

The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

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

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Forthcoming Talks and Events

2008	Details	Where
22nd Feb	Harold H Camburn - Ed Thompson (A photographers journey through Kent Villages between the wars)	Eynsford
9th May	AGM	Farningham
19th Sept	40 years of Axstane Players - Barrie Payne (A look back over the last 40 years of the Players)	Farningham
21st Nov	Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes - Alan Stockwell (Amusing stories from the life of a puppeteer)	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)

Jan our Editor will I'm sure agree with me when I say that my reports are usually if not always the last to be submitted for inclusion in the Bulletin - publications report to follow! However, having left the writing of this report to the last minute has proved beneficial as I can now write about our last meeting which was something completely different. Although Christmas is still a few weeks away there was a festive feeling to the evening with mulled wine and mince pies. It was good to get away from the normal rows of seats and for members and friends to be seated round tables. Mick and Geoff, our speakers for the evening entertained us with poems and readings with a Christmas theme and Mick accompanied the songs with his accordion, concertina and melodeon. Although I was seated at the front of the hall I'm sure I heard members joining in with the singing. The only disappointment for me was that there was not enough time for Mick and Geoff to tell us about the different colours of Santa's costume.

As this is my last report for 2007 I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)

When I think back to when I became a committee member the most impressive item on the agenda to me was always the long list of titles put forward for possible publications that was read out at each meeting. Sadly only a few have reached the printers and have joined out 'library' of interesting subjects relating to the history of our villages. It would be nice if some of those proposed subjects could be completed, which puts me in an awkward position as I suggested not one but two topics! I am pleased to say that Audrey Gee has now finished her research and we can present a new publication:

'THE FAMILIAR RED POST BOX' by AUDREY GEE

This new publication gives a background to the subject and then covers the history of the post offices and post boxes of Eynsford and Farningham with coloured photographs of each one. In A5 format this would make an excellent Christmas stocking filler.

Audrey has had the book published privately and she has very generously said that 50p from the sale of each book will be given to FELHS. Many of you will have read the review in the Trident and if you would like a copy of 'The Familiar Red Post Box' it can be obtained from the author herself 01322 862477, from the FELHS website for £1.50 plus 50p postage or from me at evening meetings.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (Elaine Ruby 862241)

We have made considerable progress towards the opening of the new archive centre and our thanks go to Susan and Veronica who have given their time so generously.

Once the new centre is fully functioning we'll know exactly what running costs to expect on a yearly basis. We have based our estimations on worst-case costs and are confident that their running of the centre should not prove too onerous. We'd like to thank the three Parish Councils, Eynsford, Farningham and Crockenhill, for their generous grants and continued support.

The provision of an archive centre has been a long-term aim of the Society. It was agreed at the last AGM that now is the time to raise the yearly subscription level which has been unchanged for the past three years. Fund-raising and membership subscriptions are vital to FELHS and it is only with your support that we can continue as a Society.

The membership renewal slip for 2008 is attached to this Bulletin and if you could return it in good time we would be most grateful.

In addition to the annual renewal, we are introducing this year the option of becoming a life member of the Society and avoid the yearly annual renewal process and all future increases in the annual subscription. If you would like to subscribe to this option please indicate on the renewal form attached,

Best wishes to you all for a peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on the 22nd February at Eynsford Village Hall for 'A Photographer's Journey through Kent Villages between the wars.

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

More about ROSS PARKER

Eric Syddique, former Sevenoaks District Councillor for Eynsford, has written the following:-

My recollection is that he lived in the ground floor flat of the Denes in Pollyhaugh. Rather curiously he was a customer of my father's garage during the 1950s, before my father retired in 1956. At that time he lived in Sutton-at-Hone and owned a Humber Super Snipe car with the registration KXP 70. He came to Eynsford as far as I can recall, a year after my parents came to the village. By that time he had changed his car. He was a larger than life, somewhat eccentric person. From the odd comment he made, I think he was out of sympathy with the direction developing in the popular music scene. I stand to be corrected, but I associate 'They'll always be an England' with the war years which would have been long before he moved to Eynsford. I do not think he played any part in the Eynsford social scene, moving in different circles himself.

More about THE BLACK COTTAGE, BOWER LANE

Eric also has some more information about this:-

The Black Cottage was the only property on the left side of Bower Lane in the Park Farm area. It was tarred timber, so representing a vernacular style of building. When I first called there at an election, I made no contact with the occupier, but did so subsequently. She was Mrs Quinnell who was either a war widow or her husband had died soon after the end of the war (i.e. 1939-1945). It was a totally inadequate dwelling with flagstone floor and outside toilet. At the end of the war she was grateful to have any kind of roof over her head and did not say anything to Dartford Rural District Council. When I did make contact with her I discovered how unsatisfactory it was as a dwelling. I cannot directly recall exactly what happened.... anyway the cottage was inspected and at once condemned. Indeed so shocked were the officers that they photographed it and circulated the pictures to the appropriate committee. Mrs Quinnell was then rehoused in a flat in Pollyhaugh, no.88, I think. When the cottage was demolished, virtually every trace of it disappeared very rapidly. My recollection is that there was a small pond quite near to it. Anne Cremer confirms that the last residents were Mrs Quinnell who brought up her son Tony and daughter Maureen in the cottage during the war. She too recalls the pond which was thickly covered with pondweed.

PATIENCE STRONG (1907-1990)

I recently heard a radio programme celebrating the 100th anniversary of her birth and was surprised by the range of her poetry. I believe she lived in Farningham for a time and have ordered her autobiography 'With a Poem in my Pocket' from the library to see if she has anything to say about her time in the village. An obituary of her states that her maiden name was Cushing and that she was twice widowed and died childless. Her nom de plume was taken from the title of a novel a friend asked her to proof read. Her obituary states that during the Second World War she worked tirelessly in her small study at her cottage in Kent 'which virtually became an adjunct to the Post Office – writing to the service personnel and their families who turned to her for spiritual succour.' Was this cottage in Farningham I wonder?

SIR STEPHEN GLYNNE'S NOTES ON LULLINGSTONE CHURCH

Sir Stephen Glynne (1807-1874) owned Hawarden, Cheshire, and was brother-in-law to Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, who made Hawarden his home. Sir Stephen Glynne visited and described 132 churches in Kent before the great Victorian restoration swept many features away. He visited Lullingstone church in 1859:-

The interior is much modernised, but on the whole handsomely fitted up with oak pews, marble pavement and stuccoed ceiling Between the nave and chancel is ... a rood screen which seems post-Reformation with debased Gothic tracery and groining There is a kind of screen in stucco at the west end of the chapel with inscription commemorating Percival Hart Esq., the repairer and beautifier of the church who died in 1738 The chancel is stalled, and the windows full of stained glass, some of late character with armorial shields, some representing saints.

Note by Nigel Yates – this interior survives virtually as described

Studies in Modern Kentish History, Sir Stephen Glynne and Kentish Ecclesiology by Nigel Yates (KAS, 1983)

FLEETING GLIMPSES OF FARNINGHAM FROM THE STAGE COACH

In 1790 the Hon. John Byng passed through Farningham and described it as being gloomy and the surrounding country steep and stoney. In 1809 an anonymous tourist spent nine days in Kent from Monday 4 September to Tuesday 12 September. He travelled alone on public coaches with no servant. He did not always state where he stayed and there was no mention of costs. He zigzagged around but left London early on the first day and ended up in New Romney. On the first day he wrote:-

From Footh Cray to Wrotham, which is the next stage, the road leads thro a country in an undulating uphill and down Hill way through Farningham, in a manner which furnishes nothing to admire. Near to Wrotham, however, on descending a high Hill a fertile and extensive Valley presents itself.

Studies in Modern Kentish History, The Kentish Portion of an Anonymous Tour of 1809 by John Whyman (KAS, 1983)

THE OLD BAPTIST BURYING GROUND, DARNS HILL, CROCKENHILL

Many of you may not know that up a track off Tylers Green Road is a very rare burying ground miles away from any Baptist Chapel founded in the late C17th. Its history has been written by Shirley Burgoyne Black in the 1980s, but since then other information has come to light. Recently my attention was drawn to a history of the Parish of St. Mary Cray held at Orpington Library and written in 1957 by Jeanne Cooke:-

The first trace of any dissension on the part of the parishioners occurs in 1698 when the death is recorded of Barbary Basset widow, 'buryd in ye Anabaptists ground at Crocken-hill in Aynesford Parish at ye charge of St. Mary Cray.

In 1676 the Compton Census noted the population of each parish and how many were Catholic and how many dissenters. It is interesting to note that of Farningham's population of 100 over the age of 16 and Eynsford's 220 there were 6 non-Conformists, all in Eynsford. Remembering that the parish of Eynsford then included Crockenhill one wonders whether that is where the non-Conformists found refuge.

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY IN EYNSFORD, 1625?

John Burlynge of Eynsford, husbandman, indicted for keeping an unlicensed tippling-house at Eynsford on 1 October 1624

Thomas Muncke of Eynsford, husbandman, indicted for keeping an unlicensed tippling-house at Eynsford on 1 October 1624

Calendar of Assizes for James I's reign

MORE ABOUT THE ROAD TO FARNINGHAM, 1608

Grand Jury Presentment (no.309)

The highway through Birch Wood on the road from Farningham to Foots Cray is narrow so that 'the clothiers are often tymes robbed in their necessary pursuit of their affayres.'

The jury is not able to identify the owners of the adjoining lands and requests the Court to delegate the matter to 'such knights and gentlemen of understanding and industry as your lordship shall in your wisdome think fit'.

Result: Sir Percival Hart, Sir Thomas Walsingham, Sir William Barnes, Mr Stephen Theobald or any two of them to undertake the task.

Assize order (no. 443, 1609) Delegates the widening of the highway through Birch Wood to a committee of JPs.

Calendar of Assizes for James I's reign

QUEEN ELIZABETH I DINED WITH SIR PERCIVAL HART ON HER WAY TO OTFORD in 1559

I came across the following entry in the catalogue of documents from Sir Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, during her visit to her royal palace at Otford in July 1559.

The chances are that this dinner took place at Sir Percival's house in Orpington, but it might have been at Lullingstone.

Accounts:

Carriage of your Lordship's tents from London to Otford

- 77 shillings 8 pence

Servants dinners when the Queens Majesty dined with Sir Percival Hart

- 4 shillings 4 pence

For 'banketing stuff' prepared at the Queen's Highness being at your Lordship's tent within the park (i.e. Otford park)

- £6 14 shillings.

1447 ASSAULT AND RAPE BY A CHAPLAIN IN EYNSFORD

Henry Weston late of Otford, chaplain, on 10 August 1447, broke into the close and house of a certain Richard Colton of Eynsford at Eynsford and assaulted and raped Agnes Colton, his wife.

Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society, p.242 (KAS XVIII, 1964)

RESEARCH QUERIES

Hills/ Baldwin of Chelsfield and Crockenhill – Shaun who was educated at Cannock School in Chelsfield, but who emigrated to New Zealand and later moved to Australia, visited here in October. Both Geoff Copus and I met him and were able to take both his parents' lines back several generations. Incidentally, Shaun's company produces the Australian equivalent of 'Who do you think you are'.

Tullet of Crockenhill – Joanne found my help wonderful!

Barr of Eynsford – Edna's grandfather was William Hendry Barr, born in Eynsford in 1881. He was one of a long line of Eynsford born Barrs and Edna wondered whether there was anything about the family in our archives.

James Gladdish of Lullingstone 1752

Boetius Symmachus Pryer – He was a blacksmith in Eynsford whose headstone still stands in the churchyard. This is a name to conjure with and any ideas about how he came to be so named would be welcome.

Arthur Mee's house – Dylan's grandfather worked on the house and wanted more information, but he did not give me his grandfather's name or his expertise.

Clay-pipe from 27 Old Chapel Road – I showed Phil Cole and Brian Boyden a pipe bowl I had found in my garden and was surprised to learn that by its shape it was possible to date it to 1660-1680. At the end of the road was an old farmhouse and my garden was part of its orchard.

Numerous questions about Crockenhill – Giles from St Mary Cray has become interested in several aspects of Crockenhill's history, including the ages of all the houses. Although I have the answers to most of his questions, to answer them would be too time consuming, but I have been doing my best.

ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman)

The Centre is looking full but more organised. Ken Baker has kindly erected shelving along one wall of the back room and this has been filled with boxes of artefacts. Veronica Sheppard now has the task of going through the boxes to sort out their contents. Meanwhile both she and I spent an exhausting day removing the folders from the 16 drawers of the filing cabinets at Horton Kirby Environmental Centre and transporting them over to Eynsford. As I write they are standing in the front room looking ominously disorganised and making a huge forbidding pile of crates. By the time this Bulletin is circulated the filing cabinets themselves should have been moved from Horton Kirby and a start made to restore the contents into some semblance of order. The Vent Axia air circulating system was fitted without a controller, but one has now been purchased and is due to be connected. We have been greatly hampered by a car being dumped in front of the Centre. After unsuccessful efforts by the Society to persuade the owner to remove this, Eynsford Parish Council has become involved, with a possibility of police action as a last resort. Once the car has been taken away bollards will be erected along the front so the space will be available to Centre users. These bollards have been purchased with a generous grant from Farningham Parish Council which has also paid for two fire extinguishers and three fire blankets. Although things have been moved into the Centre it will take some time to get the archives into a state when they can be easily consulted by visitors, but we are working as quickly as we can to achieve this end result.

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.

ACQUISITION

Vase from the Eynsford pottery – this has been donated by Gloria Gee who says it was one of Peter's proud possessions. It was given to him by Flo Martin who lived in Willow Terrace. As we have photographs and written information about the pottery which used to be up at Robsacks, it is lovely to have an artefact as well.

AND FINALLY

This year has been a very busy one for the Society, we started the year with a talk on Lullingstone station, followed it with Mysteries and Cover-ups, with a wonderful meal prepared by Elaine, Veronica and Dee with a little help from Penny and myself. In September an interesting talk by Phil and Brian on Clay Pipes and our finalee a Kent Christmas where we not only enjoyed the entertainment but partook of mulled wine and mince pies. We have put on exhibitions at the Scout Fete on that wet day in June and at Eagle Heights in September for Wings over the Darent. Barbara took the publications to the Farningham Fete and by all accounts had a very successful afternoon.

2008 is going to be just a busy with some interesting talks coming up throughout the year and hopefully some surprises, watch this space.....

Just leaves me to say

Have a

WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS

AND

GREAT NEW YEAR

Jan Wilkes (Editor) 865122

WHAT'S ON 2008/2009

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

2008

14th Jan Dig for Victory -Russell Bowes

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

Shoreham & District Historical Society

2008

11th Jan Mac White Lecture - Ken Wilson

8th Feb History of Shoreham School - Joy Saynor

7th March Annual General Meeting with talk on Lullingstone Airport -John King

Meetings held in the Village Hall Shoreham from 8pm. Members who wish to attend these meetings are advised to contact the Secretary Joy Saynor (01959 522713) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

Hextable Heritage Society

2008

24th Jan Temple Hill - Chris Baker

28th Feb Dirty Dartford - Chris Bull

27th March Yesterday's Newspapers - Monty Parkin

24th April The weather in Kent - Bob Ogley

22nd May AGM plus John Meakins with local photographs

26th June Visit to St John Baptist Church Sutton at Hone (details to follow later)

24th July Gales, Greenhouses and global warming - Ian Currie

25th Sept Time Life and humorous verse - Mrs Silvester

23rd Oct Naval Heritage - Richard Walsh

27th Nov Talk on clocks - Adrian Herbert

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)