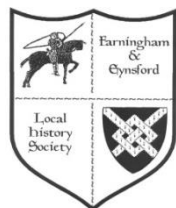


Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

(Original Society founded 1985 Registered Charity no 1047562)

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee

No. 5620267 incorporated 11th November 2005 Registered Charity 1113765



Bulletin No. 133

Summer 2023

News from FELHS AGM

We were pleased to welcome our new President, Philip McGarvey, to the AGM. He also acted as Chairman in the absence of Veronica Sheppard.



Philip is well known locally because he has been active in the area for many years, serving on Farningham Parish Council for 24 years and Sevenoaks District Council for 20 years.

He became one of the first members of FELHS (created just 4 years after he moved to Farningham in 1981). He was its Treasurer for 13 years, and was deeply involved when the Society became a registered charity and then a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee for the purposes of being lawfully able to sign the lease for the current archive centre. Computerising the accounts in Excel was his early priority.

He has manned the entrance of Lullingstone Castle for 11 years and been a part-time guide there. He has written a guide for the guides round the Castle, which is in draft form at present. Added to all this he has updated the Walker's guide to Farningham, and produced a walkabout leaflet for Farningham Church and is planning one for Eynsford church. A complex project has been mapping the monuments in both churchyards.

These are only some of his local involvements. He says that if you add all these up with his 27 years in international banking and 11 years as a church administrator, that makes him about 142, although he only looks half that age!

The Committee was re-elected with the exception of John Mullen, who remains FELHS Company Secretary, without being on the Committee. This leaves Veronica Sheppard (Chairman), Ann Cornwell (Vice-Chair, Director), Alison Marshall (Membership Secretary), Susan Pittman (Research/Archivist, Bulletin editor, Director), Vikki Saunders (Treasurer, Director), Helen Smith (Minutes Secretary & Publicity, Director).

MORE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR SUCCESSION. PLEASE COME FORWARD AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP.

2023-2024 PROGRAMME

This programme can also be found on the Diary page of the website.

The dates are all Fridays. Doors open 7.30 pm for talks at 8.00 pm

2023

15 September Farningham VH

Alan Williams Doodlebugs

Alan has researched the location of doodlebug explosions in the Darent Valley.

20 October Eynsford VH

Nick Fothergill London Airport at Hulberry?

This talk is one Nick gave on Zoom to Otford History Group during the pandemic.

17 November Farningham VH

Geoff Burr Metal detecting locally

Our well-known member, Geoff, will give an insight into his explorations, and hopes to bring along cases of his finds.

2024 (Details of talks to follow)

23 February Farningham VH

Nick Rushby - Nick is Secretary of The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust which aims to restore and find new usages for the Palace gatehouse.

22 March Eynsford VH

John Laidlow - Since moving into The Manse at Eynsford member John has been researching the house and its occupants.

19 April Farningham VH

Dr Anne Sassin - A return visit from Anne who will give an update on the archaeological digs in the garden at Lullingstone Castle.

17 May Farningham VH

FELHS AGM

A film by FELHS of an exhibition it held in about 1987 and a visit to Franks, but difficulties with sound amplification need to be resolved.

20 September Eynsford VH

Christoph Bull - Christoph will tell us about Charles Dickens in Kent.

18 October Farningham VH

Diana Beamish - member Diana will talk about education in Farningham and Eynsford from its early roots to the first 50 years of Anthony Roper Primary School.

15 November Eynsford VH

We hope to show a Penwarden film of Eynsford in the Second World War. This will be a ticketed event with refreshments in aid of the raising money for the new Village Hall at Eynsford.

FELHS FACEBOOK @felhs.1985 From Vikki and Helen:

FELHS Facebook Page @felhs.1985 where everyone can share items from the archive and other matters that relate to the local history of the area. We have posted photos and articles that are of interest to our followers, or that have arisen from queries. Do search us out and give us a Like. If you have any suggestions on items that you would like to see on the page please email us at info@felhs.org.uk

Outside Events

Thanks to the hard work of Helen Smith and Vikki Saunders, and their husbands, backed up by Ann Cornwell and John Mullen, FELHS had a stand at the Coronation Fete at Farningham in May and at the Farningham Church Fete in June. FELHS now has two banners produced free of charge by Colin Etheridge's company.



Part of FELHS display at Charles III's Coronation Fete for Eynsford and Farningham held on the cricket ground at Farningham, showing the new FELHS banner. Two banners were made free of charge by a Crockenhill businessman. (photo by Diana Beamish)



Farningham Fair in years gone by.

RESEARCH REPORT

Susan Pittman, 01322 669923, archives@felhs.org.uk

Anthony Roper Primary School: a history by Diana Beamish

In association with Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society

Available on line at £14.99 + £2.75 postage from Canterley Publishing
www.canterley.co.uk/anthony-roper-primary-school-a-history/

or from the School or through FELHS at meetings or by arrangement via
archives@felhs.org.uk

This publication was perfectly timed to coincide with the Golden Jubilee of the opening of Anthony Roper School in 1973, and the 200th anniversary of the opening of the first village school in Farningham run by The National Society, an Anglican body, in 1823. Eynsford had a 'Church' School from 1837 and a school for Non-Conformist scholars, run by The British and Foreign Society, from 1844. In 1894 Eynsford opened a Board School, followed by Farningham in 1902 - these were effectively Council Schools. The title of the book, therefore, is somewhat misleading in that its scope is wider than the history of the current Anthony Roper Primary School, and covers all preceding publically run schools in the parishes of Eynsford and Farningham, from their early origins in the eighteenth century.

The ten chapters of the book fall into three sections - Farningham, Eynsford and Anthony Roper School, and each is covered chronologically. This means that the book can be read cover to cover, or one can turn first to either village or the present school depending on where the reader's main interest lies.

Diana has successfully blended the broad approach, interspersed with more detailed incidents which bring the story more vividly alive. In 1868 Harry Skinner died of rabies seven weeks after a dog had bitten him on the way to school; in 1908 the infants room in Farningham was rendered unusable because of the snow driven into it; on 3 July 1944 Farningham school children spent all day in the school air raid shelter to avoid flying bombs; in 1988 teachers had the problem of distinguishing between one set of triplets and three sets of twins!

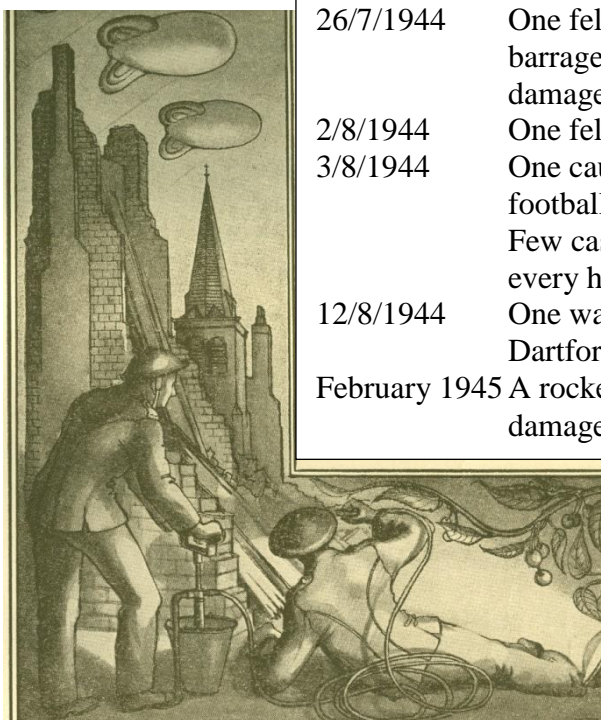
The book is well illustrated, and more so into the modern era when photography and colour became more common. Anyone with an interest in the history of the villages of Eynsford and Farningham would find much to fascinate them.

The Domesday Book on-line

The first online copy of Domesday Book of 1086 is now available. Search for your town or village in Domesday Book, find population and tax records, and see the original Domesday folios free online - opendomesday.org

Farningham against Hitler by Bernard drew (1946)

Knowing that the Society is opening the Autumn session with a talk on Doodlebugs in the Darent Valley, I thought I would look into this booklet to see the number of flying bombs that hit Farningham. The answer is six V1s and one V2. It is interesting that Bernard refers to them as fly-bombs.



28/6/1944	One shot down over Farningham Woods
early July	One crashed in Rams Wood
26/7/1944	One fell near Dartford Road after colliding with a barrage balloon cable, 12 slight casualties and houses damaged
2/8/1944	One fell close to the first in Dartford Road
3/8/1944	One caught barrage balloon cables and crashed on the football pitch, near the Vicarage and Oliver Crescent. Few casualties, but over 200 houses damaged, (nearly every house in the village)
12/8/1944	One was caught in barrage balloon cables and fell in Dartford Road
February 1945	A rocket fell above Sparepenny Lane, 'earthquake' damaged many houses hundreds of yards away

Border of a certificate presented to A. G. Guthrie in gratitude for his service as a Special Constable in the Second World War.

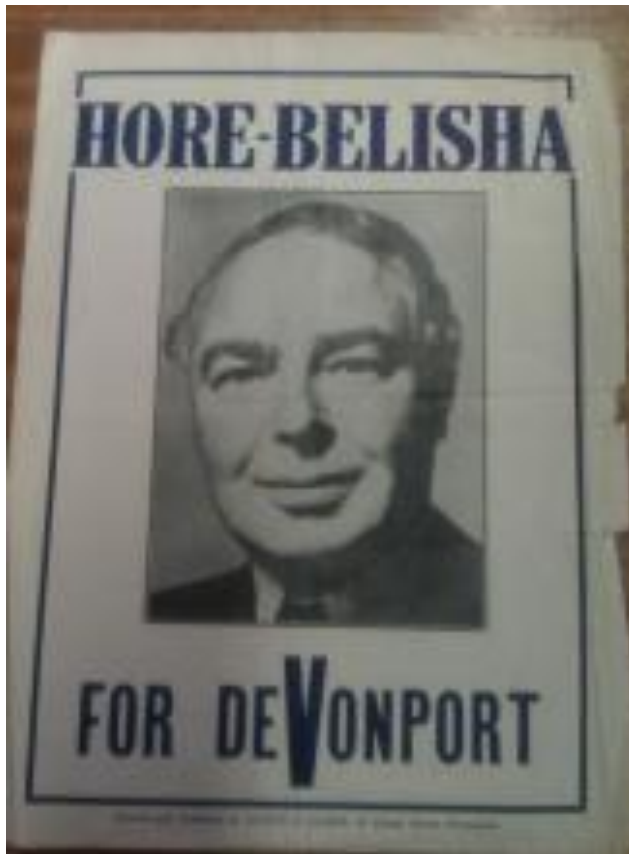
ARP records show that Eynsford suffered 10 flying bombs explosions, two of which resulted from the flying bombs getting caught up with barrage balloon cables. The Darent Valley had a concentration of barrage balloons set up to try to intercept the flying bombs before they reached London, and the strategy seems to have had some measure of success, but at the cost of increasing danger locally.

1412 Murder in Farningham

William Wickhurst, the younger, was indicted on 25 April 1412 for striking Robert Sacry, the Archbishop of Canterbury's bailiff, with a stick on the head to the brain and so killed him.
Henry V, Calendar of Patent Rolls, 27 June 1413

(Isaac) Leslie Hore-Belisha after Eynsford

From 1938 Leslie Hore-Belisha became a house guest of Mrs Elizabeth Elliott at Hull Place, Sholden, because of anti-Jewish elements in London. He served as Secretary of State for War, 1937–1940, so could have been the target of pro-Nazi sympathisers. He lived secretly in Kent and took charge of the running of the house when not in London on parliamentary business. Mrs Elliott's daughter, Cynthia, was in France helping to run a mobile canteen at the time, but the rapid advance of the German army led to her being taken as a prisoner-of-war. She spent three years in captivity before she was released in 1943. Having reached breaking point in the internment camp she vowed never to go back to a life of ease and luxury which she had enjoyed as a socialite before the war. To everyone's surprise on 22 June 1944 she married Leslie Hore-Belisha - he a confirmed bachelor aged 51, and she a dynamic 28 year-old. She supported her husband's political career which reached a pinnacle when he became 1st Baron Hore-Belisha in 1954. The marriage ended with his death in 1957, aged 63, but he and his wife were already leading separate lives. He left his estate to his secretary, Miss Sloane. Cynthia soon re-married, and settled in the Virgin Islands with her second husband - and the story has twists from there but read the article to find out more.
Bygone Kent vol. 44 no. 1 January-February 2023 pp.12-21



Election poster for Hore-Belisha as National Independent candidate for the naval constituency of Devonport, 1945. (He was born in Plymouth). He was defeated by Michael Foot, (1913-2010), Labour, who went on to become a later leader of the Labour Party (1990-1993).

General Enquiries

Till and Arbor Day - John is hoping to write the subject up for a Gardening Club project.

Army base at Bourne Wood, Stones Cross Road - Andrius thought rectangular depressions at Marwood were remains of trenches. They are in fact where clay was dug out for bricks made in Stevens Brickfield next to the wood.

The Chronology of Warlock's Songs and J. Peter Hauser - Stuart is building up a collection of these to be deposited in the Bodleian Library. In July 1927 Warlock wrote a song in Eynsford called 'The Lover's Maze' which he dedicated to J. Peter Hauser. Stuart wanted information about Hauser. I suggested he looked up the 1921 census which is now on-line (with subscription). Another reference to Hauser came from *Parlement of Prattlers* (1928) illustrated by Hal Collins, who also had Eynsford connections. Stuart would welcome any information about J. Peter Hauser.

Goldsall Road - Esme had been asked for the derivation of the name. The 1802 Lullingstone Estate Map shows Goldsall Wood roughly in the Swanley station area. The 'gold' element is uncertain, but the 'sall' part comes for the word sall/sel meaning shelving land, which would apply as the land drops away to the east Pinks Hill area.

Eynsford queries from Michael -

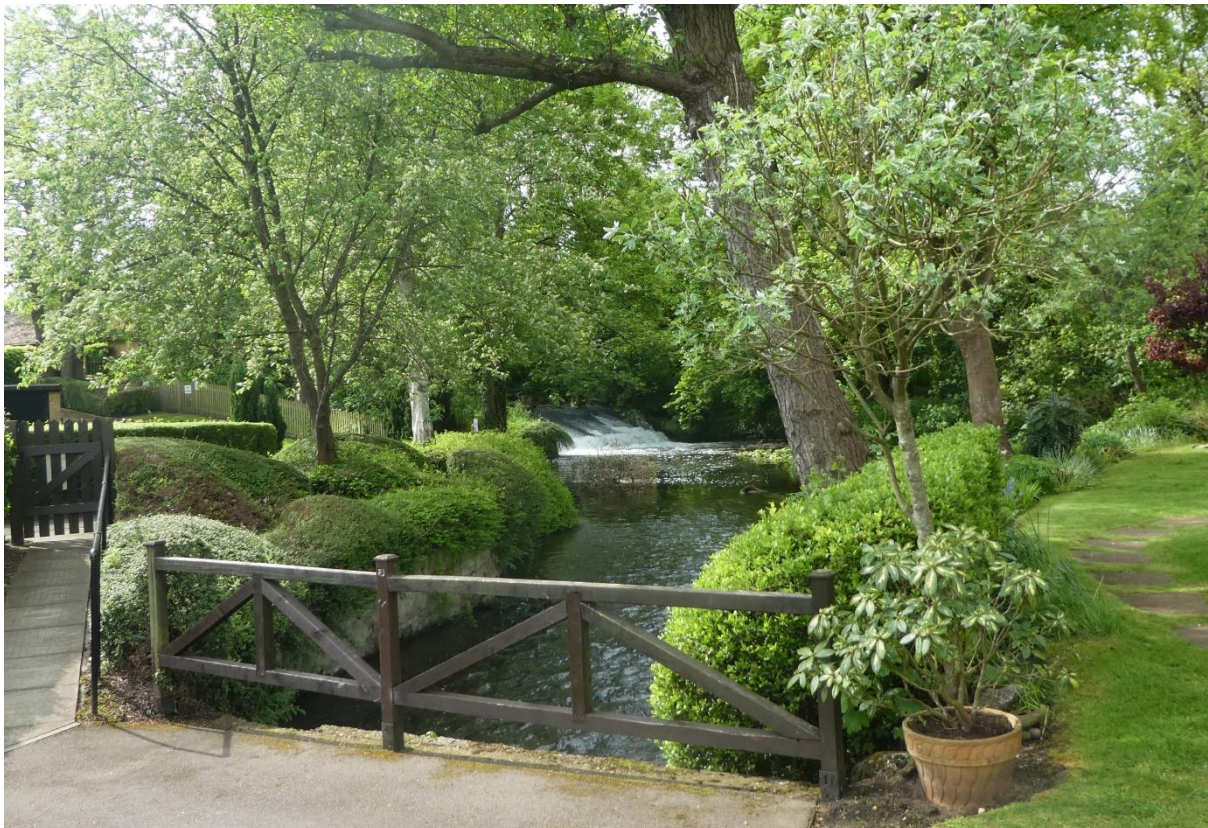
Sparepenny Lane - Michael wanted to know how a penny was spared through Sparepenny Lane. This toll gate was used to collect tolls from people using the lane to join the toll road (A225), but local people were charged one penny less, and therefore saved a penny by this route joining the turnpike road in Eynsford rather than using the section from Farningham.

Arthur Mee's house - Michael lived in Eynsford from 1948 to 1976. He wanted to know the location of 'Eynsford Hill'. I called at Eynsford Hill recently, but the house appeared to be unoccupied, although there were cars parked outside. The view across the valley from the top of the drive was wonderful.



Arthur Mee's seat overlooking the Darent Valley beyond his house at Eynsford Hill just off footpath 181 to Pedham Place, 8 February 2023. He donated the site to Eynsford Parish Council.

The weir, Old Mill Close - Rod attended a site meeting of the River Catchment Group at the weir during which the Environment Agency and Thames Water suggested removing the weir to ease the passage for fish. Rod asked for information on Eynsford Paper Mill about which there is large amount at the Centre.

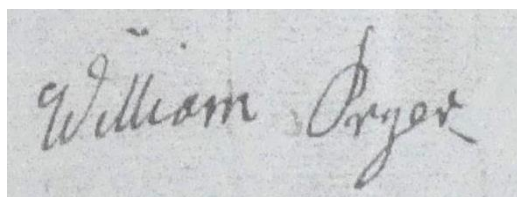


The weir at Old Mill Close which was created to serve Eynsford Paper Mill, 15 May 2023.

Family History

Richard Smith/ Waghorn - Linda's grandfather was a descendant of Aaron Smith of Crockenhill, whose name has appeared in previous enquiries. I found his baptismal record, his parent's marriage and entries in various censuses, which I sent to her. His father, Richard was an engine driver at Thomas Wood and Sons, and Edward Wood looked up the business records and found that he was employed by the company between 1871 and 1888. A follow-up email from Linda then suggested her grandfather might have been adopted into a Waghorn family, but no Waghorns appeared on the 1891 census.

Pryer - Sheila's maiden name was Pryer and she wanted to look at Pryer family documents in the Centre, which Roger Pryer had deposited with the Society. I sent her a list of Pryer items in the catalogue. She asked for copies of indentures for Park House, Bower Lane, (1835), and of a church court case of 1783 when William Pryer was accused by Revd. Marmaduke Lewis of behaving indecently, irregularly and irreverently, and for chiding or brawling by words in the Vestry at Eynsford Church. Tantalisingly, the indictment did not mention what triggered this outburst, but William agreed to abide in every way by the Court's decision.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Pryer". The ink is dark and the paper appears aged and slightly textured.

William Pryer's signature when he agreed to abide by the Church Court's decision, 1783.

ARCHIVE REPORT

Susan Pittman - 01322 669923, www.felhs.org.uk

We resumed working parties at the Centre in October and made some progress with the backlog accumulated during the Covid pandemic. On the last Monday in October we thoroughly cleaned the interior and our new volunteer, Keith Turner, tackled the hedge which was overhanging the roof. All was ship-shape until the burst pipes reported earlier in this Bulletin. More mould accumulated in both the front and back rooms and the dehumidifier was working non-stop to dry the Centre out. In the meantime Eynsford Parish Council put in an insurance claim for redecoration. We only heard that we could go ahead with a contractor in late May. It is hoped that the redecoration will start in early September. To allow access to the walls all the cupboards will have to be emptied and all artefact boxes and Brian Philp's Riverside excavation boxes will have to be removed. The physical effort and disruption will be immense. There is also the logistical problem of finding alternative storage space at the Centre for the displaced items ... then putting everything back again.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ACCESS TO THE CENTRE WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR SOME TIME BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER REDECORATION.

News of progress will be put on Facebook and on the Noticeboard Page of the website. If you can help us move the collection out and back again, please let us know.

Acquisitions

Darent Valley Rail Trails - 17 attractive walk pamphlets in a handy open sided box. Dartford marshes and gunpowder walks in the north to the wetland and wildlife walk in Dunton Green to the south are among the pamphlets. The pamphlets are produced by the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme and are free on Appline via www.darent-valley.org.uk

Sue Bowers - items from Farningham Horticultural Society - photograph album of best-kept garden 1973-1977, annotated; notebook record of main trophy winners 1982-2019; numerous programmes and flyers; run of programmes 2006-2020.



Farningham Best Kept Garden winner of 1973: The White House - Mrs G. Edwards.

Allan Bedford - Vintage Roadscene April 2023 article by him about vehicles used by Daren Flour Mills in Dartford.



Mr Holdich, baker at Eynsford, delivering bread to Lullingstone Castle, 1935.

Helen Goldsworthy - Helen has gradually been passing various items over to the Society. The most recent include some prints (Dartford in 1806 and 1830, Dartford Market, Dartford Priory in 1772); several beautiful royal events souvenir books, some produced by the Illustrated London News - one dating from 1888 commemorating the Silver Wedding anniversary of the Prince and Princess of Wales; Market Meadow Association Newsletter no.1 probably dating from about 1997 when a group of five villagers set up a fund to purchase Market Meadow, after the Albery Trust had offered to sell it to the village.



Dartford Market Day, engraver Henry Adlard (1824-1869) c.1850.

Jan Wilkes - King George V Daily Telegraph supplement 1936.



Reproduced from an original painting by Geoffrey John Hall. This was among a collection of local history items donated to me to pass on as appropriate. I will bring other pictures of Eynsford to the next meeting. This was the only one which did not appear to be copyright.