

The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

*A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
No. 5620267 incorporated the 11th November 2005*



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

Bulletin No 82

Forthcoming Talks and Events

2009	Details	Where
25th Sept	100 Years of Dartford Museum - Chris Baker	Eynsford
16th Oct	Quiz Night (Alan Cremer)	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)

Thank you to those members who attended the AGM and for the input of ideas for the future of the Society. A constant problem is the lack of members willing to join the committee and as we all know every group whatever it's size cannot function without a secretary and we desperately need one now. Most of your committee members have dual roles and this means double the time that each one of us spends running the Society. This is not a very satisfactory situation and cannot continue indefinitely. Please think of the future of FELHS and what you can do to make this Society and maintaining this interesting local group.

My main aim for the Society is to be involved with other activities not only in the villages of Farningham and Eynsford but further afield. As I mentioned at the AGM Veronica and I were going to the Local History and Family History event to be held at Sevenoaks Library on Saturday 16th May. There were many local history societies in attendance and a constant flow of visitors many hoping to trace a family home or long lost relative

make for interesting conversations. I found talking to the different societies very informative and heard the ways that many had raised money for various projects. The day will be remembered by the groups who took part as the day that the fire alarm went off and we were ushered outside the library to stand in the cold while the fire brigade checked the building over before we could return to complete the setting up of our displays. The tea urn had been found to be the culprit and was banned from further use. A very good day and one which we hope will be repeated next year.

PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)

I'm still waiting for some kind soul to offer to revamp the Eynsford Village walk about guide as it needs updating and I am very reluctant to get any more of the original format reprinted. So if you're a wizard with computer knowledge please contact me.

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

Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture

John Drew has drawn my attention to this archive containing material relating to Farningham that was included in research into dialect. One aim was to ascertain the spread of the Cockney accent, and Farningham was found to be its outer limit! Apparently aural recordings of inhabitants on tape and gramophone discs were taken in the 1950s. Mr Furlonger, the ironmonger, was among those interviewed. Does anyone remember anything about this? There are also response books that I suppose contain written notes of the interviews. An MA thesis was written based on the material.

A Kentish Family Album by John Drew

John has now sent a signed copy of his book of poems centred on Farningham in his youth with his parents, Bernard and Mollie Drew. Bernard Drew wrote the booklets about Farningham Cricket Club and Farningham's experience in the Second World War. John has written some invaluable extensive and fascinating background notes for the Society. I just have room for one of the shorter poems:-

Lanes
I shall not whisper love again
 To you along Sparepenny Lane
Nor shall our fingers intertwine
 As we walk late in Eglantine
No more our ripening bodies yield
 To one another in Beesfield
Only the memory that we kissed
 Will drift and fade and drift like mist.

Copies of A Kentish Family Album available with stamped addressed envelope (66p) from Cambridge Poetry Workshop, 10 Fulbrooke Road, Cambridge CB3 9EE.

More Lullingstone Estate documents discovered

Earlier in the year the Hart Dyke solicitors found more documents in their basement while in the process of moving to new premises. The documents have now been catalogued to join the rest of the collection at Lullingstone Castle. A copy of the catalogue of these additional documents has been deposited with the Society and I was also able to

photograph two fascinating maps. One set of maps of the Lullingstone Estate dated 1895 is of particular interest because the plot numbers correspond to the Estate Book of 1876 for which no map survives. This means that the tenants' plot descriptions of 1876 can now be exactly located. Another map of 1934 shows the land purchased by Kemp Town Brewery, but, unlike the estate agent's map, has the water pipelines of the Lullingstone Water Company superimposed on it.

'Good Morning Young England' by Arthur Mee

This little booklet (see Acquisitions below) was written for children in 1938 when war was very much on the horizon. It aimed to stir children's patriotism and pride in their country. I select the following revealing paragraph where Arthur Mee gave some accurate predictions, but was over optimistic in other aspects of life:-:

You will live in a world as different from ours as ours is from King Alfred's.

You will carry telephones in your pockets. You will see anywhere, across the world as easily as across a street. You will have the sense of touch at a distance. You will go where you like in a day. You will fly like a bird. You will switch on power and heat as we switch on light. You will never be troubled by disease. You will never be afraid of war. You will be a citizen of the United States of Europe, which will be a member of the Parliament of the World.

Letter from Elliott Downs Till to Hon. Robert Marsham Townshend

This letter was found in a presentation copy from Till (see Acquisitions below). It is dated 1 June 1909 and refers to the history of 'The Village of Eynsford' written by Herbert Henry Bassett about which Till is rather uncomplimentary. He claims to have collected the research material handed over to Bassett, but was not to be pleased with the publication. 'I am not by any means proud of it – nor in any way responsible for its contents ... but I must not be hard on the author, who did his best to give us some interesting facts concerning the history of our village.' Let us hope Bassett was unaware of Till's opinion of his efforts! The letter goes on to describe the outcome of Till's restoration of Little Mote. 'Many thought I was mad to sink money in a dwelling house so near, and almost on a level with the river – as a surgeon who discovers that an operation is much more serious than he anticipated has to go through with it so had I! I let the place to nice tenants (Mr Fountain of the Board of Trade) and I am glad to say the tenant has after 12 months' occupation purchased the freehold.' Till considered that he had been compensated and encouraged in a threefold manner – the most ancient house in Eynsford had been restored, the village had gained a most desirable residence and the money he received could be used to further his other building plans for the village.

The rise of the Dyke family

The most striking group among the parvenus were the ironmasters: families such as the Dykes, Frenches and Pankhursts. The marriage portions they left their children in their wills reveal the extent of their wealth. Thomas Dyke left £1200 each to two daughters and £1500 to a third in 1632 ... The career of Thomas Dyke indicates how the son of a successful ironmaster of parish gentry origins could, with patience and determination, establish himself as a leading figure in the shire (Sussex). Among the steps he took up the social ladder were entry to St. John's College, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple; marriage in 1639 to a daughter of the ship money judge Sir John Bramston; and the

acquisition of a knighthood in 1641 ... Sir Thomas Dyke became a JP and a man who mattered in Restoration Sussex. The elite gentry was thus not an entirely homogeneous group of men, and it was ready in time to absorb newcomers.
(pp.26-27 A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600-1660 by Anthony Fletcher)

Elizabethan plague in Eynsford and Farningham

Bubonic plague probably dealt the most crippling blow at the county's population ... In 1592 there was a major infection spreading from London rapidly into Kent. By the autumn of 1593 plague affected the towns of Canterbury, Faversham and Sandwich while a few villages like Eynsford and Farningham were also apparently infected.
(p.242. English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, politics and society in Kent, 1500-1640, by Peter Clark)

Family history enquiries

- **Slaughter** – Dr Slaughter and his family moved into Farningham in the 1840s and he practised medicine in the village until the 1880s living in Pinehurst. Stella Baggaley looked up details of the family in the Farningham registers and I referred Nicola to Hilary Harding's book which mentions Dr Slaughter and has a photograph of Pinehurst.
- **Farningham Home for Little Boys** – Rowland Amos Martin was sent to the Home on the breakdown of the marriage of Thomas Martin and Ruth (nee Jarrett). I always refer enquirers about the Home to Horton Kirby parish clerk as it actually lay outside the parish of Farningham.
- **Searles of Button Street** – Louisa Searles died at the age of 14, having fallen down a well at her home in March 1898. Ann was trying to track down reports of the inquest.
- **Sims** – Lou has traced her family back to Thomas Sims of Farningham, born 6 July 1790. Other surnames in the family are **Chapman, Hooker, Hider and Bailey**. The family mostly lived in Horton Kirby, but in the early C20th Edward Charles Sims, born in Farningham in 1924, was serving as a fireman and trimmer on the SS Manchester when he was killed in a torpedo attack from a German u-boat on 23 April 1943.
- **Round** – Robyn in Australia has traced her family back to 1603 when John Round married Annis Crane. The couple had eight children baptised at Eynsford. Four of their line, all ancestors of Robyn, emigrated to Australia between 1830 and 1840. I was able to send her transcripts of two early monumental inscriptions in St. Martin's churchyard and copies of two Round wills of 1625 and 1634 from Wilf's research on yeomen of the Darent valley and from these Robyn was able to link her ancestry with that of her husband whose ancestors Pearch and Willmott came from Shoreham.
- **Hinsby, Colyer** – Terese from Australia enquired about Victorian burial records for these families.

Other enquiries

- **Millfield Meadow** – enquiry from a student of Hadlow College who is involved in drawing up a management plan for the meadow as a group assignment.
- **Hartnup's Wood, Eynsford** – William Hartnup from USA was trying to make a connection with his surname and this wood. I was able to tell him about the will

of his namesake from Shoreham in 1673 (PROB 11/3641.148 & PROB 10/115). The earliest record for the wood dates to 1743 when Orkesden manor was sold (CKS U1159 T18).

- **Fort Farningham** – I was able to help William make contacts for a project he is working on for BBC Radio Kent/Southern Counties on the London defence network in the Second World War.
- **Well Hill Lane** – I gave Diane contact details to enable her to acquire pre-1980 aerial photographs of her property.

ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923)(archives@felhs.org.uk)

FELHS Centre

Although the entire collection has been deposited at the Centre, there is much sorting out to do and a huge backlog of cataloguing, which means that there is no means of easily either knowing or finding many items. However, I respond to all enquiries and, if necessary, the Centre can be opened to individuals by appointment.

Acquisitions

From Sylvia Baldwin – two large photographs of children playing at the ford at Eynsford dated 4 August 1949, copyright E.A. Sweetman and Son; two booklets ‘Good Morning Young England’ and ‘The Broken Dream of Wilbur Wright’ both by Arthur Mee and signed by him, 1938; an envelope of cuttings (see Research report above)..

From Gloria Gee – set of colour photographs of the local Ladies Probus Outing to ‘Hidden London and the Regent’s Canal’, 5 July 1995.

From Diana Beamish – an account of the Great Storm of 15/16 October 1987.

From Anne Cremer – copy photograph of Freda Pedder with three cossacks on 29 May 1939 at Upper Austin Lodge.

From Winifred Brightman – a presentation copy of ‘The Village of Eynsford’ c.1909 with a letter from Elliott Downs Till to the Hon. Robert Marsham Townshend (see Research report above).

REMEMBERENCE Dr Jean Lawrie

Many of you will have heard that Dr Jean Lawrie of Little Mote died on Thursday 14th May. A loyal supporter of our Society for many years she has a vast knowledge of historical buildings across the country and the families who had lived in them and her interest in Eynsford Castle and St Martins Church, Lullingstone Castle and the Roman Vills was a constant quest for new information. The history of Institute College had been her last concern for preservation within the village and she and I had many conversations about the people she had written to asking for advice to help to save the building. Since coming to live at Little Mote both she and Mr Lawrie took great delight in entertaining visitors to their home and passing on to them the history of the house and the grounds in which it stood. A very determined lady who liked everything from a visit to the shops to running a committee meeting to be conducted in a proper manner. Anything less than perfect was deemed to be ‘sloppy’. I have, on behalf of the Society, send condolences to Mr Lawrie and the family.

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(VOLUMES XC111 to CXXVIII)**

(Collector takes all volumes or none, will not split)

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and finally.....

Unfortunately you are stuck with me once more as Linda has found herself very busy and unable to commit to the bulletin at this time. It may only be once every three months but it comes around very quickly and although I have been doing it for some time, it is not just a case of sitting down and typing and checking information, but we get there every time one way or another. I would like to thank Elaine who has been checking the bulletin over the years for me and getting it printed and Stella who envelopes and sends and all those committee members who deliver it to your door. I have heard from Stella that more people like to have the bulletin electronically which is great.

The Magic evening was a success and we were entertained by magician Roy March with a short talk on the history of magic, a delicious buffet and then a performance from Roy. We were not a large group but in hindsight just over 40 people was probably perfect. This event made over £150 profit for the Society.

Barbara and I attended the church fete at Farningham on the 6th June, it was lovely to see so much interest in the old photographs of the village, although a dull day and windy was very enjoyable. We are at the Scout Fete in Eynsford on 4th July, they have an American Independence theme this year, bit hard for a local history society but we will come up with something, so please come and see us, with any luck we will once again be in the beer tent and Dee and I can enjoy the Pimms.

Moving on the future you have probably noticed that no evening events for next year have yet been arranged, Barbara and I are working on it and we are also working on a one off evening probably at Farninging in collaboration with Barrie Payne so watch this space.

Well the sun is shining as I write this and I am off to learn something about the history of London today by taking the boat from Greenwich along the Thames. To all of you have a good Summer.

Jan Wilkes - Editor (865122)

WHAT'S ON 2009/2010

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

2009

- 13th July A Taste of Roman Britain - Mrs Toni Mount
14th Sept Kent, an unusual view - Graham Johnson
9th Nov History of Cobham Hall - Gerry Harris

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

Shoreham & District Historical Society

2009

- 19th July Members Cream Tea at Queen Anne House
11th Sept Trip to Winchelsea
25th Sept Farm Buildings in Kent - William Alexander
16th Oct Memories of the 1950s led by Ken Fowler
13th Nov History of the Victoria Cross - Col. Mike Martin
11th Dec Members Christmas Social
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 Lynda Alleeson (01959 522836) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

Hextable Heritage Society

2009

- 9th July Visit (to be arranged)
13th Aug Life in the Workhouse - Helen Allison
10th Sept Artists on the North Downs - Monty Parkin
8th Oct The Royal British Legion - Christine Page
12th Nov Pipes and Pipe Making - Chris Baker
December Members Christmas Party (date to be confirmed)

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)