

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 95 September 2012

Forthcoming Talks and Events

2012	Details	Where
15 th Sept	Trip to Whitstable tickets £12.00 including entrance to Whitstable Museum	
21 st Sept	The Architecture of Eynsford and Farningham Jonathan Fenner (Architect and Blue Badge Guide)	Farningham
12 th Oct	Titanic Evening – Rob Goldsmith Talk and Buffet tickets £10.00	Farningham
16 th Nov	What is it? A collection of Intriguing objects to identify – Chris Baker formerly of Dartford Museum	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)

Failing to attract new members onto the committee at the recent Annual General Meeting we have beavered on with various events experiencing a roller coaster of emotions – highs of expectation and lows of disappointment.

A big disappointment for Jan and Dee was the lack of members and visitors to the Reading Room in the Olive Seal Hall, somehow I think bad weather and sporting events conspired against them, but our display as part of the Eynsfest celebrations also in the Olive Seal Hall was a great success with children and adults enjoying refreshments and the opportunity to remember past Royal occasions.

The Farningham Fete which was planned for the 16th June, normally a great success for us all was cancelled due to bad weather. We hope for better weather on 8th

September.

Eynsford Village Society asked if we could do anything to commemorate the anniversary of the opening of Eynsford railway station on 1st July 1862. Jan and I tried very hard to contact South Eastern Rail because we were hoping that they would agree to a plaque being put on the front of the booking office. They failed to reply to any of our letters or e-mails. All we could do was to place a display of photographs and written history of the line between Swanley Junction and the Bat and Ball station at Sevenoaks in a corner of the booking office. With the kind co-operation of the booking office clerk the booking office was opened for a visit by the judges of the Best Kept Village Competition, the first time the railway has featured in the competition.

The Scout Fun Day on the 14th July was a feat of endurance. I agreed to put on a static display. Because of bad weather the event was moved to the Harrow meadow. As I left my display in the morning the heavens opened yet again. I returned some four hours later expecting to find everything packed away but no, the youngsters were still enjoying races and it's a knock out in muddy conditions.

Although advertised in Trident and posters placed around the village only seven people came to The Riverside Club on 21st July for the Eynsford Walking Quiz.

We have tried hard this year to provide a variety of events for members and residents of Farningham and Eynsford but at the end of the day if these events are not supported they will cease. A lot of people from the two villages, and I am not only talking about the history society, put an amazing amount of effort to arrange events please support us and them.

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

The New 'Kent History and Library Centre'

I attended the opening of the Centre, which has been designed to be more open and user-friendly. There were hiccups on the day when ordering documents, but that was bound to happen. The new storage area for the archives is state-of-the-art and very impressive, but the study area, though modern, I thought to be less spacious than the old document room. Although you still need documents of proof of identity on your first visit, also take your library card, which will be archive-enabled to give you access after that. Many books about Kent (but a pruned selection) are now on open shelves in the library, so you can browse freely without special access. The new Centre is about a five minutes' walk away from the old Centre, so is still very convenient for Maidstone East station. There is an area where you can eat packed lunches etc. and a cafe in the same block as the Centre. The toilets are for joint use by men and women, which was a bit of a shock!

'Ancestry' and 'Find my Past' websites free access

For anyone who does not want to subscribe to these, or who would like to try them out before doing so, both websites are free at all KCC libraries, although it is best to book a computer before going.

Street Directories on-line (www.historicaldirectories.org)

For those of you wishing to look up former residents of your house, or where your ancestors lived, there is a website which gives images of several directories. Our area is included in Phippen's Directory of Maidstone and its environs, 1850, Post Office Directory, 1855, Melville and Co. Directory, 1858, Kelly's Directory of Kent, 1882, 1891, 1903, 1913. Other directories are being added all the time.

Kelly's Directory of Kent, 1913, includes figures for the 1901 and 1911 censuses -

	Acreage	No. of families 1901 / 1911		
Eynsford (with Crockenhill)	3544 acres	427	490	
Population	1901	2004	1911	2147 (m.1108 f.1039)
Farningham (with part of Swanley)	2739 acres	281	294	
Population	1901	1328	1911	1286 (m.636 f.650)
Lullingstone	1557 acres	15	23	
Population	1901	97	1911	113 (m.52 f.60)

Postal Deliveries, 1874 (Post Office Directory of Kent)

We might envy these today, with two deliveries and two collections daily in Eynsford and Farningham.

Caleb Bath handled the mail for Crockenhill; letters arrived from Dartford 9.15 am and were collected at 6.00pm

Alfred Strudwick handled Eynsford's post, which was delivered at 8.10 am and 9.15 pm, and collected at 9.55 am and 6.10 pm

Joseph Hearn dealt with Farningham's mail, which was delivered at 7.40 am and 4.00 pm, and collected at 10.30 am and 6.35 pm.

Beesfield Lane, Farningham

Some time ago I mentioned bee-keeping and the transportation of hives to place them near crops or flower meadows, and wondered whether one such site had given Beesfield its name. Looking up local place names in J.K. Wallenberg's 'The Place-Names of Kent', I find that in 1210-1212 William de Beseville was a tenant in Eynsford, and Wallenberg thinks is likely that the French family name became anglicised to Beesfield.

Scrapbooks in the Kent Archaeological Society Library, Maidstone Museum

I promised you items from Eynsford this time. There is a page from the Illustrated London News of May 6, 1876, with some delightful prints of the bridge and ford with a pyramidal stack of what could be hop poles and the church covered with ivy. The correspondent described the orchards of orderly ranks of trees, apple or cherry, sometimes overhanging an underwood of raspberry or gooseberry bushes. The arable fields were as clean and tidy as the beds of a pleasure-garden, and skylarks rose in joyous flight, pouring out their incessant fountains of passionate song overhead.

Another item is an article dated 1837, which describes the architecture of St. Martin's Church in some detail. There were two photograph cuttings from The Tatler of 1923 showing the Plough cottages with the church in the background, and a moonlight study of the old mill, bridge and church in 1939. Four sketches complete the items, 2 of the castle, one by MS in 1820, the ford, bridge and mill by T.C.D. in 1859 and by the same artist in 1859 a cottage, which perhaps someone will be able to identify. I will cover the Lullingstone items next time.

Further information about 'Soho Inn', Eynsford

It often seems to be the case that a query crops up and, then quite coincidentally, I come across information while looking for something else. This has happened over the Soho Inn. In 'Trident', May 1992, Anne Cremer, wrote a piece including a letter from Miss Peggy Briginshaw of 2 November 1962 about a recently discovered ingle-nook in Ford House. Peggy wrote:

My family sold the house in 1946. It had been a coaching inn (called 'The Soho' according to a sign unearthed by my father from a wall cupboard above

the kitchen range), and the adjoining cottages, now demolished surrounded the stable yard.

Miss Ethel Darby recalled the first floor rooms of the cottages linked by doors, when she lived with her parents in the one next to the Post Office, so it is possible that the terrace of three was once part of 'Soho Inn'.

After moving out, Miss Briginshaw lived with her mother, her brother, Warren, and sister, Mollie, at The Old Mill, Eynsford.

John Wellard of Eynsford and the Strict Baptist Chapel at Dartford

I do not know if the building still exists, but a book published in the late 1950s described it as a black wooden building, called 'Zion' which might have been taken for a store or barn. The chapel owed its origin to John Wellard of Eynsford who built it in 1794 as a place of worship for the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection. The chapel was operational until 1821, after which Mr Wellard rented it to the local vicar for a school. In 1847 it was taken over by the Strict Baptists, who purchased the freehold in 1918, and were still worshipping there into the 1950s.

(The Strict Baptist Chapels of England – The Chapels of Kent, by Ralph F. Chambers, pp.107-108)

Family history enquiries

Booker of Eynsford – Hilary has sent information about a document dated 1703 in the National Archives (C6/336/36) Boucher v. Dyke about the personal estates of John Booker and Humphrey Dyke of London, but she is not sure whether John Booker had links with our area.

Whale family, Eynsford – Gill from New Zealand enquired which pub her family ran. I told her about Wilf Duncombe's book about Eynsford pubs and pointed her towards The Plough, for which he has Whale licensees from 1829 to 1842. She has the will of her 4x great grandfather, Thomas Whale, who in 1819 left an unnamed pub to his wife, in her lifetime, and then to his three children, so this would seem to take back evidence for The Plough for at least a decade.

Other enquiries

Darenth Cottages, Station Road – Deborah sought information and help to research the history of the house. I have several copies of a KCC booklet about how to research your house for those who would like a copy, and I am happy to give advice, but the Society is unable to undertake any detailed research.

'Farningham at War' by Bernard Drew – Andrew was trying to track down a copy, so I gave advice and hope he was successful because he hasn't got back to me. Andrew believes his grandfather, George Ottaway, was at one time gardener at Hampton Court Cottage, Farningham, and he has memories of family visits to Farningham.

The Red House, Crockenhill – Kieran wanted information and photographs of the house, which is being sold by KCC. Now the new school wing has been built, this building, which had been used by the school, is no longer required.

Artist, A.W. Davis – Fran in Canada has a painting 'Eynsford, Kent, from the meadows', 1919, and would be interested to learn any information about the artist. I googled his name and found a painting by an artist with that name at Ightham Mote, painted in the 1950s. I suggested Fran contact The National Trust.

Institute Cottage, Eynsford – Jonathan was interested as a prospective buyer of the property.

Farningham Hobby Horse photos – I have not yet received Franny's digital photographic record of these.

ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman 01322 669923) (archives@felhs.org.uk)

FELHS Centre

The Centre was open for Eynfest on Saturday, June 2, but only two visitors availed themselves of the opportunity to look round.

Another tambour cupboard has arrived and now houses the collection of 'Trident' and older church newsletters.

Wanted 'Trident' for FEBRUARY 2001

If you have a copy, but don't want to part with it, please let us borrow it to copy.

Otherwise we have a complete run from 1983.

Also JANUARY AND NOVEMBER 1982 (This was the first year of 'Trident' so I am not sure whether there were issues for these months).

Dr Geoffrey Cramp has very kindly copied all the slides, 200 glass negatives of Eynsford, taken from about 1900 to 1914, and 13 of Farningham, taken in the 1920s, into digital form, and has also had prints developed. All of which are now catalogued. I also have taken 4 prints of Lullingstone c.1900s, which were among the glass plates mentioned in the Bulletin of March 2012.

Acquisitions

From Anthony Roper School – 12 hand-drawn Royal family trees produced for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

From Diana Beamish – Photographs of events in Eynsford – 16/6/2011, military funeral of Lieutenant Oliver Augustin; 5/6/2011, organised photo of villagers by the Five Bells; 2/7/2011, road repairs, Eynsford Rise; 31/7/2011, open day for 100th anniversary of New Place, Eynsford; 2011 petition against design of new station footbridge, various works connected with new footbridge, 15 April 2012, the new footbridge in place; 12/6/2011, exhibition about proposed new Eynsford Village Hall; changes to various houses in Pollyhaugh, St. Martin's Drive, Eynsford Rise; various modern brochures, flyers.

From Alan Crisp – Scout's belt with 2 Kent Fire Brigade buttons, dating after 1948.

From John Gee – 'Good News Bible', signed by Rev. Sweetman, with undated book plate from Anthony Roper Primary School; elaborate block ink stamp 'Gee and Son', with lists of products (in delicate state of preservation); 'Eynsford' school project, written in early 1980s when M25 under construction, with separate folder on Willow Terrace, with contemporary photographs; large framed photograph from 'Illustrated Magazine', 1944, 4 boys by ford with bridge, one boy, Peter Gee; 2008 letter from Dr Jean Lawrie with appreciation of Produce Show, to which she and her husband had contributed since 1957, but which she was then unable to attend; spy-viewer from 'The Five Bells', with view of the pub.

From Brian Hussey – Report of a talk, 'Lullingstone – the airport that never was', given by John King in 2006 to the Beckenham and Bromley Branch of the Historical Association; typed excerpts from diary, January to August 1944, by Unknown Soldier. He was based in a camp, to which he often walked from Otford, but seems to have had lots of passes and often went to cinemas in Bromley, Swanley and Maidstone. One week he saw a film at Borough Green on Sunday, one at Maidstone on Monday, at Sevenoaks on Tuesday, at Swanley on Wednesday, and travelled to London to see 'Lady in the Dark' in Piccadilly on Thursday. He mentions Camilla, mother and father at home, but it is not clear where he lived. One clue is that he went to a show 'In the Mood' in the local village hall. He was sometimes on duty at Wrotham, and mentioned a canteen there.

And finally....

As I sit here on a rainy Saturday it does not seem quite fitting to mention a coach trip to Whitstable, but mention I must, due to circumstances some people are now unable to come on the trip which means we have ten places left. It would be good to go with a full coach so anyone who may still be interested please contact me to reserve a place. The pick-ups are 8.30am Castle bus stop, with a pick up at Old Mill Close bus stop on the way to Farningham Village Hall for approximately 8.35am then onward to Whitstable. If you do not know the town I will supply you with a map and also included in the £12.00 cost of the trip is entrance to Whitstable Museum. We had a great day last year at Hythe and I am sure will equally as good this year. I have heard that fish and chips down at the harbour are a must.

DATE OF TRIP 15TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Tickets for the Titanic Evening at Farningham are now selling steadily; again if you would like to come and join us please contact me to reserve a place. Tickets are £10.00 which includes talk, buffet and raffle with Titanic related prizes.

DATE OF TITANIC EVENING FRIDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2012

Below is the foreword from a book called A Night to Remember by W Lord

‘In 1898 a struggling author named Morgan Robertson concocted a novel about a fabulous Atlantic liner, far larger than any that had ever been built. Robertson loaded his ship with rich and complacent people and then wrecked it one cold April night on an iceberg. This somehow showed the futility of everything, and in fact, the book was called Futility when it appeared that year, published by the firm of M F Mansfield

Fourteen years later a British shipping company named the White Star Line built a steamer remarkably like the one in Robertson’s novel. The new liner was 66,000 tons displacement; Robertson’s was 70,000 tons. The real ship was 882.5 feet long; the fictional one was 800 feet. Both vessels were triple screw and could make 24-25 knots. Both could carry about 3000 people, and both had enough lifeboats for only a fraction of this number. But, then, this didn’t seem to matter because both were labelled “unsinkable”

On April 10, 1912, the real ship left Southampton on her maiden voyage to New York. Her cargo included a priceless copy of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and a list of passengers collectively worth 250 million dollars. On her way over she too struck an iceberg and went down on a cold April night.

Robertson called his ship the Titan; The White Star Line called its ship the Titanic.’

**FARNINGHAM CHURCH FETE NOW SATURDAY 8TH
SEPTEMBER 2012**

Jan Wilkes – Editor
Telephone 865122 email Jan51@btinternet.com

WHAT’S ON 2012

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

2012

- 10th Sept Bexley Village - Roy Hopper
12th Nov Historical and Interesting Sites in Dartford - John Rank

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

2012

- 12th Sept Visit to Walmer and Deal Castles
19th Oct Traditional Kentish Building Materials – Richard Filmer
16th Nov The History of the RAF at Biggin Hill – Bob Ogle
7th Dec Christmas Social Celebrating St Nicholas

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 534501) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

Hextable Heritage Society

2012

- 13th Sept Joyce Green Hospitals & the River Hospitals – Francine Payne
11th Oct What is it? Objects from Dartford Museum to identify – Chris Baker
8th Nov The River Thames – a working river – Jerry McCarthy
December 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)