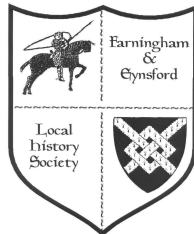


The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

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 89 March 2011 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place at Eynsford Village Hall on Friday 20th 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 2011
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Any other business

Nominations for officers or committee members should reach Elaine Ruby by 1st May 2011

Forthcoming Talks and Events

2011	Details	Where
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 7.30pm, 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)

Like many people the 1st January means the beginning of a new diary. I start by entering the dates of birthdays for family and friends, then the dates of wedding anniversaries. This is then followed by dates for meetings and events as the notices arrive through the post from the various societies to which I am a member or invitations from societies who would like FELHS to join them in their events. In next to no time, even in February, the weeks and months ahead are filling up with people to see, places to visit and displays to arrange. Many of these displays have special themes or speakers and I try to make our contribution to the event reflect the topic.

Often this involves a lot of research to find snippets of interest which then have to be written up and displayed together with photographs to hopefully add a little more knowledge of the history of the local area to the members and visitors to these events. Although these are advertised in the local newspapers and society newsletters and most are open to the general public I am often very disappointed by the lack of support given to participating societies by their members. A lot of time and effort goes into the preparation of arranging these open days and society meetings and support to every participating society is always appreciated.

PUBLICATIONS REPORT

At the end of January G & T Printers at Sutton at Hone closed leaving the Society without a very convenient company to use for the printing of our Bulletins and Publications. They were always very helpful when I needed copies of photographs or extracts from newspapers or books done for displays, especially for our 25th anniversary exhibition. I am still looking for a company, not too far from Horton Kirby, who would be willing to take on all our printing and copying requirements. One new publication is almost completed and I am thinking about the best way to get this printed. More urgently needed is the printing of an old favourite. The Eynsford Castle Guide, to complete a recent order. As I said in my Chairman's report the society has been invited to several local events and I have no doubt that I will be requiring the services of a good printing company so that I can arrange some interesting displays.

At our last meeting many members showed an interest in the book telling the story of the Farningham Cattle Screen. This publication was part of the Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration of the cattle screen and I understand that there is a possibility that copies may be obtained from the Farningham Parish Council who were responsible for the writing of the book. They very kindly presented the society with two copies, one to be put into the archives and one for display at meetings for members to look at.

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

The main personal news is that I handed in my thesis in January. After it has been assessed I am grilled on it in a viva – at which I will be told whether adjustments have to be made, but eventually I hope to be awarded a doctorate.

While doing the research I have come across various references to our area, which I have included in these research notes. Being less active in archive centres in the future, such snippets will be harder to come by. However, on the positive side I hope to be able to begin to tackle the backlog of cataloguing at the Centre, and can draw on the resources there for tidbits.

‘An Infantryman’s Story’ by Albert E.G. Clapson, (1916-2004)

(See Acquisitions under Archive Report).

Albert lived in various addresses in Crockenhill until 1966. His 300 typescript pages of memoirs focus on the Second World War. There is an evocative description of making his way across London during an air raid to take leave in Crockenhill, and a moving description of his journey home after the war to be reunited with his mother. Most of the memoirs tell of his harrowing, yet stoic, war service, which took him to ten countries, until he was captured in 1942. During his imprisonment he made several spirited attempts at escape from prisoner of war camps both in Germany and Italy. The memoirs remind one of the great contrast between the intimate village life many had known and the sudden change of culture brought about by life in the armed

forces.

Sub-Lieutenant Fraser Haslam of Crockenhill

Fraser was aged 22 when he was drowned off the coast at Swanage on 21 December 1943. He was British liaison officer on board the Free French gunboat 'Chasseur' which foundered in a terrible storm. Fraser and the French captain were lost at sea, but the rest of the crew was saved. Carolyn contacted me from Canada and said that her mother had been engaged to Fraser and was heartbroken at his death, wearing his engagement ring every day of her life – she is now 91. However, the story did not quite stack up, because in fact her mother met a member of the Canadian air force, whom she married in September 1943, a couple of months before Fraser's death. After the war she emigrated to Canada as a war-bride, but her husband later deserted her, and she returned to England, so perhaps her attachment to the ring signified regret that she had not stuck by Fraser.

1940 Cricket Match, Farningham v. Shoreham

John Drew's dramatic description of this appeared in the Sevenoaks Chronicle in the autumn, and Shoreham and District Historical Society is due to bring out a publication shortly.

Closure of Lullingstone Silk Farm

The Silk Farm, founded in Lullingstone in 1934, moved from there in 1957, but continued production in Hertfordshire until Zoe Lady Hart Dyke's death in 1975. It was then acquired by Rosemary and Robert Goodden, who, until they announced its closure in January of this year, ran it alongside their Worldwide Butterflies enterprise in Compton House, Sherborne, Dorset.

The Final Flight of R101, 4/5 October 1930

Brian Hussey, FELHS member, gave us a fascinating illustrated talk on this subject in the autumn. The flight from Cardington was destined for Karachi, with a stop in Ismailia in Egypt. Local interest is that after flying directly over the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, it continued over Eltham and Sidcup before reaching Crockenhill, from whence it turned south over Lullingstone and on up the Darent valley. Over Lullingstone an incident occurred upon which the fate of the R101 depended. An updated weather forecast for the next 12 hours was received, predicting strong winds of up to 50 mph, with low cloud and rain. Had this been known earlier the flight would have been cancelled, but the journey could have been abandoned even then. However, on board, Major Scott, in charge of flying, decided to press on as fast as possible against the head wind. The result was that one engine developed an intermittent fault and the fragile membrane of the craft suffered damage, so when trying to cross the Beauvais Ridge in France the R 101 suddenly lost height and crashed, with a resultant death toll of 48, with only 6 survivors.

Gabriel Cox of Farningham, 1689

James Kitson was given a warrant to go to Farningham to arrest Gabriel Cox, who was accused of dangerous practices against the government of William III and Mary II. I wonder what story lies behind that.

(State Papers Domestic, 27 May 1689 no.879, p.122)

Timber extracted from Lullingstone Park for shipbuilding, 1638 and 1639

In 1638 280 loads of timber were purchased by the navy from Sir Percival Hart and sent from Lullingstone Park to Woolwich for the rebuilding of the 'Prince', the cost of cartage being charged to the county of Kent.

Laurel Cottage, Farningham

The owner tells me that the cottage was built in 1620, and at one time served as the overspill to the local jail, with the jail door still in situ in the cellar. The village archives hold very little detailed information about individual houses so if you have researched the history of your house, please let us know the results.

Family history enquiries

- **Fraser Haslam** – Carolyn in Canada wanted to know about Fraser, and I was able to tell her and put her in touch with his niece. (See Research above)
- **Masters of Farningham** – Brian is interested in Martin Masters, inn holder of the Black Lion, in about 1780. He also farmed in the parish.
- **Ottaway and Cheeseman from Maplescombe Cottages** – Judy was following up an earlier enquiry from Helen about the same family, so I was able to put the two in touch with each other.
- **Rev. Robert Hayman Whiteway** – there is brass plaque to him on the north chancel wall in St. Martin's. Brian from Devon was researching him because Rev. Whiteway's daughter-in-law, Caroline, commissioned a splendid memorial window to her cousin in St. Mary's Church, Ideford, Devon. Captain Mostyn of the 24th Regiment was killed in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879.
- **Coles of Eynsford** – James's great-grandfather worked in Gibson's foundry.
- **Pink of Farningham** – Lynn needed help with family history research so I recommended the North West Kent Family History Society research centre at Joyden's Wood Library.
- **Luck and Barley of Eynsford** – Stuart's ancestors moved into the village in the 1880s and he supplied some background history.

Other enquiries

- **Old Parsonage House, Farningham** – the architect drawing up plans for the land at the rear wanted information about its history. I gave him archaeological contacts and informed him that documents related to Parsonage House from 1869-1947 were lodged in Lambeth Palace Library. Apparently, the parochial school demolished in 1895 once stood on the site.
- **Fort Farningham** – John enquired about the ownership of this.
- **Major George Wilson, the tank pioneer** – I was able to recommend Wilf Duncombe's publication on the subject.
- **Eynsford Churchyard Monumental Inscriptions** – Frank, one of the churchwardens, has been checking the MIs against the burial registers and asked permission to enter the results on <http://www.freereg.org.uk>
- **The Eynsford Singers** - The Eynsford Singers attended Chelsfield Church on 12 June 1842, presumably to sing to the congregation. Geoffrey would like to know if anyone has come across references to this choir?
- **Yew Tree cottages, Station Road, Eynsford** – Stuart's grandfather, John Barley, was signalman at Eynsford in the early C20th. I took photographs of the property for him.

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

FELHS Centre

Now I am less committed to study, I hope to be able to go to the Centre fairly regularly after Easter, perhaps on a Wednesday morning. I will let you know in the

next Bulletin when I will be there, but unless you don't mind taking a chance, contact me before you visit. You can always leave a message on the answer-phone if I am out.

Acquisitions

- **From Susan Clapson via Kent Archives** – manuscript copy of 'An Infantryman's Story' by her father, Albert E.G. Clapson, (1916-2004). Albert was a resident of Crockenhill until 1966 when he moved to West Kingsdown. Susan sent 2 photographs of her father as a serviceman, and one of his parents at 'The Nook', Crockenhill. (More details under Research)
- **From Liz Rolph** – Toc-H items from her father-in-law, Bob Rolph, who ran the Horton Kirby Branch. Photograph of the butcher's shop in Eynsford – one under A. Jordan, family butcher, and another under Harry Mills, butcher and grazier. A guess is that they are from 1920s/30s. Any information welcome. 3 books about Toc-H and its founder Rev. 'Tubby' Clayton. A leather-strapped wooden box containing a taper holder adorned with a double-armed cross.
- **From Wilf Duncombe** – research notes including Little Mote, Eynsford; ancestry of Joseph Holdstock; the Jordan family of Farningham; settlement of William Hanger's estate, Farningham, c.1773; plan of The Five Bells site, 1869; CD – field and property names, Eynsford, Farningham and Lullingstone.
- **From Crockenhill Parish Council** – Set of minutes, 1987-2000, and pre-1996 planning documents.
- **From Judy Leslie** – copy photos including pre-war painting of Riverside by her father, George Essendon Evans, before the bombing of a cottage there.
- **From James Coles** – 2 copy photos of Gibson's Foundry and one of a Baptist Chapel tea party.
- **From Stuart Barley** – 3 copy photos of Farningham church, Eynsford High Street and Station Road.
- **From Robin Pearce** – a set of copy photos found in his stepmother's effects (nee Norma Upton). They appear to be Edwardian, 9 of Crockenhill and one of the bridge at Eynsford.

and finally

Thank you to everyone who came to our first evening meeting, it was good fun. Chris Baker who presented the evening has another bag of tricks so perhaps we will get him back some time in the future. Our next meeting is the AGM in May and by then we should have details of some events that will be taking place later this year. Firstly the Farningham Walking Quiz on 4th June, a trip to Hythe and a one evening only Christmas Musical. Also at the AGM we will give you the dates of venues we will be attending with various exhibitions, two of which will be the Farningham Fete on 11th June and the Scout Fete in Eynsford on 9th July.

We have been given from Farningham Parish Council recording equipment and disks. It is our intention to embark on recording memories from people who live in Eynsford, Farningham and Crockenhill. It is important to try and gather these memories but as you can appreciate this is a mammoth task. Firstly we want to hold some informal coffee mornings for anyone who may be interested, but again more of this at the AGM.

Stuart Fletcher is going to take over booking the evening meetings, so this will give a fresh eye on things, he has a few ideas up his sleeve already.

We are living in difficult times at the moment so let's have some fun with history - Jan Wilkes, Editor (865122)

WHAT'S ON 2011

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

2011

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|-----------|--|
| 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 |

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

2011

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|------------|------------------------------------|
| 15th April | Memsahibs in India - Molly Poulter |
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- 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

2011

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|------------|---|
| 14th April | Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies - Martin Lloyd |
| 12th May | AGM including more pictures from John Meakins |
| 9th June | Kentish village life in Victorian times - Helen Allinson |
| 14th July | Visit to St Margaret's Church, Darenth. Promptly 7.15pm at church |
| 11th Aug | Dartford's Historic Acacia Hall - Dr John Trethewey |
| 8th Sept | The Farningham Homes for Little Boys - Barbara & Brian |
| 13th Oct | Pictures of local vintage transport - Adrian Herbert |
| 10th Nov | Reach for the Sky - Chris Baker |
| Dec | Members Christmas Party |

All meetings are held at the Hextable Heritage Centre. Crawfords, Dawson Drive, College Road, Hextable 7.30pm start. If you require further information please contact Barbara Cannell (01322 864253) (Remember your membership card)