

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. 138

Spring 2025

FELHS AGM: Friday 9 May **Eynsford Village Hall** 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm
FELHS AGM (formal notices will be sent round at least 21 days before the meeting)

After the AGM, Nick Fothergill will give a talk on Lullingstone's 2nd World War dummy airfield.

As usual there will be light refreshments and a display of items from FELHS collection on hand.

**NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR
SUCCESSION. PLEASE COME FORWARD AND SEE WHAT YOU
CAN DO TO HELP.**

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL REMINDER

Current members do not need to fill out a form unless contact details have changed - then please let us know.

£10 (individual) / £15 (family) membership

Life Membership: £100 (individual) / £150 (a couple)

You can pay

- ✦ by cheque payable to **Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society (do not use initials)**
- ✦ by BACS (sort code 20 25 42 account 13275752)
- ✦ by standing order (sort code 20 25 42 account 13275752)

Please let **Mrs Alison Marshall**, Membership Secretary, 83 Hever Avenue, West Kingsdown, TN15 6HQ, Kent (alisondukes@btinternet.com) know that you have paid remotely or send her your cheque.

At the same time please let us know if you wish us to collect Gift Aid for this year and for future years.

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

FELHS WEBSITE www.felhs.org.uk - Queries to archives@felhs.org.uk

2025 PROGRAMME

The dates are all Fridays. Doors open 7.30 pm for talks at 8.00 pm. The evening includes refreshments and a display of items from FELHS collection.

Friday 11 April

Eynsford Village Hall

Rod Le Gear

Chalk mining in Kent

Rod is a leading figure in the Kent Underground Research Group, and has vast experience of Kent chalk mines, of which there are some 1,184 cavities. Sink and dene holes occur in the chalk around Eynsford and Farningham and more understanding of them is of local relevance.

Friday 9 May

Eynsford Village Hall

AGM - For members (Guests also welcome without charge, but are not eligible to vote).

Nick Fothergill

Lullingstone's Dummy Airfield

Learn more about the Dummy Airfield laid out in Lullingstone Park to lure German bombers away from Biggin Hill in the Second World War.

Friday 12 September

Farningham Village Hall

James Holman

Report on the Excavations at Harrow Meadow

James, project manager and senior consultant for Canterbury Archaeological Trust, will discuss the archaeological discoveries made during the excavations in Harrow Meadow, Eynsford, and how they fit in with other local sites.

Friday 3 October

Eynsford Village Hall

FELHS 40th Anniversary Evening - An informal open meeting with cake cutting and light refreshments. To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War there will be a display of related artefacts and documents from FELHS collection.

Friday 14 November

Farningham Village Hall

Tom Hart Dyke

Growing up in Lullingstone Castle

Tom has yet to decide on a title, but he says part of his brief will include The World Garden.

Speakers and dates for the 2026 Programme have been finalised. The post of Meetings Secretary has been vacant for some years - volunteer needed. With the programme in place it would initially involve contacting speakers a month before the meeting, to check arrangements and what equipment is required. Speakers would then be greeted on arrival.



This has been labelled 'Eynsford', but is it? Does anyone know the location? Answers welcome.

NEWS

We are looking forward to celebrating the 40th anniversary of FELHS, founded by local history enthusiasts, Paul Parmenter from Farningham and Wilf Duncombe from Eynsford. At present the Society is desperately short of Committee members - with only five operating instead of the ten required. At present I am fulfilling my original role as research/ archivist, but following the loss of a meetings secretary I have also been arranging meetings for five or so years, and lastly I have ended up as editor of The Bulletin. I am in my eighties so worry about the long term future of the Society. Please think seriously about coming forward, even as a Committee member without a specific role. A little help would go a long way to regenerate the administration of the Society.

FELHS publication 'Eynsford Past and Present' published by Canterley Publishing has been greeted with enthusiasm, and compliments have poured in. It can still be ordered via www.canterley.co.uk or call 01580 766428. £9.99 plus postage. Or copies can be bought directly in Eynsford from Norman's the butchers. FELHS also has copies for sale - contact Alison Marshall, details in box on p.1 of this Bulletin.

It would be nice to produce a similar publication for Farningham, but we need a photographer or photographers who would be interested in producing current images to match the old ones we have in the collection. If interested please do get in touch.

RESEARCH REPORT

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

The 'Flu Pandemic of 1918-1919

The 'flu pandemic of 1918 and questions about the death toll of the Covid pandemic were raised in the last Bulletin, and a follow-up promised. That it should appear now is a reminder that the first recorded death from Coronavirus in the UK was on 4 March 2020 - about five years ago. Total deaths to April 2024 were 232,112 - figures taken from the Office of National Statistics. The first recorded case of the flu pandemic of 1918-1919 occurred in the USA on 8 March 1918. In the UK it killed 250,000 people. One big difference was that while the elderly were vulnerable to Coronavirus, the flu pandemic affected mainly healthy young adults. This can be illustrated in Crockenhill where Elsie Clements, a farmer's wife, kept a diary. The two deaths noted were of Mrs Ethel Agnes Barden from Wimbledon, aged 26, visiting the Gorrings at Partridges, Hulberry, and Frances Elizabeth Peck, wife of Robert Peck, aged 32, who was buried in Crockenhill churchyard. Both funerals were arranged by W & T Everest, who ran multiple businesses from the village forge.



The various school log books from Crockenhill, Eynsford and Farningham, each of which had two schools (Council and Church Schools) at the time, recorded barest details of the flu pandemic in a very matter of fact way.

October 1918

- 17 - As Sutton School is closed for influenza, headmaster returned here. (Farningham Church School) (NB - he had been seconded to Sutton-at-Hone School during the war)
- 20 - Medical inspection this morning. Owing to so many children being absent with flu it was decided to close the school (Eynsford Church School)
- 22 - Attendance very low owing to flu (Farningham Council School)
- 24 - Flu is on the increase, attendance still somewhat bad (Crockenhill Church School)
- 25 - Over 100 absentees today (Crockenhill Council School)
- 28 - Numbers down to 40 at 9.00 am. (Farningham Council School)
- 30 - Closed school today in common with the neighbouring schools on account of the prevailing flu epidemic. (Eynsford Council School)

November 1918

- 25-29 - Schools reopened

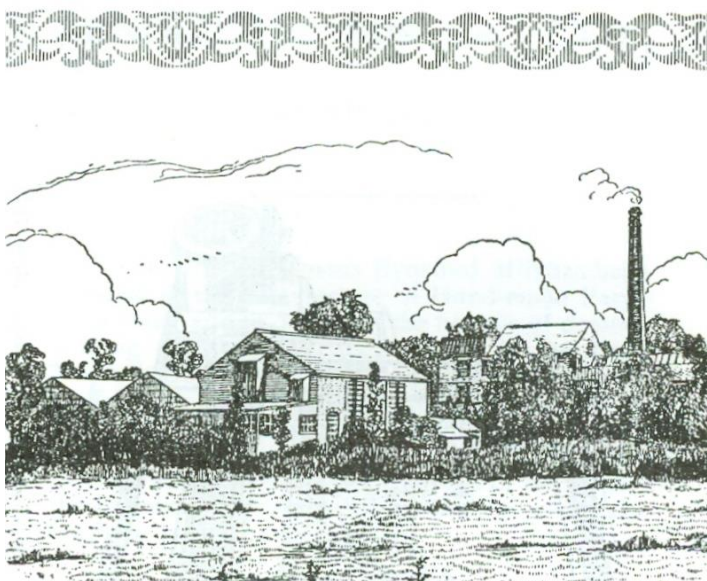
See FELHS website 'WW1' (left hand column on Home Page) which has a section on the Flu Pandemic and a section on local schools in the First World War

Robert Thomson (1928-2022) - Eynsford and hand-made paper

His daughter, Ishbel, has donated some items about Eynsford found in his home. He was born in Glasgow and worked in a paper mill there before being sent to Eynsford Paper Mill in its last years of production - it closed in 1952. The rarest item is *The Survival of Hand-made Paper* perhaps by H. B. Brown, who was responsible for some of the drawings, (one is dated 1930). The Introduction explains that they have been drawn from life, and 'can be regarded generations hence as faithful records of the ancient craft'. The 5 mills featured are:

- Arnold & Foster - Eynsford Paper Mill, Kent
- Joseph Batchelor & Sons - Ford Paper Mills, Little Chart, Kent
- J. Barcham Green & Son - Hayle Mill, Maidstone, Kent
- W.S. Hodgkinson & Co. - Wookey Hole Mill, Somerset
- A. Millbourn & Co. Ltd. - Tuckenhay Mills, Devon

FELHS publication by W.G. Duncombe 'Eynsford Paper Mill', 2001



Robert Thomson, former secretary of Eynsford Cricket Club, c.1950.
Eynsford Mill in 1930 from *The Survival of Hand-made Paper*.

Philip Richard Steele (1882-1954) - Farningham

His granddaughter, Rosemary, has written about him as master draper and shopkeeper in St. Albans Road, Dartford. He papered the walls of his shed in his Dartford home with cancelled cheques the Bank returned to him each quarter. 'His signature was repeated hundreds of times running in vertical blue stripes down the bright pink walls.' In retirement in 1949 he moved to Wild Thyme, Calfstock Lane, Farningham. He resigned as Councillor on Dartford Rural District Council and instead became a Parish Councillor for Farningham, serving as vice-chairman for a time. One of his achievements was to get a street light erected opposite the end of Calfstock Lane.

North West Kent Family History Journal December 2024 pp.521-254, Rosemary Hubbard 'My Grandfather'

Brothers killed in the 1st World War commemorated at Lullingstone

The procedure to have names included on a local war memorial is not always known, as is the case with J. P. Baker and John Pretty at Lullingstone. Connections are found more readily for the others. Below is based on Joanna's research (see under General Enquiries).

Killed in the 1st World War -

John Percival Baker, Henry Treneman Partridge, John Ernest Partridge

Killed in the 2nd World War - John Pretty, Ronald Whitehead

Killed in Northern Ireland - Cpl Paul Edward Harman

Research into the Partridge brothers revealed their upbringing in Streatham. Their father, Henry Starr Partridge, was a bank clerk, but on the documents related to his sons' deaths his address is given as Hulberry. A property there still bears the name 'Partridges', and it lies within Lullingstone parish. The brothers were very close in age, 12 and 13 in the 1911 census, with a younger brother aged 6, who would have been a school boy in 1914.



Lieutenant Henry Treneman Partridge served three years with the Royal Sussex Regiment, seeing action in Egypt and the Palestine Campaign. He transferred to the Royal Flying Corps but was killed in a flying accident on 14th July 1918 aged 21. He is buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery.

Private John Ernest Partridge fought with the Royal Irish Fusiliers in Belgium. In April 1918, whilst scouting, he went missing in action, believed wounded. He was taken to Heilsberg

Prisoner of War Camp in East Prussia, where he died in the harsh conditions on 27th October 1918, aged 19. He was buried in a mass grave but has a stone close by in Malbork Commonwealth Grave Memorial.



See also FELHS publication 'The Commemoration of War'

Chi-Rho sign (or not) at Otford

In Bulletin no.199 of Autumn 2019 I mentioned excavations of a Roman villa site at Church Field, Otford. Since then more has been revealed which has led to a reassessment of the discovery of a piece of painted plaster, which was interpreted as being part of a chi-rho Christian symbol. This had led to speculation that a chapel in the villa might pre-date the one at Lullingstone (*Archaeologia Cantiana* 2019, pp.311-314). The plaster remnant, however, was not found in the dig, but was a random find some years before excavation at Church



Field started. No trace of a chapel has been found at the Church Field site, and the area yet to be excavated is either contemporary or slightly later than the Christian room at Lullingstone, so even if another Christian room was found at Otford it would not be older. This information has come from Kevin Fromings, the leader of the excavations.

X (chi) & P(rho) =- Greek for the first letters in capitals of Christ

Random 2nd World War items from FELHS collection

A couple of random items in the archives which surfaced recently served as reminders of local life during the Second World War, the 80th anniversary of its ending occurs this year.

Eynsford: Mr Hever of Eynsford received this letter from the Ministry of Food on 22 April 1941 - C. Hever Esq. is hereby authorised ... to take any steps necessary for the preservation, equitable distribution, or if necessary the destruction, of any articles of foodstuff for human consumption within the confines of Eynsford village.

Farningham: Claims for war damage compensation for Farningham Church continued into the 1950s.

15 May 1949 Major Stanley Elliott to Canon Maples-Earle re bomb damage:-

- 1) Repair of church roof in 1945 was £53.
- 2) Repair to the main fabric is complete. The builders have been paid £500. I have received £370 from War Damage Commission, leaving outstanding £110.
- 3) Three stain glass windows are to be repaired. Two were fitted with plain glass.
- 4) The west window was made in 1906 by Messrs James Powell and Sons (Whitefriars) Ltd, and they have the tracery intact. In 1948 they quoted £350 to re-make the window, but received no reply. The cost now would be £400.

Kent History and Library Centre DRb/RW 145



The replacement west window depicted Charles I facing Elizabeth II. The dedication of the window was in 1954. The window bears the distinction of being the first stained-glass window to depict Queen Elizabeth II, 22/12/2013.

Another Gibson manhole cover found in Sidcup

Peter has sent a photo and details of a cover which had been grassed over in Queenswood Road. He puzzled about the date. The others he has found date from the 1930s, but the Close was not built until 1955.

Edward Gudsell's marriage in 1763

John Gudsell was a prolific local cartographer featured in other Bulletins, including his headstone in Farningham churchyard. His parents' marriage banns were entered in the Lullingstone register:

The banns of Edward Gudsell of this Parish and Alice Chapman of the Parish of Chelsfield were duly published in this Church for the first time on Sunday 17 July for the 2nd time on Sunday 24 July and the 3rd time 31 July in the year 1763 by me Davies Lambe Rector.

Pioneer Game of Lawn Tennis at Lullingstone Castle, 1873

The article written by Nigel (see General Enquiries) is very well researched and cited. He promised a copy of the published version. How ladies played that day was new to me. This account by Tom Booker, one of the original ball boys, was reported in the *Sunday Express* of 12/6/1933, just before a re-enactment on 18 June:

Well I remember that afternoon, 'Twas sunny and the gentlemen wore the brightest striped blazers I ever saw. The ladies looked very grand in pretty hooped frocks. Then one or two of 'em ups and wanted to play. We men were a bit surprised but the ladies joined in. Their crinoline dresses got in the way though, so a chaperone took them to the castle tower and there they removed the hoops from their skirts.

How marvellous for women to assert themselves in this way. The first Women's singles tennis competitions were added to Wimbledon in 1884.



left: Butler & ball-boys, brothers R and Tom Booker (right) the original ones in 1873.
centre: The chambermaid was also in attendance to carry rackets and balls for 'the gentry'.
right: Moving to the ball had to be done with more decorum than this modern player could manage.

Illustrated Sporting New 17/6/1938

ARCHIVE REPORT

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

The team at the Centre, Ann Cornwell, Vikki Saunders, Helen Smith, Keith Turner and for a couple of sessions, Simone Laidlow, have worked tirelessly to put the Centre back into full working order after the upheaval of the burst pipe and subsequent redecoration. We have gone through the various collections checking items against the catalogue and updating or amending the catalogue where necessary. I was delighted to have two sessions with Alex, a Sixth Form student from Tonbridge School. He wanted experience of cataloguing and archiving. None of the new artefacts had been catalogued since 2019 so we spent the time adding them to the collection - giving catalogue numbers and wrapping them in archival tissue etc. Alex is studying A-Level History, and according to his mother was surprised 'how much cool stuff' there was at the Centre, including the Roman ring from Farningham. It is a pity more members do not visit us to see all the 'cool stuff' we hold on behalf of the local community. The Centre has now re-opened (Mondays 9.30 am - 12.00 pm), but queries can be answered through the website or Facebook, and appointments made to visit at other times.

Index for Bulletins after 2018 - Volunteer needed to update the Index, which is a useful tool to access the Bulletins on the website. A few hours on the computer would get the job done, and the current Index would serve as a template. This is a task that can be done in the comfort of your home and in your own time - please consider doing it.

Family History

Whiffen - Chris offered help to others researching the name. He has allowed me to pass on his details.

General Enquiries

Names of those killed in 1st & 2nd World War on reading desk, St. Botolph's, Lullingstone - Joanna has carried out more research into these names, and has subsequently sent in a great deal of information. (See above Brothers killed in 1st World War)

Diversion of road to Shoreham in front of Lullingstone Castle, 1861 - Kent County Council wanted information about this. I directed them to the documents at the Kent History and Library Centre.

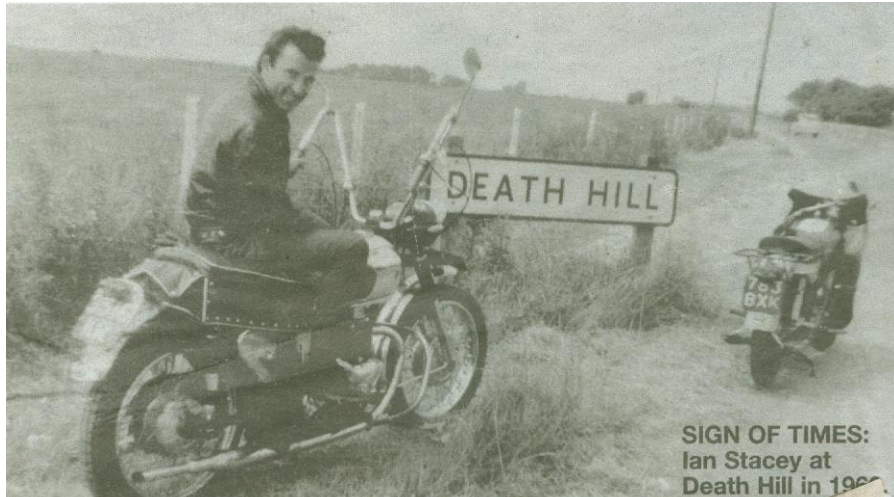
Lawn tennis at Lullingstone - Nigel was researching Herbert Lawford, a pioneer tennis player and remote relative, and wanted information about the part played by lawn tennis experiments held at Lullingstone Castle in 1873. I was able to supply him with an article he was trying to trace and other material. He has sent me a copy of the article he has now completed. (See above)

Farningham Butchers - Tom, from a commercial company, requested photos and documentary evidence about the butchers as a heritage asset. I complied and the Company sent a donation for our help.

E.J. (Jack) Moeran - Alan is a great admirer of this composer and hopes to visit the Centre to see our collection. He has given a link to a thesis about Moeran - (<https://etheses.dur.ac.uk/view/year/2014.html>).

Percy Pilcher - Giles spent several hours at the Centre to study our collection on Percy Pilcher and early aviators prior to the informative and entertaining talk he gave to the Society in February.

Death Hill renamed to Gorse Hill - Mike would like to know the precise year date for the change.



Ian Stacey at Death Hill in 1966 from *Dartford Times* 10 June 2010.

Acquisitions

James Alexander - 4 aerial photos of Eynsford; photographs from Bruce Dolling family (steam engines); typed entries of 1891 census for Eynsford.

Diana Beamish - Many thanks to Diana for taking photographs around Eynsford during 2024, illustrating various changes and events round the village. It would be wonderful if someone did the same for Farningham.

Ishbel Parmenter - Ishbel has sent items belonging to her father Robert Thomson. Eynsford by Curnow; 8 photos of Eynsford Paper Mill; booklet *'Thee Survival of Hand-Made Paper'* with pages 13-16 printed on Eynsford hand-made papers and featuring Arnold & Foster; watermark sheets 'Arnold & Foster Ltd Makers of Bank Note Paper Eynsford Mills' with outlines of £5 note and 50 dollar note.

EYNSFORD VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE thanks to FELHS

We thank the History Society for the most enjoyable fundraiser they mounted....

This film screening of the 1977 Silver Jubilee community event was a sell out and many people in the audience were also able to see themselves on screen from 47 years previously. The precious memories revived on that night reminded us all of the importance of community, then and now, and how this must be maintained and cherished for years to come. (£775 donated to Village Hall fund)



Munn's Cottage where Peter Warlock and Jack Moeran lived from 1925-1928. Dartford Rural District Council attached the blue plaque commemorating this in 1969. 20/1/2010.