 'business' side of the proceedings as short as possible so that members can also enjoy the social aspect of the evening.

Jan Wilkes has put together a great programme of events for 2008/2009. In addition to our usual members' meetings there are also several 'social' evenings where we hope you'll join us. A date for your diary is Friday 31st October, a Hallowe'en evening with spooky tales and entertainment from the Tonbridge Mummings together with a two course supper – tickets £10.00 from Jan on 865122 at EVH.

Our next members' evening is Friday 19th September with an entertaining history of the Axstane Players by Barrie Payne – we hope to see you then.

RESEARCH REPORT (Susan Pittman 01322 669923) (website www.felhs.org.uk)

I am now very busy working to dead-lines, but two chapters of my thesis have been written with 20000 words and have 70000-80000 still to go!

By the way, I never put direct contacts in the Bulletin, unless requested, because the immediate back issue of the Bulletin goes onto our website and I am not sure that enquirers would welcome worldwide exposure. Also by using me as an intermediary I can ensure that the Society benefits from any extra information that arises and can keep you all informed of developments.

Dictionary of National Biography (DNB), full Oxford English Dictionary, Encyclopaedia Britannica, The Times newspaper from Victorian times and much more available free on-line through your library ticket

I recently wanted to consult the DNB and was pleasantly surprised to have full access to it by using my KCC library card number (no password required – ignore that line). Go to www.kent.gov.uk/libs – click on-line library services and then on-line library resources. There are various categories – reference, arts and humanities, careers, business, family history, journals and newspapers etc. It is a wonderful resource and I don't think it has received the publicity it deserves. You can sit comfortably at home, consult at leisure and print out if required.

The Family Record Centre closure

The Centre that was in the centre of London has now been closed and its records, national registers, wills and census records and the services it provided have now moved to the National Archives at Kew.

State Papers entry for Lullingstone, 1621

28 August 1621, Sir Peter Manwood to Lord Zouch, excuses himself for detaining a letter, having been engaged with the subsidy business, the general meeting at Maidstone etc. Is at his brother, Sir Percival Hart's.

(Sir Peter Manwood's sister, Anne, married Percival Hart, so the men were brothers-in-law)

(State Papers Domestic, James I, CXXII no.94, p.285)

A Directory of Kent Taverns, 1636

This was written by John Taylor in 1636 and contains a list of 137 taverns of which 47 were named, while the rest had the licensee. A tavern at Farningham run by John Radcliffe is included.

(for full list see Cantium Spring 1974, p.7 article by Christopher Buckingham)

Eynsford v Farningham cricket matches, 1873

In September 1873 Eynsford played Farningham 12 a side cricket. Eynsford gained an easy victory beating Farningham by an innings and 12 runs, with Eynsford scoring 86 runs and Farningham 18 and 56. That evening the farmers and tradesmen of the two villages met and spent a pleasant evening over dinner provided by Mr Brice of the Five Bells Inn. The return match was played a week later, when Eynsford again came away victorious by one innings and 7 runs, scoring 104 against Farningham's 46 and 31.

(Cantium, Summer 1973, John Whyman, 'Eynsford and Lullingstone a century ago')

Harold Cambourn, postcard photographer, 1877-1956

I was fascinated by Ed Thompson's talk because Harold Cambourn was a prolific photographer of Crockenhill and I now have clues as to the dating of some of his pictures from the size of the well logo on the reverse of the postcard. I think because of the Gee photographs of Eynsford, Cambourn took few there, but in Crockenhill he partnered with Kingsnorth the general stores, which gave a sales outlet. Another reason for the popularity of Crockenhill postcards was the huge influx of East Enders in the fruit-picking season and their desire to write to family and friends at home.

Fred Penwarden, former Chairman of Eynsford Parish Council, 1960s

He came to the village in 1930 when he bought the Tudor-styled Farningham Service Station on the A20 (now King's). In 1950 he set up an agricultural machinery works in Beesfield Lane, which amalgamated with a national company in 1971. As well as serving on the parish council, he was a village hall trustee, and founder-member of the Eynsford Players. He was known for his down-to-earth outspokenness and bluff zest for village life. He said, 'There is nothing like village life, but you have to love it and live it, not just use it.' (A lesson for us all there! S.P.)

(From newspaper cutting of 1971 sent by his son, Michael)

The Founding of the Darent Valley Rugby Club, c.1970

Barty Hotchkiss, formerly from Farningham and now living in Sweden, has sent an early photograph of the Club and writes:-

I played rugby for Blackheath as indeed did Ken Exeter's son, Ian, so I was easy prey for the plan established by Ken and Mike Reed for a rugby game between The Lion and The Five Bells to be played on Boxing Day, I think in 1970.

Actually that was not the first Boxing Day encounter. A few years earlier Bill Chancellor arranged a Boxing Day soccer match between the young bloods playing rugby and Farningham United Football Club, all of whom used to patronise The Bull at Farningham, where the cricket club also met and members from both camps would play cricket together in the summer. I can't remember exactly, but I am pretty sure the United side won.

The original contest between The Lion and The Five Bells, a challenge really issued by Ken Exeter, who patronised both pubs, was to have taken place on Boxing Day 1970, but we had a heavy fall of snow and so the event that day was confined to drinking beer in The Lion – David Kerr and his men I think won that contest. When the match eventually took place The Five Bells won.

I distinctly remember Peter Prall in his track suit being there, amongst others, representing The Five Bells. Ken Exeter was keen on physical fitness and he encouraged the young men in The Lion to compensate their drinking habits with some PT and a swim

in his pool. This sometimes meant a run from his house in Sparepenny Lane through to Eynsford past The Plough and The Five Bells and then back passing The Lion to his house. That didn't go down very well with most of us I can tell you. The PT happened on a Tuesday. Most of us put up with it in order to earn a swim in Ken Exeter's heated pool.

(Does anyone else have any sporting memories or can they add to the above I wonder? S.P.)

Family history enquiries

- **Sims of Farningham and Horton Kirby** – I had the following response from Jill Hussey:-

My great-grandfather, William Reeves, farmed in the Horton Kirby area in the C19th/early C20th. His son, Billy Reeves, had a farm in the main street of Horton Kirby called Meadowbrook or Meadowview. Billy married Muriel Sims, but they had no children. I remember going there to visit as a child and watching the cows being fed in the cow sheds at the rear of the property. I well remember the smell of cow cake!

- **Mace, Searles** from Farningham and Crockenhill, from marriage of John Mace with May Ann Serles in 1811.
- **Rogers, Devine** from Crockenhill.
- **John Nimmo** from Farningham, early C20th.
- **Booker** of Lullingstone, Thomas Booker married Ann Ashdown in 1709, and possible links with Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury in Henry VIII's reign.
- **Booker** of Crockenhill, Lydia Rosina Booker born 1884.

Other enquiries

- **Birling House, Station Road, Eynsford** – the owners would like information about this property and would especially like old photographs of it.
- **Wested**, origin of the name.
- **Highcroft cottages**, Farningham (now Swanley)

Book reviews of Wilf Dumcombe's 'Elliott Downs Till' and Brian Hussey's 'An Eynsford Boyhood'

Excellent book reviews of the Society's recent publications appeared in the March edition of the Journal of Kent History.

- **Journal of Kent History - *renewal of subscriptions***

This is the magazine of the Kent History Federation which comes out in March and September every year. It contains interesting articles, book reviews on publications to do with Kent and anything Kentish. It also lists the 100 Federation members with their meetings, research projects and new publications. The Journal helps readers to keep abreast with what is going on. I am pleased to say that it has had a good uptake within our Society and the time has now come *to renew subscriptions* for the next two issues - **September 2008 and March 2009. The cost is £2.**

I will be at the AGM if you wish to pay me direct, otherwise please send a cheque for £2 (+£3 postage, if applicable, but in the villages I deliver),

payable to Susan Pittman, at 27 Old Chapel Road, Crockenhill, Swanley BR8 8LL. .

ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923)

Bollards have been set up across the front of the Archive Centre because access was often denied us through thoughtless parking. The audio-visual collection is due to move in shortly. We are awaiting the purchase of another desk and when the dimensions are known we can set up the bookcases and get the books in order. When all the furniture and equipment such as photocopier, computer have been purchased and put in place, and the books shelved, the front room will be ready and safe to receive visitors, and we hope to hold an open weekend at that time. Other committee members will need to be trained about the contents of the collections before individual researchers can have access.

However, I continue as ever to answer such queries as I receive to the best on my ability and time-constraint. I hope members will be patient in the meantime, knowing that the main aim of having a central storage place for the collection has been achieved

Kitchen cabinet wanted – this is to stand on a 2 tile wide ledge at about 1 metre height behind the toilet. A double door standard unit would be ideal.

ACQUISITIONS

- **From Michael Penwarden** - A Hundred Years of Farningham Cricket by Bernard Drew; Schedule of work 1960 at Towercroft Meadow Education site, Acrostic tree planting; Eynsford War Memorial appeal pamphlet, September 1946; Village Hall trustees 'We need your help' pamphlet, 1968; Eynsford Cricket Club souvenir programme for opening of new pavilion, April 1959; newspaper cuttings about Fred Penwarden, 1971.
- **From Barty Hotchkiss** –Darent Valley Rigby Club photo of February 1971.
- **From Keith Booker** – CD with Baldwin family tree; by email photographs from Roger Hart of Booker and Baldwin family members; bell ringing in Eynsford church with David Baldwin and Fred Booker; David Baldwin (great-grandfather) at Margate, 1930/32; (grandmother) Bessie Booker (Luck) with David Baldwin; May Bessie Booker (mother).
- **From Gloria Gee** – Photograph album of FELHS events, includes visits to Franks Hall, Little Mote, Eynsford Hill, Eynsford Water Works, Pedham Place Fort, 1998 Ethel Darby's 100th birthday, Arbor Day planting, and FELHS exhibition.
- **From Wilf Duncombe** – Notes made for publications on Eynsford watercress beds, corn mill at Eynsford bridge, bridges at Eynsford and Farningham, Elliott Downs Till, master copies of illustrations for Eynsford Paper Mill, D. G. Burcham's notes on Eynsford in the Second World War, plans of St. Martin's churchyard showing trees and their dimensions, video tape on Percy Pilcher

and finally.....

Barbara and I had our usual mix of fun and aching feet at the Farningham Fete on Saturday 7th June and we will repeat the exercise at Eynsford on Saturday 28th June, let's hope we have sunshine this year.

Lullingstone Roman Villa will re open to the public at the end of July it is now nearing completion and we are back on the site from 23rd June with the team of curators to clean

