

# The Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

Founded 1985

*A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee  
No. 5620267 incorporated the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 Registered Charity 1113765*



(Original Society founded 1985 Registered Charity no 1047562)

## Bulletin No 85 March 2010 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place at Farningham Village Hall on Friday 14th May at 8pm (doors open 7.30pm).

The Agenda is as follows:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last AGM/matters arising
4. Adoption of Accounts
5. Setting of the Subscription level for 2010
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Any other business

**Nominations for officers or committee members should reach the Chairman by 1st May 2010**

### Forthcoming Talks and Events

2010	Details	Where
14th May	<b>AGM including buffet</b>	Farningham
24th Sept	<b>Metal Detecting – Des Cook</b>	Farningham
16th Oct	<b>London Pride (Music Hall)</b>	Farningham
26th Nov	<b>The R101 Airship Titanic of the Sky – Brian Hussey</b>	Eynsford

### 1ST AUGUST TO 31ST AUGUST 2010 - HISTORY MONTH

7th Aug	Exhibition Farningham Village Hall/Guided Village Walk from 11am to 4pm	Farningham
14th Aug	Exhibition Olive Seal Hall/Guided Village Walk from 11am to 4pm	Eynsford
21st Aug	Exhibition Crockenhill Village Hall/Guided Village Walk from 11am to 4pm	Crockenhill
29th Aug	Discount for Members and one guest to Lullingstone	Lullingstone

	World Garden and Castle with guided tour from 2pm	Castle
28th/29th	Display of Poems, judging and prize giving	Lullingstone
30th Aug	Discoveries in the Darent Valley 11am to 5pm	Roman Villa

Full details of all events for history month will follow in the next bulletin

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)**

Another busy year is ahead for the Society with meetings and events especially during the month of August when we will be celebrating our 25th birthday. The various activities we are planning should be of interest not only to members, whose support we would welcome but to members of other groups and societies (*and will perhaps encourage those who have never been to a history meeting to dip their toe in the water and come along - editor*)

Our villages have a varied and colourful history and many local unsung personalities whose inventions, musical prowess and artistic talents have enriched our lives. If you know of a person who has lived, even for a short period of time, in either Eynsford, Farningham, Crockenhill or Mapelscombe who has done something that had influenced our way of life and we have not acknowledged through one of our publications then please contact me.

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

Further to the report in the last Bulletin regarding the publication of Brian Philp's 'Farningham Kent'. (Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit, Kent Special Subject Series no 17) (this can now be obtained from me price £5.00 + £1.00 pp).

A request for information - I was speaking with Wilf Duncombe recently about his forthcoming publication on the Gibson foundry and I mentioned have taken some photographs five years ago at our big events in Eynsford village Hall when many of our artefacts were on display. Among these photographs were items relating to the foundry which we thought would add interest to the book. Does anyone know to whom these items belonged as they do not appear to be among the artefacts in our archives.

### **RESEARCH REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923) website [www.felhs.org.uk](http://www.felhs.org.uk)**

#### **Research for book on Upper Darent Valley**

Rod would like to know of any particular current craftsmen or women to feature in his book. He lives in Otford, [rod.shelton@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:rod.shelton@tiscali.co.uk). I have a mobile phone number to give anyone who contacts me.

### **Dartford Rural District Council, 1894 – 1974**

Before Sevenoaks District Council was set up this area came under Dartford Rural District Council, and I had cause recently to glance into a booklet in our collection on the

history of the D.R.D.C. Illustrations in the book include the new club-house, inside and outside, in Lullingstone Park. It was the Council who installed the 18-hole golf course, opened in 1968. I expect with the over-provision of golf courses now current golfers do not experience a three to four hour wait to tee off, as they did then.

### **The matchbox cover of Eynsford Bridge**

Brian Hussey kindly asked a friend, who is an avid matchbox cover collector, about this. He tells me that although the address given was Sidcup, the factory was in St. Mary Cray. It closed in the 1980s, but so far no date for the Eynsford bridge matchbox has been identified. The 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign was initiated by the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 1954, so the matchbox cover was definitely after that date – my guess is the late 1950s. The matchboxes were packed in sets of 12, and Eynsford Bridge is one of a set depicting Kentish scenes.

### **Kent was Icebound (Official), 9 February, 1940**

'Precluded by official censorship from giving the present state of the weather, the *Kent Messenger*' today gives reports of the blizzards and heavy successive frosts experienced throughout Kent just over a fortnight ago.' Many places experienced 20 to 10 degrees of frost for 15 days or more. In Canterbury the beer froze in public house cellars. Icebreakers removing ice floes from the Thames were a common sight. Many villages were almost snowbound with 4 to 6 feet of snow. On Romney marsh sheep froze to death.

### **Ralph Hurst (1894-1968) from Australia to Eynsford**

His father, Reuben Hurst, bought some land at Paracombe near Adelaide, Australia, in 1902 and established a fruit farm and market garden there. This was where his son, Ralph, was bought up. In 1914 Ralph Hurst enlisted in the First Field Artillery Brigade, which saw action in Gallipoli and France. After the Brigade was disbanded in 1919, Ralph did not join the transport ship home, but came to England, where he worked at Cannell's market garden, Chalkhurst, which was then being run under administration by James Lawson. James Lawson wrote of Ralph Hurst, 'He takes a keen interest in our methods of packing fruit and our means of getting produce to London by lorry, steam, traction, horse team and rail.' After his return to Australia he worked on his father's land, but after his father's death in 1926 he had to leave the holding and became a salesman for Singer sewing machines and Rawleigh's Medication Essences. After the Second World War he set up a business providing school bus transport.

### **Yet more about the Samoyede dogs in Farningham, 1920s**

When looking for photographs of extreme weather I came across a page of 4 photographs with the heading 'The Great Snow Storm' Farningham, 1929 (but likely to be that which hit the area in 1927/28. Of particular interest was a photograph of 5 Samoyede dogs pulling a sledge on which Mrs Kilburn Scott is riding. The photograph mentions Mrs Kilburn Scott of Beesfield Farm Farningham, so now we know where the dogs were bred.

### **Old Castle School, Eynsford c.1920s**

Hubert, from U.S.A, e-mailed a copy of the prospectus, which he found among his mother's possessions. The prospectus contains photographs of a large detached house, standing in its own grounds, with a long view over fields and looking towards Eynsford with the church steeple. The house was said to be on the Hart Dyke estate and

overlooking Lullingstone park. I thought Chalkhurst might be a candidate, but the roof gables don't match up. The school aimed to attract boys aged 6 – 14 years of 'sterling character and good home training, preferably the sons of professional men.' Fees were £80 a year or £110, if the boys stayed during the holidays. The headmaster was Hubert's grandfather, Marcus Egerton Pike. It is thought that the school closed because of the Great Depression of the late 1920s. Marcus Pike then became Superintendent Registrar at Sutton Coldfield. Any information about where this school might have been, or any information about it at all, would be welcome.

### **Royal Artillery Steeple Chases**

Michael has researched the races held in Bromley, but also noted that some were held in Farningham in the 1830s and 1840s. The last one held in our area seems to have been on 3 March 1864 'over an excellent line of country.' Looking at the collection Hilary Harding has recently given the Society, in 1846 one of the races at Farningham was called 'The Military Race', for horses which were the property of army officers on full pay, and to be ridden by them. It was a handicap race in which four horses entered - Resolution, Darnley, Monreith and Saracena.

### **Will of Thomas Pryer of Eynsford, 5 February 1769**

He left his cousin, William Pryer, his silver watch. He left his housekeeper £5 5 shillings to buy a mourning suit and a deal box to put her clothes in. The rest of his goods and estate he left to his father, Thomas Pryer, who lived at Bowyer or Bower Cottage in Eynsford.

### **Family history enquiries**

- **Ross Parker** - Myles is distantly related to Albert Rostron Parker and has, through his mother, an autograph book signed by him. Ross had a small role in 'Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang' so Myles has seen him as he was in 1969, but otherwise has failed to find a photograph of him. I put him in touch with Jan who raised interest in Ross originally. Any information welcome.
- **Chilman of Farningham** – June has found Stephen and Sophia with family in Farningham at Dartford Road in 1861 and at Dartford Cottage in 1881. One son, Richard, married Eliza Chapman in 1876 at St. Margaret of Antioch Church, and June wanted to know where that was. I told her it was probably the church of that name at South Darenth.
- **Ralph Hurst in Eynsford from Australia** – Pam from the Tea Tree Gully Library made enquiries about this inhabitant about whom a biography was being written, (see Research above).

### **Other enquiries**

- **'Bring and Buy Sale' at Eynsford School' film c.1960** – does anyone know of the whereabouts of a copy? Roger was in it as a pupil and would like to see it again.
- **E. J. Moeran** – Barry is writing the biography of this musician friend of Peter Warlock. He asked for any photographs from the 1920s. I also took a photograph of Peter Warlock's cottage and The Five Bells for him.
- **Gothic structure behind Mill House, Farningham** – Timothy was curious about this building, which was a folly built by the Colyer family in the C18th. See Hilary Harding's book and Bygone Kent 19 no.5, May 1998, pp.287-290.

- **Crouch Farm House, between Crockenhill and St. Mary Cray** – David wanted information about the house to resist a neighbouring planning application. I put him touch with the Local Studies Centre at Bromley and the St. Mary Cray Action Group.
- **Proposed Lullingstone airport** – Arthur wanted more information so I put him in touch with John King.
- **Cuttings/photos of extreme weather** – Gerald asked for examples for possible inclusion in an exhibition on the subject. I found a cutting of 1940 in one of Peter Gee's albums, and photographs of a great snow storm in Farningham, dated 1929, but probably winter of 1927/28, (see Research above).

### **ARCHIVE REPORT (Susan Pittman 669923)(archives@felhs.org.uk)**

#### **FELHS Centre**

After delays caused by delivery problems (from Turkey!), and then the long freeze, the new tambour cupboards are now in place at the Centre. These cupboards have fronts that slide round to the back of the cupboard so the doors do not open out into the room, and have definitely given us more space. The photographic collection has been put into them and is easier to access. I would like to thank Veronica Sheppard who helped me to empty and move the filing cabinets to make room for the cupboards, and John Mullen who helped me take one broken filing cabinet to the dump. Unfortunately, although I thought I had been careful, I strained my back in carrying this filing cabinet and it has taken two months to heal. In future I think the Society will have to consider getting in professional removers for this kind of task, but hopefully most of the heavy work is now over.

Over the winter months, Anne Cremer, Jackie Clark and Veronica Sheppard, have suspended their sessions of sorting the uncatalogued items, but I would like to reiterate the plea for more volunteers for the coming year. Sessions last for about two hours and are being coordinated by Anne Cremer, who would soon give the little training required. If you would like to join in, even for one session as a trial, please do make contact - Anne Cremer 01322 863732 or myself (details above).

I continue to respond to all enquiries and, if necessary, the Centre can be opened to individuals by appointment.

#### **Acquisitions**

**From Diana Beamish – Photographs of 52 St Martins Drive** at the start of alterations in November 2009.

- **From 'Cooch' – Photographs of the 1920s of Eynsford ford and Knatts Valley.** 'Cooch' was born in 1939 in Knatts Valley and went to Farningham School when a bus was laid on. Before that he attended school at West Kingsdown, walking there at the age of 6 over the footpath and ploughed fields.
- **From Geoffrey Copus** – details of the **Petley family**; **Chelsfield land tax** details, 1799, 1800, 1802, 1807; CD of **1790s Land tax returns for Eynsford, Lullingstone and St. Mary Cray.**
- **From Sara Cremer** – '**History of Kent County Council, 1889-1974**', a handsome volume of 214 pages packed with information.
- **From Wilf Duncombe** - Copy of **speech of 1811 for repeal of Act to repair and maintain Eynsford Turnpike road**, which describes the route through Shoreham and Chelsfield parishes, (see Research above); **print of Eynsford bridge**, undated – looks C18th, signed GDG; '**Three Hundred Years of Paper Making**' reprint

from Jobbing Printer, May 1950; Photocopy of documents related to a **tithe dispute** between the vicar of Farningham and the dean and chapter of Canterbury, 1838-1840.

- **From Peter Jones – Estate Sales Particulars of the Farningham Hill estate and the Manor House, Farningham, 1920**, reference (SC00538) at the English Heritage National Monuments Records (Laundry Cottage, Entrance Lodge, Farningham Hill Farm, Farningham House and cottage, Farningham Manor House, The George Barn; **Franks, 1899** (SC00539) (Franks, Entrance Lodge, Stables, Cottage, Gateway, Pavilion, gardens, Risely House, Hop Kiln Cottages in Farningham; **Outlying Portions of the Lullingstone estate, 1919** (SC00560) properties in St. Mary Cray, Chislehurst, Orpington and Knockholt.
- **From Hubert Jordan - Copy of the prospectus of ‘The Old Castle School, Eynsford,’** (see Research above).
- **From John Mullen – Photocopy from ‘Walking Again with Fieldfare’** c.1950s, walk no.14, 13-mile circular walk from Eynsford, Lullingstone, Shoreham, Otford, East Hill, Maplescombe and back to Eynsford. ‘A pleasant diversion is provided at Lullingstone Castle, where every effort should be made to see the fine herb gardens and the wonderful silk farm. In recent years, too, the remains of a Roman villa have been uncovered in the grounds, and on no account should this interesting discovery be missed.’
- **Roger Pryer – Copies of C18th wills of the Pryer family** of Eynsford, (see Research above).
- **From Michael Robinson – Booklet about the Royal Artillery Steeple Chase meetings in Bromley**, (see Research above).
- **From Robert Straker – Album of photographs, cuttings and work of pupils from Anthony Roper School collected to celebrate the centenary of Arbor Day, February 1997;** Two certificates – for contribution to Sevenoaks District Council’s **‘Streets Ahead’ Survey 2005**, and completion of Kent Fire and Rescue Service Schools **Fire Safety Education Programme, 2004-2005**.
- **From Jan Wilkes - Kent Life** of July 2003 with article **‘Farningham – an unpoilt treasure’**; Kent Life of October 2003 with article **‘The Roman treasure of Lullingstone’**; **Programme of Celebrations** in the Parish of Farningham for coronation of Elizabeth II, 2 June 1953.

### **Family History Lookups**

Registers for Eynsford, Farningham and Lullingstone searched, births, marriages and death certificated applied for, cost £7.00. Census searched for named individuals with copies and PCC indexes searched and wills obtained. Prices are dependent on the number of pages.

Donations please to the Society . Contact: **Stella Baggeley 01322 862812**

## **AND FINALLY....**

Please accept my apologies for this bulletin being later than usual, but there were a few things I wanted to confirm, and to be honest I just don’t know where time goes. There are such a lot of things going on this year one of them being History Month as Barbara has mentioned above. As a fitting end to this at the AGM we will be launching The Poetry Competition, everyone who lives in Eynsford, Farningham, Maplescombe and Crockenhill will be free to enter and the subject of course will be ‘My Village’. I am

also going to contact local schools to see if I can get them involved. The display of all the entrants will be at Lullingstong Roman Villa on the August Bank Holiday weekend. Judging will then take place and prize giving for the winners will be on Bank Holiday Monday. Combined with this Barbara will be there with a small exhibition about archaeology in the Darent Valley.

With the exhibitions in the halls I am making a call for volunteers. If anyone would like to come and assist at any of the exhibitions please give me a call on 865122, e-mail me at Janw@fsmail.net or drop me a line 2 Fountain Cottages, Bower Lane, Eynsford, DA4 0AL. If all else fails let another members of the committee know. This will involve helping in the hall, talking to visitors, making them welcome and possibly helping with refreshments. Accompanying the walks around the village to make sure everyone stays together, or anything I may have forgotten. It would be nice if those who volunteer could stay with us for the day, but if that is not possible any time you could spare would be appreciated.

Lastly I hope everyone who attended our first evening meeting in February about the murder of Caroline Luard enjoyed the talk by Monty Parkin and it prompted the detective in all of you to consider the evidence and try and unravel the mystery. Our next meeting in the AGM at Farningham. If anyone is interested in joining our committee this is your chance to put yourself forward. After the business of the AGM there will be a buffet supplied by Mary Turner and an opportunity to see the latest acquisitions and generally enjoy a sociable evening.

**Jan Wilkes - Editor (865122)**

## WHAT'S ON 2010

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

#### **2010**

10th May	Chislehurst Caves - Gordon Dennington
12th July	History of Otford - Cliff Ward
12th Sept	Railways of Kent - Bob Ratcliffe
8th Nov	Kent Villages, signs and Inn signs - Colin Coe

NEW BOOK - The Farningham Home for Boys (this book has plenty of historical information and photographs of members) £6.00 + £1.50 P&P from Keith Saunderson on 01322 862056)

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**

#### **2010**

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 522836) to check that no changes have been made to their programmes (Remember your membership card)

### **Hextable Heritage Society**

#### **2010**

8th April	Cooling Secret Radio Station - Frank Turner
13th May	AGM plus Talk on Kent Ghosts - Dennis Chambers
10th June	History of Fire Fighting in Kent - Roger Mardon
8th July	Visit to St Margaret's Church, Darenth 7.15pm at church
12th Aug	More Cinemas of Yesterday - Andy Garner
9th Sept	Hartley church revisited - Gerald Cramp
14th Oct	If War should Come - Chris Baker
11th Nov	Puppets, Piers and Pantomimes - Alsn Stockwell
Dec	Members Christmas Party

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)