

# The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

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

## Bulletin No 79 September 2008

### Forthcoming Talks and Events

<b>2008</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Where</b>
19th Sept	<b>40 years of Axstane Players - Barrie Payne</b> (A look back over the last 40 years of the Players)	Farningham
31st Oct	<b>Hallowe'en supper with spooky food</b> (Tonbirdge Mummings & Hoodeners entertain us with spooky tales tickets £10)	Eynsford
21st Nov	<b>Puppets, Piers &amp; Pantomimes - Alan Stockwell</b> (Amusing stories from the life of a puppeteer)	Eynsford
<b>2009</b>		
20th Feb	<b>My Life - The Royal Parks - Jim Buttress</b> (Jim a familiar figure at Lullingstone Castle)	Farningham
24th April	<b>Evening of Magic with Roy Marsh</b> (An entertaining evening with magician Roy Marsh including buffet and wine bar tickets £10)	Farningham
9th May	<b>AGM</b>	Eynsford
25th Sept	<b>100 Years of Dartford Museum - Chris Baker</b>	Eynsford
16th Oct	<b>Silent Auction</b> (details to be confirmed)	Eynsford
20th Nov	<b>Welcome to the Manorial Hall - Jean Stirk</b>	Farningham

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)

**ARCHIVE CENTRE OPEN TO MEMBERS**  
**SATURDAY 27TH AND SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2008**  
**10am to 4pm**  
**COME AND MEET MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**AND HAVE A LOOK AT HOW THE CENTRE IS**  
**PROGRESSING**

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Barbara Cannell 864253)**

Phew - what a hectic few weeks - there certainly isn't a lack of things to write about in this bulletin!

The Society had a stand with publications and displays at both the Farningham Church Summer Fete on the 7th June and the Scout Olympic Funday on the 28th June. Both these events were well attended and the weather was dry and sunny. the number of people who showed an interest in our Society and come looking for the history of their homes always amazes me and quite often they have stories to tell about their families who have lived here and the things that they did. My thanks to Barrie Payne for the use of his 'tent' at Farningham and to the committee members who came along to help on both these occasions.

On the 10th June I took a few publications and a small promotion display to Crockenhill for the evening event put on by C.O.G.S. (Crockenhill Opening Gateways). It was an evening where all the village groups were represented to show what the residents, both young and not so young, could support. There was even a group who were hoping to convert an empty shop into a cafe and 'drop in' centre for young people. It was disappointing that the residents themselves were not invited to attend but it is hoped that this will change for next year.

Saturday 5th July, another fine sunny day, and I was at the dedication and blessing of the two stones that have once graced the entrances to the school at the bottom of Bower Lane. Mark Baldwin, an ex pupil, had made an excellent job of setting these reminders of the past into the old school wall and creating a small flower through beneath them. Many ex pupils and teachers gathered for the introduction by Audrey Gee who thanked Peter Nelson for his generosity in donating to the Eynsford Village Society money collected in memory of his wife which had prompted EVS to erect this monument. Mr Davis, the last headmaster of the school, reminded us of past events and teachers and pupils told of their memories of the time they had spent at the school. The Rev Taylor added a few memories of his own school days before making the blessing. An excellent tea followed, served in the lounge of Fountain Court where many of the residents enjoyed talking about their school days. The small collection of old school photographs that I had taken from the archives created an interest and brought back even more memories.

The biggest thrill has been to meet David Till and his wife Christine, yes David is a

descendant of our own Elliott Downs Till. Sunday 13th July and I was escorting them around Eynsford, showing them The Priory, the castle and village hall, the cottages by the war memorial, the church of of course Elliott Downs Till's grave in the church yard. A visit to Little Mote and a very welcome cup of tea with Wilf Duncombe. David and Wilf spend a very informative time together exchanging notes on the Till dynasty.

My last engagement on behalf of the Society was to attend the official opening of the Lullingstone Roman Villa after its refurbishment. A lot of thought has been put into the new presentations and there seems to be a lot more to look at although I personally found it a little too dark and this made it difficult to read all the information boards. Do go along and see what has changed.

### **PUBLICATION REPORT (Barbara Cannell)**

Looking for Gibson - Six years ago whilst waiting for a friend outside his house I noticed a not quite round manhole cover in the road. Looking close I discovered the works Gibsons and Eynsford cast into the surface of this cover. Odd I thought, what is this doing in a tiny road in Stone. This reminded me that there were manhole covers like this one outside my cottage in Horton Kirby. That sent me looking for more and much to my amazement I discovered not only manhole covers but drains in the road where I had lived as a child in Dartford. The search was on the find as many as I could with the intention to write a short history on the Gibson Foundry in Eynsford for the Society. Title to be - Looking for Gibson. As I said that was six years ago and now as many of you will probably know Wilf Duncombe is researching the Gibson family history. My rather limited findings on the Foundry have been made available for Wilf to include with his work should he wish. I would like to invite all members of the Society to help me to locate manhole covers and drains that were made at the Eynsford Foundry. You don't have to photograph them just let me know where they are, ie in what road they are to be found and outside which house or road junction and of course whether you have found a manhole cover or drain. It would also be extremely useful if anyone has any family connection with the foundry, old photographs, or best of all a catalogue showing the items that were made. Please telephone me on 01322 8642523 with your findings.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT ( Elaine Ruby 862241)**

We are delighted to welcome back the Tonbridge Mummers and Hoodeners to entertain us once again, this time with an evening of traditional spooky tales and music at Halloween.

Please come and join us for a two-course supper followed by the spooky goings-on at Eynsford Village Hall on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. It promises to be a great evening out and following the success of previous events, don't delay to get your tickets - £10 from Jan on 865122.

Sadly we say goodbye to a Committee member, Clive Curtis who has been an able Vice Chairman for the past three years and served on the Committee since 2004. Clive also had responsibility for the audio-visual archives and has generously offered to continue the task of scanning the photographic collection onto disc. We are sorry to see him go and thank him for all his hard work.

Also, don't forget to make a date in your diary for the Open Weekend at the new centre on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> September from 10am-4pm. This is an opportunity for members only to call in and the view the new facility but please note that the archives will not be available for research during the open weekend. For full details see Susan's report.

**RESEARCH REPORT (Susan Pittman 01322 669923) (website [www.felhs.org.uk](http://www.felhs.org.uk))**  
**Lullingstone Castle and The World Garden by Tony Russell**

This is a new beautifully produced guidebook available for purchase to visitors to the Castle. The text is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs. There is a two-page spread for every room, St. Botolph's church and the grounds, while the remainder of the guide covers The World Garden. The back cover opens out into a double page bird's eye view on the whole site with numbered points of interest. This publication is well worth adding to your collection.

**Websites – British Pathe News – Current Value of Old Money – Family Search**  
**British Pathe News – [www.britishpathe.com](http://www.britishpathe.com)**

If you remember the newsreels in the cinema, pre-television, when visual news was a novelty, you might like this website where you can preview the entire 3500 hours of British Pathe film archive.

**Current value of old money – [www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/howmuch.html](http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/howmuch.html)**

This gives links to tools and online resources which enable you to calculate the current value of 'old' money.

**Family Search – [www.familysearch.com](http://www.familysearch.com)**

This is a searchable database of millions of names made available by the Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). The Mormons sought access to baptismal and marriage registers throughout the country and transcribed them for this resource.

**Lullingstone Airport**

John King gave an updated talk to Shoreham and District Historical Society after its AGM in March. He has done even more research and is able to tie up loose ends he had in his mind. In particular, he has been looking into the impact on the airport site of the proposal of a South Orbital Road round Greater London (roughly the route of the M25) to connect with the approach to the Dartford tunnel where construction had begun in 1936.

**Samoyede dogs and Farningham**

I wrote about this topic earlier, but have now had another enquiry and found this under Samoyed Club on the internet.

In England, Mr. Ernest Kilburn-Scott of the Royal Zoological Society became a significant influencing factor in the breed outside of Siberia. He acquired dogs from the explorers as well as some directly from Siberia. In his position with the Royal Zoological Society, he had the opportunity to accompany an expedition to Archangel in the 1880's where a very cute, plump puppy caught his attention. When he arrived home, the puppy attracted considerable attention. He then seized other opportunities to acquire more of these white dogs. He expanded the breed in England and showed the dog in several expositions. The English liked the pure white coat over the cream or biscuit colour. Any black and white or other combinations were not acceptable. The dog began as something of an oddity from Siberia, but its beauty and amiability fast made it popular among the well to do and the influential. The Kennel Club initially allowed them to be shown in the foreign dog class.

Kilburn-Scott founded the Samoyede Club and in 1909, Samoyede became the official name of the Bjelkier outside of Siberia. Kilburn-Scott conferred with explorers of Siberia and agreed on the pronunciation and a spelling of the tribe who were responsible for the dog. The dog was then named after the people. In 1912, the Kennel Club decided that the dog could be shown in an accepted classification. The Bjelkier was now officially named and recognized as a distinct breed in the West. In 1923, the English Kennel Club dropped the "e" from the name and in 1947 the American Kennel Club dropped the "e" from the name. Shortly thereafter, the name began to be mispronounced. Instead of Sahn-uh-yed (the native pronunciation) the name became anglicized to Sahn-oid.

Thanks to Stella Baggaley we have learnt through Bradford Archives that Ernest Kilburn-Scott was living in Beesfield Lane, Farningham, in 1905. Does anyone know precisely where?

### **John Ward Egyptologist from Farningham**

Bryony and Paul contacted me about John Ward after they had bought an ancient Egyptian figurine on e-bay. It came with a letter saying that it had been given to the writer's father, Christopher Percy Casstine, by John Ward the famous Egyptologist of Farningham. I had heard of Casstine who was a prolific local photographer, but not of John Ward. The 1901 census had Herbert John and Alice Ward at Farningham Mill House. Herbert was born in 1870 and came from Lennoxvale, Belfast, and was a marine engineer and naval architect. Hilary Harding's book on Farningham added that they rented the property and that his father, John Ward, came to live at The Mount, Sparepenny Lane. Bryony and Paul later contacted me again to say that John Ward was born in Ulster and died in Dartford in 1912. Apparently he was well known in his field and travelled and excavated in Egypt, donating several artefacts to the Ulster Museum. If anyone has more information about this family, please let me know.

### **Eynsford in the 1870s**

'In the midst of hop gardens and cherry orchards... Flour and paper mill and fruit orchards furnish the chief employment, and help to give the village that mingled manufacturing and agricultural aspect which is seldom altogether comely to look upon. With the river flowing along one side of the main street... and with a number of old rickety half-timber houses about it, and the old church towering over it, the village has... in many parts a picturesque appearance.'

(James Thorne, Handbook to the Environs of London, 1876)

The parish covered 3,536 acres, had a rateable value of £6,233 and a population in 1871 of 1,433. The vicar was Rev. Robert Browne whose living was worth £480 a year and a new vicarage had been built at the cost of £2000. The Baptist chapel was under ministry of Rev. William Mummery. There were two schools, the National School with Mr Charles and Mrs Isabella Billows as master and mistress, and the British School with Samuel Woolley as master.

(Cantium, Summer 1973, John Whyman, 'Eynsford and Lullingstone a century ago')

### **Rev. John Pendleberry of Farningham**

Alison would be keen for any information about John Pendleberry, whom she thinks married one of the poet John Milton's nieces. John was vicar of Farningham for 35 years

and was buried in the chancel on 14 December 1719 aged 66. His wife, Anne (daughter of John Milton's brother, Sir Christopher Milton) was buried on 24 February 1720 or 1721. Their monument is still in the church chancel but partly under the high altar.

### **Current research**

Our president, Dr Wilf Duncombe, and chairman, Barbara Cannell, are cooperating over researching the Gibson family who had a foundry at Eynsford on the site of the now demolished garage.

### **Family history enquiries**

- **Blagden family, blacksmiths of Crockenhill**
- **Smith and Tullit families of Crockenhill** – enquiry from Australia
- **Woolley family bricklayers of Farningham** – enquiry from Canada

### **Other enquiries**

- **Institution Cottage by Eynsford Village Hall** – the enquirer wondered whether I knew anything about its use in the early 1800s as a drill hall for the militia. This would be in the Napoleonic War period. As I was going to the Centre for Kentish Studies I asked what sources might be available and was directed to the solicitor, Claridge of Sevenoaks, who kept an account book of parochial and militia accounts from 1786-1822. Unfortunately, there was no reference about any drill venues. Doing an A2A search while writing this I notice that Farningham parish has a collection of militia bills and receipts from 1803-1825 (P145/12/7) so I will try to look at them next time I am due to visit Maidstone again.

### **ARCHIVE REPORT**

**(Susan Pittman 01322 669923)**

**(website [www.felhs.org.uk](http://www.felhs.org.uk) – [archivist@felhs.org.uk](mailto:archivist@felhs.org.uk))**

### **FELHS CENTRE**

I hope to welcome you at the Centre, off Riverside near the Cricket Ground, during the Open Weekend for members on Saturday and Sunday, September 27 and 28th, from 10 am – 4 pm. Although not yet fully equipped for research you will be able to see inside the Centre and how it is progressing for yourselves. Please there is no parking at the centre, so if you drive use Riverside or the car park in the High Street.

### **ACQUISITIONS**

- from Peter Mayer – 401 London Country Bus Services Ltd. fares-route timetable of 21 February 1971. The bus ran from Belvedere to Sevenoaks via Dartford down the A225. The Farningham and Eynsford bus stops were as follows: Farningham cross roads, The Bull or White Post Hill, Eynsford Mill Road, church, station, Shoreham Road girdle bridge. The full fare from Belvedere to Sevenoaks appears to be 28p, if I am interpreting the sheet correctly, which I may not be!
- signed by and from Guy Hart Dyke copy of Lullingstone Castle and The World Garden by Tony Russell.

### **and finally.....**

There is so much goes on in Eynsford and surrounding villages, take a careful look at our

programme and also that of other Societies and I am sure you will find something of interest. With out support Societies like ours will die so next time you come along bring a friend. Talking of other Societies I owe huge apologies to Keith Saunderson of Horton Kirby, for some reason I cannot seem to get his entry in our bulletin correct, I had the same trouble when I was 5 year old, that time it was a maypole and a girl called Alston, every time I came to her I went wrong, well she was 11. Needless to say I was dropped from the dance..... so Keith please accept my apologies with good grace and also for any other errors I may make in the future, after all I am only human.....I may just offer prizes for those who spot my mistakes, perhaps not, that could be costly... See you soon.

Editor - Jan Wilkes (865122)

## **WHAT'S ON 2008/2009**

### **Horton Kirby & South Darenth Local History Society**

**2008**

8th Sept Archaeological Finds in our Area - Frank Turner  
10th Nov A Royal Interlude - Peter Hartley

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

### **Shoreham & District Historical Society**

**2008**

No information on future meetings available at this time

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**

25th Sept A Laugh at true life in 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)