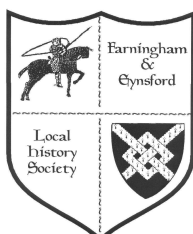


The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

*A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
No. 5620267 incorporated the 11th November 2005 Registered Charity 1113765*



(Original Society founded 1985 Registered Charity no 1047562)

Bulletin No 87 September 2010

Forthcoming Talks and Events

2010	Details	Where
24th Sept	Metal Detecting and our Favourite Finds -Geoffrey Burr	Farningham
16th Oct	London Pride (Music Hall) Come with us down the Old Kent Road to the Bull and Bush, join in the fun and sing along to those old favourites. Tickets £5.00 from Jan 865122. (Bring your own refreshments) Arrive 7pm for 7.30pm	Farningham
26th Nov	The R101 Airship Titanic of the Sky - Brian Hussey	Eynsford
2011		
18th Feb	'What is it' - Chris Baker	Farningham
20th May	AGM with buffet	Eynsford
23rd Sept	The Darent Valley Archaeological Project - Paul Cawsey	Eynsford
25th Nov	Invitation to a Vestry Meeting - 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)

The importance of archives be they large or small are vital to the preservation of local and family history. This was dramatically portrayed in the recent screening of the popular television programme 'Who do you think you are?' in which Rupert Everett, the actor, traced one of his family roots to The Homes for Little Boys at South Darent. The very small but informative record of Victorian childhood of those children who for whatever reason had been placed into an institution to save them from a life on the streets of London is on permanent display in the chapel. The

chapel, used by the boys not only for religious instruction but for lectures given by invited guests and the production of plays, has a collection of log books recording some of the names of the boys and their achievements at sport, their ailments and when they were sent to hospital for treatment as well as reminiscences written by some of the boys who were taken into the care of these 'family homes'. The association of Old Boys who meet every year with members of their families keep this small chapel living proof that archives are needed.

PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)

Several of our publications were reprinted mainly in anticipation of interest in subjects highlighted in displays during History Month. There is no new topic being researched at the moment. We really do need some more ideas for future publications so, if you can think of a subject that would make interesting reading please let me know.

RESEARCH REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923) website [www.felh](http://www.felh.com)

Directory of Local History Internet sites

This is available for £2 + £1 postage from the British Association of Local History (email – development.balh@btinternet.com)

The Surprising Life of Constance Spry

This new biography of Constance Spry traces the poverty-stricken childhood of this flower arranger through her career when she mixed with the height of London society, culminating in her creation of the floral displays for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. From 1934 to 1946, she lived at Park Gate House, Lullingstone, where some of the features of the garden she created can still be seen. She was a close friend of King Edward VIII (later Duke of Windsor), and so was given no commission by his brother, the new King George VI. It was without hesitation, however, that when Mrs Wallis Simpson asked her to do the flowers at her wedding to the Duke of Windsor she travelled straight to Paris to create the most perfect flower arrangements that she could devise. During the war Constance joined the local ARP, although she was not cut out for it, but she found her metier in the garden and kitchen where she grew food for taste and pleasure in the austerity years, especially encouraging people to eat fresh vegetables. Constance Spry escaped a violent marriage and had a lesbian relationship with an artist. Yes, it was a surprising life, and a good read.

Sue Shephard (Macmillan 2010, £18.99)

Location of Old Castle School found

Anne Cremer has followed up the request for the location of the school following the February meeting when the prospectus, from the grandson of the headmaster, Mr. Marcus Pike, was displayed. Anne reports that she was not the only one to suggest that it may have been Waughton, the second house from the top of Station Road on the east side. This house was still there after World War Two when Anne delivered newspapers to a Mr. Hepburn and his family. By then Anne thinks that the property had been pebble-dashed and painted cream. The clues given from the prospectus photographs supported this school being at Waughton, but there were doubts. Anne contacted Mr. Tom Rand who lives in the area, and he was able to copy a photograph of the building owned by Mrs. Kitty Softley, late of Pinza, Station Road. Anne also went to the Local Studies department in Dartford Library to look at a copy of the 1936 OS Revision Map. This showed the house at the southern end of a large plot adjoining another similar sized large empty plot (183) on which 'The Lodge' still stands to the north. Behind, these three plots there was a large meadow, which ran to Butchers Lane, with an outline of the proposed road, St. Martins Drive. If this field was owned or rented by the owner of "Waughton" there would have been room for

the football field and for the photograph, 'View from the School Grounds over Eynsford Village,' to have been taken from near the top of Butchers Lane.

The photograph of the house owned by Mrs Softley was not dated, but it matched the school building. The glass on the conservatory had been renewed and a tennis court had been laid. Another property in this area, has this plot named as 'Kilvington' so maybe this house has had three different names.

P.S. Sadly, Mrs.KittySoftley died on 9 July 2010.

Crockenhill, Eynsford and Lullingstone War Dead

I have reported recently on two websites giving details of Farningham's war dead. Wilf Duncombe had already researched Eynsford's war dead as I have done for Crockenhill, so we hope to publish our findings soon. In the meantime, Wilf has looked up Lullingstone's five war dead. John Baker of the Canadian Infantry died in Belgium in 1915, Henry Partridge of the Royal Flying Corps was buried in Egypt in 1918, and his brother, John Partridge of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, died in a prisoner of war camp in Poland in 1918. In the Second World War, John Pretty of HM Submarine X22 died at sea in 1944 and Ronald Whitehead of the East Surrey Regiment died in Italy in 1944. The final serviceman commemorated at St. Botolph's is Paul Harman of the Intelligence Corps who was killed in Northern Ireland in 1977.

Bus to Farningham

Geoff French wrote in *Bygone Kent* about his boyhood memories of his father, Sydney French, who drove London buses. For much of the time he drove the 21 route which called at Farningham (he drove the inaugural bus on the route in 1910). One of Geoff's childhood treats was to be driven from Eltham High Street to Farningham village, with the long-time conductor, Frank Smith, ringing away merrily with his ticket machine at the back. This was probably in the 1920s. In the First World War Sydney French was sent to drive buses to and from the French lines, where more than 900 London buses served.

(*Bygone Kent*, March/April 2010, p.11)

Arthur Mee and his opinion of roads

(First paragraph) From my hilltop I look out on a tranquil scene ... but across it lies the dark shadow of map on which the engineer has drawn a line right through the valley, thinking what a splendid place it is for a wide arterial road that would save a motorist five minutes. It is possible to stand on this hilltop and point to the sites of two Roman houses and two Saxon graveyards, and to see actually standing two Norman and two Tudor monuments; but all this is nothing to those who would fling great roads across our countryside to make this Age of Speed a little madder than it is.

(Last paragraph) It is what we must all feel as the little lanes go and the Age of Speed presses about us with a rush and roar so great that we cannot hear the still small voice of Nature speaking to us. Even the village school is going with the coming of the Road, and with the passing of the school goes the schoolmaster friend of the children. The church is less and less, and so the parson's influence is passing, and as the village loses its tranquillity, its character, it will lose the family doctor too: three pillars of country life are slowly passing from our villages. If things like these must be, it is surely for us to save what we can, to take the great road away from the village and to preserve as vital to our very life what still remains of that serenity and beauty and tranquillity which have made our countryside the inspiration of our people and the envy of the world.

(from *Kent Today*, published by the Committee for the Preservation of Rural Kent of the Kent Council of Social Service, c.1936/7, 'Roads' pp.34-36.)

Bottle from the Chislehurst Mineral Waterworks

This was found in Old Chapel Road, Crockenhill, when foundations were being dug for a rear extension of a house constructed in the 1890s. The glass of the bottle came from A. Alexander Company from Leeds. Research on the Internet dated the bottle from the date of the house's construction. This was because 'The Chislehurst Mineral Waterworks' was owned by Moses Line, who died in 1892, and by 1902 it had changed its name under his sons' ownership. In 1913 A. Alexander combined with other glass manufacturers to form the United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd.

Buckcatching at Lullingstone Park by the Honourable Edward Vesey Bligh

In the mid-19th century there was a peculiar breed of dog used for 'buckcatching' – half deerhound and half bulldog, these were used in Eastwell, Cobham and I think Lullingstone parks. The *bull* element led the dog to hold on by the ear and not go for the throat like purebred deerhounds. It was an awkward fix for buck and dog pushing at each other's heads, and of course dangerous for the dog if the buck could get him against a bank or tree. However, we were generally well up on our steeds and ponies and I myself became quite adept at catching the buck's hind leg and throwing him on his back, when straps soon incapacitated him while someone stood on one horn till the cart arrived and he was carried off to the paddock to be fatted for some London Alderman in the Spring. All the juniors enjoyed this sport immensely for many years, until unfortunately the former Lord Clifton had a fall from his horse and the Earl of Darnley (owner of Cobham Hall) also collided with a tree or something, and the sport was despotically and most unreasonably put down for ever – it being declared highly dangerous.

(Memoires of the Honourable Edward Vesey Bligh, 1829-1908, from 'This was a Man' by Esme Wingfield-Stratford, published London, 1949)

Will of William Wilder of Lullingstone, gardener, 1632

He left £20 each to his two brothers and £10 to Annis Wiccars 'for the good affection which I always bear unto her.' The almsfolk of Lullingstone received thirty shillings (£1.50p) and his funeral sermon cost ten shillings (50p). He left a sword, an old livery coat (i.e. the uniform provided for service at Lullingstone Castle), as well as a green summer suit and a hay-coloured cloth suit.

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Family history enquiries

- **Barr of Eynsford** - a third enquirer after this family has contacted the Society and I have put him in touch with the two previous members of the family.
- **Crickenden of Eynsford** – William Crickenden was a wheelwright in the late C19th.
- **Erry/ Errey of Farningham** – George Errey was foreman of the Farningham mill in the 1890s and Dorothy requested information about the school records. I suggested she purchase Shirley Burgoyne Black's booklet 'The children of Farningham and their schools, 1800-1900'. I was able to send Dorothy a photo of the High Street showing the draper's shop where her grandmother worked.
- **Gibson/ Illman/ Chapman/ Webb of Eynsford**
- **Lee of Crockenhill** – I was able to put Margaret in touch with another descendant who has researched the family quite extensively.

Other enquiries

- **The Farningham tank** – the Friends of the Lincoln Tank wanted information

about this presentation tank for a catalogue of presentation tanks, which they are compiling. Farningham was not given an official presentation tank after the First World War, but received a tank anyway because of the link with Walter Gordon Wilson, one of the pioneering designers of the tank. The Society has provided a photo of the Farningham tank.

- **Ramuz, Green Court Road, Crockenhill** – request for photographs.
- **Farningham Home for Little Boys** – I often receive requests for information and now have a contact – The Office, Southdown Retirement Home, South Darenth, 01322 864279. **The Farningham Home for Boys** compiled by James Jenkins has recently been published by Horton Kirby and South Darenth Local History Society - for details contact Keith Saunderson on 01322 862056 or “Appledore”, Rays Hill, Horton Kirby, Dartford, Kent, DA4 9DB.
- **Pictures of Crockenhill** – Martin was enquiring for sources of photos of Crockenhill.
- **Bomb on Cray Road, Crockenhill, 11 March 1941** – David was living with his parents nearby and his grandparents were in another neighbouring house. Four people were killed by the bomb. David wanted my contact details to let me have more information, but he has not yet replied to my response.
- **? Explosives factory in Lullingstone area** – I thought perhaps the gun testing range was meant and referred Chris to FELHS publication Miscellany no.3.
- **The Farningham Home Guard** – John’s father and uncle served in the Farningham Home Guard and he wanted information. Bernard Drew’s booklet ‘Farningham in the Second World War’ included John’s uncle in a group photo, and I also put John in touch with the publication donated by Gerald Cramp (see Acquisitions below).

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

FELHS Centre

The pre-cataloguing team have resumed filing during the summer.

I continue to respond to all enquiries and, if necessary, the Centre can be opened to individuals by appointment.

Acquisitions

- **from Diana Alexander** – Diana has handed over part of James Alexander’s local history collection. There are hundreds of items – copied and original – which I am unable to list here – all of which reflect James’ love of the village and its history. The collection includes original drawings of 5 November 1979 of Farningham and Lullingstone churches with several cartoon drawings of Eysnford village scenes and characters. I will bring the crate to the next meeting with the full list of items so that members may see the contents for themselves. We are extremely grateful to Diana for allowing us to be custodians of this fascinating collection.
- **from Marian Bell** – copy photographs of the cottages at Wested Lane, now by the M25 intersection. Marian’s grandfather was manager of Thomas Wood’s Jam Factory by the railway line in Swanley. She has a very large collection of photographs of Swanley and its surrounds, which I hope to return to see soon.
- **A Guide to Listed Buildings in Kemsing**
- **from Gerald Cramp** – 19th (Farningham) Battalion Kent Home Guard booklet. This battalion covered the areas of Longifeld, Farningham, Darenth and Swanley. The book outlines the history of this battalion and lists all who

were serving in the Home Guard in 1944.

- **The Farningham Home for Boys** compiled by James Jenkins.
- **from John Meakins copy photograph of Eynsford Fire Brigade engine with other local fire engines c.1931** – The photo shows Eynsford's Morris Commercial fire engine, delivered new in 1931. John is honorary curator of the KCC Fire Brigade Museum and enjoyed seeing what the Society had about the Eynsford Fire Brigade.
- **from Mrs Saunders** – Back issues of the Kent Journal.
- **from Barbara Cooper** – Funeral service programme of George Cooper, 1934-2010, and a copy of eulogy of reflections gathered by Peggy Etheridge.
- **Dr Wilfrid G. Harding CBE, 1915-2010** – Funeral service programme.

and finally

We were finally able to put our feet up at the end of August after a month of exhibitions, four exhibitions at four different venues, a bit of a feat you might say but successfully pulled off by our committee, thanks goes to all those who were involved and all those who came along on the day. Barbara Cannell put together imaginative and interesting displays at each venue, we are very proud of her.

Thank you to all who entered the poetry competition, praise was given to all entries by the judge. The winners are as follows

First Prize - Gwen McIntyre

Second Prize - Alastaire Budd

Third Prize - Alan Cremer

Children's prize went to Ellena Jeffrey for her poem entitled 'The River'

Prize winners received book tokens and Ellena received a book of poetry for children

Well done to you all. Poems will be display at our next evening meeting on Friday 24th September 2010, which bring me onto the subject of our next evening meeting. There is a change from the original speaker and now we have Geoff Burr coming to talk to us about 'Metal Detecting and our favourite finds', he will bring some finds with him so we can see at first hand the kind of things that can be found under our feet.

On Saturday 16th October, together with Axstane Players we are putting on, for one night only, an Old Time Music Hall. Come and join in the fun and let your hair down as we are join in a good old sing song. Tickets £5.00 from me on 865122 (please bring your own refreshments) Farningham Village Hall only holds 100 people so book early to avoid disappointment.

Lastly Barbara and I will be at the Sevenoaks Library Family History Fair on Saturday 23rd October 2010 (I am not sure of timings please ring the library direct if you are interested in coming along 01732 453118 or e-mail sevenoakslibrary@kent.gov.uk rumour has it that Dr David Starky may be there signing his new book, but this has so far not been confirmed)

Jan Wilkes
Editor (865122)

WHAT'S ON 2010/211

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

2010

8th Nov Kent Villages, signs and Inn signs - Colin Coe

2011

10th Jan The Lure of Family History - Peter Shearan

14th April Hever Castle - Don Williams

9th May Working Behind the Scenes with National Trust - Andrew McElwee

11th July Society Member's evening

12th Sept Mystery Animals of Kent - Neil Arnold

14th Nov Ceremonial London - Anne Carter

NEW BOOK - The Farningham Home for Boys (this book has plenty of historical information and photographs of members) £6.00 + £1.50 P&P from Keith Saunderson on 01322 862056)

All meetings are held at 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

2010

18th Sept Outing to Rochester and Gad's Hill

22nd Oct The History of Fort Halstead - Dave Perry

19th Nov Knole and the Sackvilles - Jill Webber

2011

6th Jan Twelfth Night Supper A Country House at Christmas - Pat Mortlock

21st Jan Hopping in Kent - Richard Filmer

18th Feb The Story of British Broadcasting - Dan Dray

18th March AGM The History of the RAF at Biggin Hill - Bob Ogley

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

2010

14th Oct If War should Come - Chris Baker

11th Nov Puppets, Piers and Pantomimes - Alan Stockwell

December Members Christmas Party

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) (Remember your membership card)