

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 110

June 2016

Forthcoming Talks and Events

	Details	Where
2016		
10/11 th June	Queen Elizabeth – A Celebration 11am to 4pm (Small Exhibition to be held in the Castle Hotel)	
1 st July	Somme 100 – A Concert to Remember from 6.30pm concert 7.30pm	EVH
7 th Sept	Trip to the Kent Battle of Britain Museum and Battle of Britain Monument at Capel le Ferne	
23 rd Sept	World War One poets – Bob and Fern Ogley	FVH
11 th Nov	The Crystal Palace Story 1854-1936	EVH

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)

It had been my intention to reflect upon the proceedings of the recent AGM held at Farningham Village Hall but an unwelcome visit from a most unpleasant virus has meant a delay in this happening. Hopefully this will be done for the next bulletin. My thanks to Jan for chairing this meeting in my absence and my thanks to committee members for their support during the meeting

Some of you may have seen in the Sevenoaks Chronicle recently that a meeting of descendants of two local families, the Gibson family of Eynsford and the Wood family of Crockenhill gathered at the Castle Hotel on the 30th April. The reason for this had been prompted by the discovery of a silver bracelet that had been found whilst digging in the garden of the Crosby family in the 1980s. This family home had been built in the grounds of Towercroft the large Victorian home of Sidney and Emma Gibson. David Crosby researched the history of the Gibson family and traced the bracelet back to its owner, Muriel Gibson. More research found Diana Ricketts, Muriel's granddaughter and it was to her that the bracelet was returned. I thank Tessa

Wannell for her invitation to attend this meeting as a distant member of the Wood family. It was amazing the amount of family history and artefacts that were on display and the memories of past times that were remembered. I have copies of the Gibson and Wood family trees should any member be interested in tracing the family links.

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

HELP NEEDED - Letters from whom?

Two letters in the FELHS collection are signed by Christian names only, and I wondered whether any reader could supply surnames.

- February 1995 to Peter Gee from Susan and Philip, Red Pits Cottage, Wood Dalling, Norwich
- Undated letter (13 pages of recollections of Eynsford) to Ethel Darby from Ruth and Doug, ?lunes, Kinlochbervie

A History of Eynsford by AJ Dunkin

This was published by the author in 1856 and included an architectural account of Eynsford castle. The second part of the book contained the history of Erith. Dunkin gave 20 variations of the spelling of Eynsford. Cresy wrote the account of Eynsford castle in 1835 when the stabling and kenneling erected in the castle had recently been removed. 'The outer or curtain wall, unquestionably one of the most perfect specimens remaining in this country, is an irregular polygonal oval, or horseshoe.' Some rudimentary excavation work was done to reveal the footings and the layout. Cresy also mentioned a tessellated pavement which had been found at Lullingstane (once a separate parish between Lullingstone and Eynsford) and the Roman coins constantly found in the neighbourhood.

1871 - What the Dartford Chronicle said

- Mr Clarke, the enterprising proprietor of the **Lion Hotel, Farningham**, has started a new and handsomely constructed omnibus last Wednesday to run between Farningham and Dartford railway station. The vehicle was built by our townsman Mr W of Lowfield-street, and is equal in appearance to any private conveyance. We think it cannot fail to be much admired and largely patronised during the coming summer. (4 May)
- Lady Dyke laid the foundation stone of a **new vicarage house at Eynsford**. (5 August)
- It was resolved to fence **two dangerously exposed ponds at Crockenhill** following complaints from Mr Mace. (8 April)

A letter from Sir Percival Hart Dyke said there was no acceptance to fence off the ponds. When it was suggested that the waste land might be taken over against his will by giving notice, the subject was dropped. (5 August)

Eynsford Fire Brigade, 1897

A committee meeting was held at the Priory, the home of E.D. Till. There was discussion about raising money for the Brigade, which 'cannot, like their fortunate brethren at Cray, get the least public support from the rates.' It was hoped that a surplus of £3 raised in Farningham would be given to the Brigade, which was 'absolutely destitute of necessary equipment.' A course of weekly popular lectures, and a string quartet concert had been arranged to boost funds.

Millbourn family - papermakers and publicans

This is tale of how people with differing research emphasis can combine knowledge to mutual benefit. Carolyn contacted FELHS over her Millbourn/Stockley families, and later Colin did so over T.H. Saunders paper. Carolyn saw the Saunders item in the Bulletin and contacted FELHS again to say that the Millbourns had worked for T.H. Saunders so I put the two in touch with each other. Their exchanges threw light on the Millbourn's family connection with papermaking back to 1854 when James Millbourn was manager of Marsh Beech and Rye Mills. Arthur Millbourn purchased Little Darenth Mill and later moved the business to Tuckenhay, Devon. In 1866 Joseph Millbourn was manager of the Phoenix Mills at Dartford. His nephew, Henry James Millbourn, (Carolyn's great-grandfather) subsequently went to work there. In the 1880s the Phoenix Mill burnt down and the site was purchased in 1889 by Mr Burroughs and Mr Wellcome, who set up their business there. After the fire Henry James took over the licence of the Malt Shovel, Eynsford, but died in 1890, leaving his widow, Drusilla, to take over until her son, Henry, followed. Hillier Millbourn, the grandson of Henry James, took over the business from his father in 1930 and carried on until his retirement in 1972, although from 1950 his daughter, Miriam, was a great help. Carolyn has given FELHS a copy of the notes dictated to Miriam by Hillier in 1988 of his time at the Malt Shovel, and of the extensive alterations made to it in the early 1930s. She has also sent her notes about Millbourn and the Stockley families, with a card of a delightful 'Highland Snow' scene which she had painted.

The Mace family tragedy, 1932

In the Orpington and St Mary Cray Times, 8 January 1932, the suicide of Ernest Mace aged 52, and the murder of his wife, Violet, at The Greyhound Public House, Kennington Park Road, Lambeth, was reported. His father had seven years previously committed suicide at The Bull, Birchwood, Swanley, and his brother, Arthur, was landlord of The Chequers, Crockenhill. Ernest's son told the coroner at the inquest that his father was worried about increased income tax and the payment of his licence amounting to £300. In the suicide note, Ernest wrote, 'Something has snapped in my brain. Forgive me. Am taking Mum with me. Income tax is the cause of it all.' The coroner stated that in fact Ernest Mace had ample funds to meet his bills, so his view had become distorted and he had taken his own life and that of his wife 'in sheer desperation.'

I knew there had been enquiries about the Mace family, so was able to look up the records and contact Jeremy, who had first contacted me in 2009, to pass over the information.

1939 An artist comes to Farningham

Percy Buckman RMS came to live at Hillside, Farningham, in his retirement. 'Farningham is so unlike any village I know. It has so much dignity.' In 1892-1893 Percy was appointed artist to the Egypt Exploration Fund. In 1898 he became master of the life school at Goldsmiths' College, and was joint-author in 1926 of 'The Art of the Miniature Painter'.
(Dartford Chronicle and Kentish Times, 9 June 1939)

Alexander Gordon Guthrie and the Jacquard Puppets

Pam picked up from the website that FELHS had recently acquired some sheet music by Alexander Gordon Guthrie (known as Gordon Guthrie). She is writing the biography of puppeteer, John Carr OBE, the owner of Jacquard Puppets, and had found two letters from the 1950s from A.G. Guthrie, who had composed a musical version of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter', which he thought Carr might perform with

puppets. The first letter commented on various aspects of linking dialogue and action with his music. Another letter of 2 February 1955 referred to the possibility that the show would be shown on television or on film, and whether the fee to Guthrie would amount to much. 'Let me know if anything transpires as I haven't even got a television set of my own.' Pam sent copies of the letters and photos of the stage set and the walrus and carpenter puppets. She requested information about Guthrie, and I have put her in touch with his daughter Caroline, who believes she has the original score of the playlet. I sent Pam a photo of Guthrie's home, Hampton Court House, Sparepenny Lane, and of the metasequoia tree he planted on his hundredth birthday on 19 April 1985. His death was reported in the March 1986 Trident, and his wife Christina's in that of October 1998. The Trident of April 1985 had a lengthy article on his life. He came from Liverpool and, after taking an engineering degree, came to Farningham in 1908 to join his brother-in-law, Herbert Ward of Mill House, Farningham, at J & E Hall's at Dartford. Music was one interest of many, others were painting and gardening.

The Romano-British skeleton found at 6 Pollyhaugh in 1957

In the FELHS collection I came across a letter from the Department of Forensic Medicine of Guy's Hospital to Rex Lawrie, a consultant there. Colin Hunter-Craig found the skeleton to be that of a 5'9" tall man, aged about 40, and right-handed because his right arm bones were bigger than his left. He had an old back injury and his backbone showed he was accustomed to heavy labour. His teeth were worn down by grit from the millstone used to grind flour, and he was suffering from a dental abscess.

Family history enquiries

- **Atcheler** - George wrote that he had located baptisms in Kent in the 1590s, and wondered whether the family had originated in the county. I passed this query on to the help-line of North West Kent Family History Society.

Other enquiries

- **A.G. Guthrie** - Pam asked about A.G. Guthrie in relation to puppeteer, John Carr (see above)
- **1st World War lorries** - Peter had visited the 1st World War exhibition section of the website and was able to correct the identification of the 4 lorries belonging to Crockenhill farmers - namely - 1st lorry not a Commer, but might well be a Palladium; 2nd lorry, not a Dennis, but an ex-War Department Leyland; 3rd lorry a Hallford as stated; 4th lorry not a Federal, but another Hallford. Thank you, Peter, for sharing your specialist knowledge.
- **All Souls' Church History** - Terence requested a copy of this. I was able to find one, but otherwise it is now out of print, although I can supply it on disc.
- **Farningham airfield** - John wanted information about this so I referred him to Wilf Duncombe's research in FELHS publication no.20, which also has a paper on the dummy airfield at Lullingstone.
- **South View, Till Avenue, Farningham** - Paul believes this house to date from about 1885, but he has been unable to trace its history. I gave him a KCC booklet on how to research house history, and a few hints to start him off. There was nothing in the Centre of immediate help.

FELHS Centre

The office room in the Centre had been affected by mould on the ceiling, but this has now been treated and the ceiling painted. At the same time extra shelving was put up in the back storage room, which has immediately been filled with objects which had been put on the top of cupboards.

Alison, Ann, Helen and Vikki began sorting the photographic collection in late February. Duplicates have been put together so condensing the collection. The A4 and larger sized photos have been put into sections for ease of access. The cupboard containing the photos has been reorganised to give maximum space. The most difficult task is to match the photos with various pieces of paper of description/names which have become separated from the photos.

Now the collections at the Centre have been better organised and items can be located I would like to form a team to help with the ongoing running of the Centre. Tasks which need not be too onerous or involve too much commitment might include cataloguing (computer skills required) but can be on an irregular basis, computer at Centre or could be done at home; filing; how we conserve the collection; regular opening up of the Centre any day, any time, at convenience of volunteer/s; finding relevant items for exhibitions/displays and copying/preparing material; checking the building and equipment.

THE CENTRE IS A VITAL RESOURCE AND HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO CONTINUE TO RUN IT.

Acquisitions

From St Martin's Church, Eynsford - 2001/03 folder for sound and loop system with Faculty papers; folder on organ; folders on church repairs, 1947/1961, 1961/1975, 1982/1988, 1994/1998 (summary list only), 1999/2002; 1995 accounts; 2001 Hibbin memorial; 2002 Dolling memorial; 1960 plan and description of electrical installation; 1961 plan/ letter re pavement along front of church/ moving lych-gate; 1967 plan/ letter change to Baptistry; 1967 application for faculty to re-site font, Faculty permission; 1993/1995 repairs to nave, south transept; 1999 plan for iron fence/gate near Olive Seal Hall.

And finally...

Thank you to all those members who came to the AGM on 20th May and for their support as I took the roll of acting chairman in Barbara's absence. Fortunately, she is now feeling so much better so hopefully the situation will not arise any time in the near future.

Tickets are now available for Somme 100 – A Concert to Remember they are £10.00 and children under 16 are free. There is information either attached or enclosed depending on how you get your bulletin delivered to you. Also there is information about the trip to The Kent Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, we only have 29 places available on the coach so if anyone would like to join us please get in touch with me as soon as possible.



Jan Wilkes – 865122 email hisarc@btinternet.com

What's On 2016

Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society

- 13th June Our Thames from Dartford to Grain – Christoph Bull
11th July Restoring Reynolds Place – Laurence Hatfield
12th September Darent – Rod Shelton
14th November AGM

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

- 17th June Early Seaside Resorts – Ann Kneif
31st July Summer Strawberry Tea
16th September Paper Making – Jean Stirk
21st October They dared to be Doctors – Toni Mount
18th November Woolwich Women at War – Steve Hookins

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

- 9th June Rowhill Grange – Brian Wates
14th July Visit to Rowhill Grange
11th August Somme 100 to Wilhelm, with love – Steve Hookins
8th September A Sheltered Life – Mike Brown
13th October Our Thames from Dartford to Grain – Christoph Bull
10th November Keming VAD Hospital a village's response to WWI – Janet Easton
3rd December Christmas Party

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)

**AS I WRITE THIS I AM LOOKING AT RAIN – WELCOME TO
SUMMER.....**



