

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 116

December 2017

ATTENTION!

URGENT message from the Chairman & Committee

full programme for 2018 may be the last

We are in desperate need of more Committee members, or else the AGM of MAY 2018 will see a resolution to disband our Society.

Many of you have already contributed your services to FELHS since its formation in 1985,

BUT

**Can you encourage others to join the Committee?
Can newer members consider offering your services?**

Please don't hesitate. give it a try!

**WE PARTICULARLY NEED A SECRETARY, TREASURER /BOOK KEEPER, PROGRAMME SECRETARY,
but you can join the Committee to give general support.**

**OUR ARCHIVE COLLECTION FOR EYNSFORD,
FARNINGHAM & LULLINGSTONE IS THE ENVY OF**

OTHER SOCIETIES, PLEASE DON'T LET IT BE DISPERSED AND LOST TO THE VILLAGES.

Please contact either

**Barbara Cannell (Chairman) 01322 864253: barbarathecottage@gmail.com
or Susan Pittman 01322 669923: www.felhs.org.uk (contact page)**

Forthcoming Talks and Events

Date	Details	Where
2018		
16 th February	Darent Valley, well I never knew that – Rod Shelton	FVH
27 th April	Excavation of a Saxon Palace in Eynsford (full title to be announced) – Brian Philp	EVH
18 th May	AGM – Photographs on display from the FELHS Collection	FVH
21 st September	Kent on Film, old film sequences of rural life in Kent from early 20 th century	EVH
2 nd November	Members evening (details to be announced) details to be finalised: In the pipeline:- 'Eynsford Shops' (repeat of successful exhibition of September 2017) 'Farningham Shops & High Street'	FVH

Unless otherwise stated all Meetings are held on a Friday evening from 7.30 pm, talk commencing 8 pm. (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 01322 864253)

I really hope that the notice on the front page of this Bulletin brings the results that ensures the future of our society. For me and the existing committee and all those members that over the years have given their time and energies towards the running of the society and organisation of the archives it will be an unimaginable loss if we must disband through lack of committee members.

On a brighter note I am pleased to report the recent success of the two displays held in The Library of the Castle Hotel. The Shops of Eynsford was well attended and a lot of interest was shown in the pictures and exhibits with quite a few memories of the different shops and shop keepers being exchanged between visitors. The second display commemorating the 100 years since the death of Elliott Downs Till, remembered as Friend and Benefactor of Eynsford was again well attended with interest in the many societies that benefited from the generosity given them by Till. Our thanks go to The Castle Hotel for the use of The Library on both these occasions. The Eynsford bell ringers rang a special peal in memory of Till who helped with the funding for a new bell tower, the repair and replacing of the clock and the repair and re-siting of the weathervane. Gary Owen, the vicar of St Martins church, asked for a small display highlighting the repair work that Till funded be placed in the church. For me the highlight of this display was to welcome David and Christine Till to the event. David is a distant relation of Elliott and I have had the pleasure of exchanging over the years snippets of information and pictures of Till that I have found in various

publications. Likewise, David sends me some of the results of his research. We were also asked to bring a display about the work that Till did in Eynsford especially his founding of Arbour Day in England to the Eynsford in Bloom meeting in Eynsford village hall on 3rd November for the presentation of this year's gold award.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT (Alison Marshall 01322 862298)

It's the December issue of the Bulletin so that means it's time to renew your membership. You will find your renewal form either attached or enclosed, depending on your preference.

When you complete your form don't forget to sign the Gift Aid section as that helps the Society by making your subscription more valuable.

You can return your form and cheque to me by post or just put it through the door. My name is Alison Marshall and I have recently joined the History Society and become the new Membership Secretary all in one go!

My address is 11a Riverside, Eynsford, Kent. DA4 0AE

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

Index to the Bulletins - nos. 1 - 114 (1985-2016) have now been indexed and a searchable copy is to be put on the Bulletin page of the website.

Kent Population on census nights 1891-1981

1891	710,172	
1901	806,488	13.56% increase
1911	868,927	7.74%
1921	938,112	7.96%
1931	958,710	2.19%
1939	1,014,520	5.82%
1951	1,091,153	7.55%
1961	1,198,564	9.84%
1971	1,399,463	16.76%
1981	1,467,619	4.87%

(HMSO Kent Part 1, Census 1981 Report)

Sale of Eynsford Station Goods yard, 1988

This conveyance between British Railways Board and Paul Dunstall Organisation Ltd of Shoreham for £79,250 contained many conditions to ensure nothing on the site interfered with the running of the railway.

'A Vale in Kent' by Philip Rogers (1909-1973)

This historical guide to the Darent Valley was published in 1955. An article by Mark Gardner in *Bygone Kent* vol. 38 no. 4 (May/June 2017) pp.38-43, gives some background to the author. He was a gifted linguist, an officer in British Intelligence in the Second World War, and in other periods a teacher, lecturer and diplomat. He wrote several books as well as 'A Vale in Kent', which revealed his appreciation of conservation and ecology that was far ahead of his time. He died at his home in

Orpington in 1973, aged 63. Mark considers him to have been one of the most dedicated and expert chroniclers of Kentish history.

1931 Scheme to upgrade Eynsford Recreation Ground rejected

Eynsford Parish Council was negotiating a loan of £300, to be repaid by ratepayers over 30 years, in order to re-turf the cricket pitch, provide seating and to erect a swimming pool, where children could learn to swim. Opposition to the scheme centred on the cost overall and the ongoing cost of maintaining the pool. The meeting of parishioners voted against the scheme 22 to 4.

(The Chronicle and Courier 8 May 1931)

1897 Four Days in a Dene hole

Richard Castleton walked to the woods on Crouch Farm, between Crockenhill and St Mary Cray, to gather nuts one Sunday. When he did not return search parties hunted for him to no avail. Then someone suggested he might have fallen into a dene hole.

On Thursday afternoon a new search was made and a well in the wood was sounded.

A searcher's dog promptly grew alert, and someone was lowered down to find

Castleton 40-50 feet down more dead than alive.

(The District Times 24 September 1897)

Dartford Union Minutes, 1850-1851

Farningham officers to take proceedings against James Palmer for neglecting to mention his 3 children now in the Workhouse.

Relief for permanently disabled William Stradwick, aged 79 of Eynsford, refused in favour of his being admitted to the Workhouse.

Mr Hunt, the Medical Officer, said the pig sty erected by John Taylor of Farningham was likely to be a nuisance and injurious to health in warm weather.

The death of Joseph Beckley, the registrar of births and deaths for Farningham was announced. He was replaced by C. Everest of Farningham.

Mr Webb, shoemaker of Eynsford, who requested boy Walklyn as an apprentice, was refused because his character was considered to be unsatisfactory.

Mary Ann Curd of Eynsford, aged 60, chargeable to the parish of St Paul's Deptford was to be returned home to Eynsford.,

History of old Racecourses

William is writing the history of old racecourses and wanted information about the one at Farningham. I gave him a copy of Hilary Harding's article on the subject in FELHS Publication no. 32, and from that was able to give him an idea of where the course ran, and to point out that the Hop Pole mentioned was not the one in Button Street, but another that once stood on what became Broomfield Hall, now on the Swanley side of the M25. William was very impressed with the collection of original posters and programmes from the 1830s and 1840s collected by Hilary.

The 1837 races "afforded much amusement to a company both numerous and fashionable. "In mid-July 1838 spectators paid 2/6d (12½p) to bring carriages on the course, and one shilling (5p) for other vehicles. The attendance was the highest known, despite the rain, and the 'magnificent' sport ended with a pony race. The Royal Artillery Band played and there was an 'excellent' dinner at the Hop Pole.

A seal in the Darent

An undated and incomplete newspaper cutting in the archive tells the following story. In 1843 a seal escaped from a zoo in Sevenoaks and swam down the Darent as far as

Eynsford. There it took shelter in a hedge, where it was found by suspicious villagers and stoned to death before the owner could retrieve it.

(This begs the question of where the zoo was in Sevenoaks!)

Update on David Dalley of 1842

In the last Bulletin I wrote about David Dalley, his epileptic wife, and three children, as reported in the Dartford Union Minutes of 1842. Jane Schoelkopf writes that the family ended up living in her house, The Limes, Farningham. I am not sure where the information came from, but apparently the wife had a fit in Farningham church yard and was found with her skirts up round her neck, which was not sympathetically dealt with.

Useful websites

Key to English Place Names: <http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk>

Looking at Buildings: <http://www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk>

C18th & C19th Maps: <http://archivemaps.com/mapco>

National Wills Index: <http://nationalwillsindex.com>

Family history enquiries

Baldock / Pullen - Shinead from Ireland wanted information about her great-grandparents Sidney E.H. Pullen and Beatrice I. Pullen nee Baldock from Eynsford. Details from the 1891 census showed Sidney's father to have been a railway signalman, while Beatrice's father was a carpenter, neither were born in Eynsford. I advised her to contact North West Kent Family History Society or her local family history society if she wanted to go back further.

Ashton Morgan and other branches of the family - Zoe is researching the Morgan family on her mother's side - Ashton being her grandfather's uncle. She hoped to make contact with other family members. I put her in touch with Jan Wilkes who was involved with discovering the story behind the Ashton Morgan Dead Man's Penny found at Farningham House.

Other enquiries

Lullingstone Airport - Daniel from BBC South East Today wanted information about the proposed airport at Hulberry in the 1930s, about which we have a great deal. Airport expansion in the south-east is a subject of current debate, and Daniel is hoping to be given a broadcast slot about the similar problem from the 1930s.

Peter Warlock - Elizabeth, senior content editor from Classic FM, is compiling the station's first podcast and has chosen to concentrate on this composer. I was able to show her items from the archive, including three cassette tapes (one with an interview with Peggy Eves (nee Munn) whose father rented Munn's Cottage to Warlock). Elizabeth has digitised the tapes and has offered to convert the rest of our cassette tapes to CD.

Update on local football teams - Barbara, our chairman, has photos of Otford United 1921-22, Horton Kirby 1924-25, and pointed out the photo of Sutton-at-Hone in the parish book. I have passed on the information to Ralph.

Harber lorries - Allan wanted photos of Harber vehicles in the 1920s/30s. The Harber family business had a major presence at Horton Kirby gravel pits and on road construction, including the Farningham by-pass. I was unable to help him, but perhaps a reader might know of Harber lorry photos. He is also interested in Brown's haulage business of Priory Lane, Eynsford.

Bob Paine update - Our member, Jackie, contacted me because she is Bob Paine's sister, so Mike and Bob have been put in touch with each other.

Legacy of basket making in the 1st World War - Hilary from Devon contacted me for permission to use an image of baskets which appears under WW1(The Exhibition

held in 2014) on the website. I sent her other images of baskets and basket making in the area. Hilary is working on a project about basketry as part of the Everyday Lives in War Centre at Hertfordshire University. She is updating the booklet 'The Cultivation and Use of Basketry Willow' for Rothamsted Research, part of the university, which holds the national willow collection. At Crockenhill a pond along Stones Cross Road is called the osier pond, and the pond and stream into it are lined with white willows grown for basket making. All the trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them.

Wilson gearbox - Nicholas, technical adviser of the Alvis Owner Club, wanted FELHS publication 'Walter Gordon Wilson, engineer and tank pioneer' by Dr Wilf Duncombe. He was particularly interested in the Wilson gear box. I told him about items in the collection concerning the Wilson-Pilcher car, and gave him the email address of Peter Meyer, who has written a comprehensive book about the gear box entitled 'Lubrication and care of the Wilson pre-selective self-changing gearbox.'

ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman - 01322 6699233 www.felhs.org.uk)

FELHS Centre

The Centre has been opened since March, with the season ending in November. The Centre can also be visited by appointment throughout the year.

The team of Ann, Alison, Helen, Veronica, and Vikki has been kept busy with the various events, and generally with sorting out the collection. We were able to put out a varied transport display at the AGM, which was well received. The Centre also provided information for the 'Shops in Eynsford' (fronted by Alison Bridgeman) exhibition and the 'Elliott Downs Till' (fronted by Barbara Cannell) exhibition held in September.

The new season will begin in March 2018 when we will be concentrating on cataloguing the photos individually, and preparing for an exhibition on Farningham shops and High Street, to be shown in Farningham.

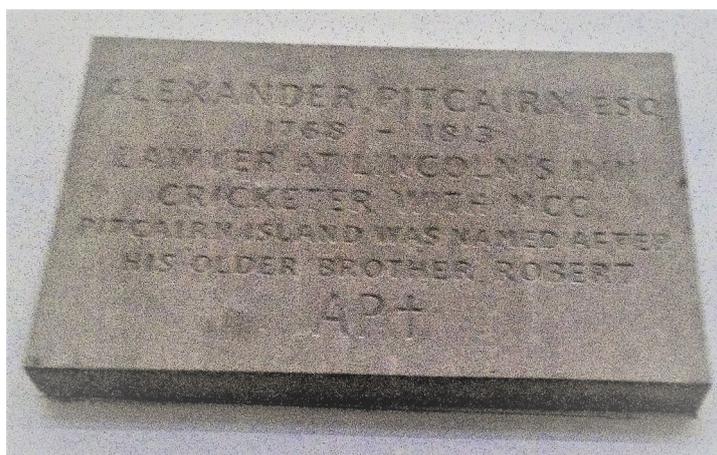
Diana Beamish continues to do a splendid job in keeping the Eynsford scrapbook, but Lynda Jarrett, who took over the Farningham scrapbook, about a year ago has had to give up. Ann has caught up with sticking in Farningham cuttings on Mondays, but we need another volunteer from Farningham willing to take over. Please let me know if you would like to give it a try. The idea is to collect today's news for tomorrow's history. Sticking in the cuttings (which I collect from the local newspapers) can be done at home as and when convenient - a job for those long winter evenings!



Farningham tank in the 1930s. The bank (then Martin's Bank, later Barclay's) was built in 1922. The tank was taken as war scrap in 1940. Sadly, the bank has closed this year and the building is up for sale.

and finally.....

What an amazing year, firstly the evening meetings Pocahontas, Charles Darwin and finally George Bernard Shaw, all were thoroughly entertaining and informative. The Shops Exhibition and Till Exhibition at the Castle Hotel. A World War I display for the North-West Kent AGM, then Farningham Fete. The display and peal of bells to honour Alfred Gates and finally in October a service St Martins to dedicate the plaque to Alexander Pitcairn, our body in the church.



Some of you may be aware that earlier in the year I approached James Alexander with reference to the photographs which his late father James Alexander had gathered over the years. I knew he had photographs of the shops in Eynsford in his collection. I went around to see James and in the end, we concluded that it would take far too long to look for the relevant photographs, so he very kindly let me have a copy of the whole collection which I now have on my computer. These are an invaluable resource and so far, have been used for the Shops, Till, Alfred Gates and Pitcairn displays. My aim sometime in the future is to put together film shows as James Alexander did in the past to make funds for the history society. We live in such an amazing age for technology, to have access to all these photographs, to be able to produce copies without having one single original photograph.....I think James Alexander would have loved it.

It just leaves me now to say thank you and please support the Committee where you can to ensure that the FELHS can continue its work in bringing the history of our villages to you all.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW
YEAR**



What's On 2018

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

8 th January	Gravesend - Gateway to the Thames - Christoph Bull
12 th March	Kent and East Sussex Railway -Then and Now - Doug Lindsay
14 th May	Life and Times of Edith Cavell - Melanie Gibson-Barton
9 th July	1917 - Bombs on Kent – Alex Ferris
10 th September	Development of South Darenth before 1900 – Malcolm Scott
12 th November	AGM + short talk + wine and cheese

Meetings are held on Monday at the Village Hall, South Darenth from 8pm. If you require further information, contact Barbara Cannell (01322 864253) (Remember your membership card)

Shoreham History Society

19 th January	The Dr Lothian Lecture – Dr David Rushton
16 th February	Community Archaeology work in NW Kent – Andrew Mayfield
16 th March	The Medieval Housewife – Toni Mount

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 525312) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

Hextable

11 th January	Members night Looking at items from the archives
8 th February	Memories of Swanley Village – Keith Whitmore
8 th March	Lost Empires – The Last Days of Music Hall and Variety – Wilf Lower
12 th April	The Forming of the RAF and the early days of Biggin Hill – Bob Ogly
10 th May	AGM followed by The Winchester Mystery House – Sharron Mitchell
14 th June	Seaside Postcards – Alan Payne
12 th July	Evening Visit Firefighting Museum – Woodlands Garden Centre, Ash (time to be confirmed)
9 th August	Alexander Pitcairn – The Body in the Church – Jan Wilkes
13 th September	Pocahontas – without Disney – Christoph Bull
11 th October	Guy Fawkes – Anne Carter

8th November

South Darent and Sink the Link – Sarah Lewis

6th December

Christmas Party – A History of Teddies and Other Bears –
Melanie Gibson-Barton

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