

August 2013

Volume 2, Issue 10

Chairman's Message

The EHS website gets enquiries from around the world, which often prove interesting. Just occasionally they lead to actual contact, as one morning recently, when Marian Reynolds from Western Australia called on me with some items relating to her husband's grandfather, Cyril Butcher. Cyril was a carpenter, who worked in the church before WW1, and one of the items was a copy of "The Architect" of 10 August 1917, which contains photos of the High Altar and Western Gallery. Cyril's sisters included Mrs Oakes and Mrs Lovell, who lived in Old Road, and Mrs Goatman, who kept the paper shop in Cullings Hill, where you also went to get your accumulators charged.

A few days later I met Linda Brown, from Saskatchewan, with her husband, daughter and grandson. Linda's grandfather, George Broadbridge, another Elham carpenter, emigrated to Canada in 1920. George was a cousin of Les Ames, and they have several postcards and letters from Les, which they will scan and send to us. We lunched at the Abbot's Fireside, so imagine their delight at finding the "Les Ames" bar. They knew little of cricket, but Zac, the young grandson is an ace at baseball, so perhaps that's his great-great uncle's genes coming out.

Diary Dates for 2013

20 th Sept.	A Friday Evening Talk updating us on this year's excavations and finds at the Lyminge Dig by Dr. Alexander Knox.
October (tbc)	Behind the Scenes Visit and Ride on the Leas Lift
4 th October	A Friday Evening Talk by Prof. Clare Ungerson on The Kitchener Camp at Richborough.
1 st November	A Friday Evening illustrated talk on Medieval Folkestone by Dr. Denis Pepper.
End of Nov.	A visit to be arranged to see behind the scenes at The Beaney Museum in Canterbury.
6 th December	Christmas Special! A cosy evening with Derek Boughton telling tales by the fireside of a local hostelry. (details and costs to be announced later)

Booking arrangements:

All Friday evening talks are at the Village Hall in Elham, starting at 8.00 p.m. and places can be reserved by contacting the Secretary on 01303 840336 or emailing asladden@btinternet.com. Members £3.00 and Non-Members £5.00.

Visits that are arranged by Real Socialising can be booked by Telephoning Viv Kenny on 0777 3946828 (Let her know you are an EHS Member) or emailing info@realsocialising.co.uk.

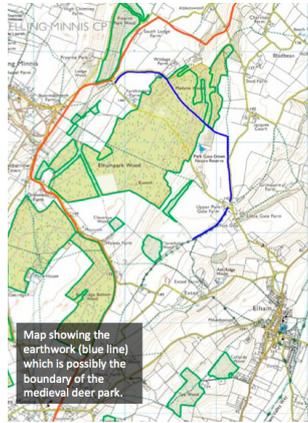
We try hard to provide you with a varied programme of talks and visits

But if you have any suggestions of things you'd like to see or hear about please let us know.

"N.B. Real Socialising are planning a trip to Parliament on Friday 17th January....with an additional visit to either The Bank of England Museum or Chelsea Pensioners....make a date in your diaries for next year! Full details and prices to follow. If there are enough of us we'll be able to have an Elham Valley pick up."

Elhampark Wood — a walk led by Alfred Gay on 12th July

Elhampark Wood is the largest area of woodland in the Parish covering some 400 hectares (988 acres) and like almost all the woodland in the Parish it is also 'ancient woodland' (that is, it is known to have been woodland since at least 1600AD). Sadly it was largely replanted with conifers when the Forestry Commission acquired the site (along with Covet and Covert Woods) from the executors of the late Sir Henry White of the Broome Estate in 1924¹. However, it still retains a surprising amount of both historical and ecological interest and is an excellent place to do some landscape detection.



Map showing the earthwork (blue line) which is possibly the boundary of the medieval deer park.

We set off from the roadside at the entrance to Park Gate Down Nature Reserve and headed south-west across pasture to the eastern edge of Elhampark Wood. Here we observed the ancient hornbeams on the woodland boundary many of which showed evidence of being plashed in their youth with their stems and branches often growing along or close to the ground. Historically, trees on the woodland boundary were often plashed to maintain a thick hedge to prevent livestock from getting into the woodland, and they would have probably not been allowed to grow to their current size until the introduction of wire fencing replaced the need for plashing in the early 20th century.



It was pointed out that the ancient woodbank on which the hornbeams were growing was quite shallow probably due to centuries of erosion. Woodbanks such as these were usually constructed to demarcate the woodland edge, and as many of them are known to be very old (records show that most are Medieval) they are one of the most reliable ways of identifying ancient woodland in the field². The trees along the woodland boundary are really all that remains of the original tree cover before the Forestry Commission replanting and it is interesting to speculate why they were left when everything else was felled - maybe they were retained to reassure people that it was still woodland when viewed from outside the wood?

Just before crossing the stile into the wood we stopped to observe the dewpond at the top of the slope on the woodland edge. This was dry upon our visit but had held water until a few weeks before. Dewponds were traditionally constructed to provide water for livestock, and due to the permeability of the underlying chalk, usually have a clay-lined base so as to hold rainwater throughout the year. This particular dewpond sometimes has a population of the pond water-crowfoot, *Ranunculus peltatus* but unfortunately this was not present upon our visit.

Once entering the woodland, we made our way along the Forestry Commission tracks towards the Bronze Age tumuli at the southern end of the wood. Although most of the interior of the wood is densely planted with Norway spruce, Douglas fir and Corsican pine, which is neither particularly scenic or rich in wildlife, the Forestry Commission have maintained a network of open rides along some of the tracks. These do support some interesting plants such as common eyebright, bitter vetch, heath milkwort and lousewort. In good weather it is also possible to see the white admiral butterfly but we were perhaps a week or so too early on this occasion. A photograph of the group was taken in front of the largest of the three Bronze Age round barrows. It's unlikely that the barrows would have been constructed in woodland, so we can be quite sure that at least this part of Elhampark Wood was open land during the Bronze Age.

After leaving the tumuli, we headed back northwards, crossed the road into Madams Wood and stopped at a point where a large earthen bank intersects the forestry track. This earthen bank can be traced across the breadth of Madam's Wood from the north-west to the south-east and also appears to extend outside the woodland towards Park Gate and Clavertye Wood on the eastern side and towards Fryarne Park Wood on the western side. Another unusual feature is that along much of its length it has a ditch on both sides of the bank (an ordinary woodbank would only have a ditch on the outside of the bank), and is frequently topped with pollards. Considering this, it is tempting to speculate that it could be the boundary of the medieval deer park especially as it passes through Park Gate and would appear to enclose much of Elhampark Wood (although I cannot trace its southern and western boundaries). It would be very interesting to hear other people's opinions on this.

Continued on next page

Elhampark Wood — a walk led by Alfred Gay on 12th July cont/...

We then turned southwards towards Park Gate Down nature reserve. Bryan Badham explained that Madam’s Wood was the site where two airplanes were shot down in World War II. The first, on 31st August 1940 when the German Ace Eckhart Priebe was shot down over Elham. Priebe parachuted into the village, landing in the area of Hogg Green/George V playing field, his plane coming down in Elham Park Wood (for further information please see the Wally Harris article in this issue). The second was Sgt. ‘Mabel’ Gray whose Spitfire was shot down on the 5th September 1940 by a twin engine Messerschmitt. He was probably killed instantly and the plane crashed in flames very near where Priebe’s plane had come down³. A friend of Sgt. Gray visits Elham Park Wood every year around the anniversary as an act of remembrance.



Just before entering the reserve we had another opportunity to observe the large earthen bank from a

different angle, and also view a few small flint piles near the edge of the wood which probably have their origin from historical clearance of flints from nearby arable fields. We returned to our starting point across Park Gate Down which had a very fine display of chalk grassland wildflowers including several species of orchid for which the reserve is famous.

¹Information from papers on the purchase of Elham Park Wood obtained from the Forestry Commission.

²Rackham, O. 2006 *Woodlands* London: Collins ISBN: 978-0-00-741900-5

³Knight, D. 1981 *Harvest of Messerschmitts* London: Frederick Warne ISBN: 0 7232 1772 1



The Lyminge Dig – Our Next Talk – 20th September

I’m sure you are all aware of the archaeological exploration that has been taking place in Lyminge since 2008. It is an ambitious programme of village-core archaeology examining the antecedents and development of a documented Anglo –Saxon monastic community founded by the Kentish royal dynasty during the 7th century AD.

This year’s exploration on Tayne Field is well under way, with some interesting finds already made including pottery, beads and glass, indicating the high status of the site. On Friday 20th September we have Dr Alexandra Knox, the Assistant Project Director, coming from Reading University to update



Coins found by metal detectorists at Lyminge



Dr Alex Knox at the Tayne Field site in Lyminge

us on the conclusions they have drawn at the end of this season’s dig. She will be at the Village Hall at the usual time of 8.00 p.m.



A continuation of the Dover Express article of 6th December 1901 printed in the last edition of our newsletter

The Vicars of Elham

Of the vicars of Elham we have no complete list. The most remarkable thing which the list discloses is the great show of interchanges with other parishes; and it is probable that few vicars on the list held the benefice so long as the last one, the Rev. Walker Wodehouse, whose term extended from 1846 to 1899. In the archives of Canterbury Cathedral there is a record of the Countess of Eu in the years 1234-42 granting the patronage of Elham Church to the Archbishop; but the right of presentation was apparently only temporary, for in 1268 the patronage was given by Archbishop Boniface, then Lord of the Manor of Elham, to a college then founded by Canon Walter de Merton (of St. Paul's), with whom it ever after remained, there being attached to the gift an obligation to pay to the vicar of Elham forever 30 marks (£20) per annum. The archives of that College show that very soon after they became patrons, that is in the year 1290, they spent £88 16s. on the church and £1. 8s. 10 ½ d on the church clock (orologium). Of course that must have been a clock long previous to the present one, or, as clocks then were rare, it might have meant a sundial. Referring to the list of vicars we find that the eleventh on the list was William de Canterbury. He went into a Monastery in 1289, and his successor was William de Arundel, concerning whom there is a curious record to the effect that after he had held the office of vicar of Elham 35 years, Archbishop Reynolds appointed a "curator" to act for the vicar owing to his great age and infirmity. This "curator" was a chaplain (Capellanus) named William de Ottings, probably of Ottinge in this parish. This instance A.D. 1324 furnishes one of the earliest instances of the title of a curate. There used to be a crossed coffin slab in the south porch of Elham Church supposed to have been the tomb of this aged vicar. The Rev. Thomas Rigdon, the vicar in the year 1511, excused the parishioners from making offerings because they were deprived by authority of their quid pro quo – the privilege of drinking ale in the church. There used to be a brass in the church to the memory of the Rev. John Hill, dean and vicar of Elham, who died in the year 1730. The present vicar, who has been in office rather more than a year, is the Rev. Allard Charles Debourbel, M.A.

The Bells of Elham.

There are eight bells in the tower, some of which it is suggested were brought from Sandwich, the number of the peal having been increased since the days of Edward VI., when the number was only five. These bells are rung from the bottom of the tower, the belfry being on a level with the church floor, and on the wall is a record that on the 23rd May, 1772, there was rung for the first time in this steeple a complete peal of 5040 changes of grand sire triples in 3 hours and 8 minutes by J. M. Cullen, William Rigden, George Downe, Richard Down, Richard Foreman, William Ruck, Dan Cullen, and George Ladd. There is another record that the Kent County Association of Bellringers, on the 5th December 1892, rang in this belfry a "date touch" consisting of 1892 bob triples in one hour and thirteen minutes. These bells were cast in the year 1763 by Messrs. Lester and Pack, Whitechapel, the founders of the great bell (70cwt.) at Canterbury Cathedral. The following are the particulars of the Elham peal:

Tenor	16 cwt.	F
7	11 ½	G
6	9	A
5	8	B flat
4	6 ½	C
3	6	D
2	5 ½	E
Treble	5	F

The ringers at Elham are governed by a set of rules adopted in 1888.

Steam Returns To Elham

The sound and smell of traction engines rumbling through the valley is still a fairly regular event and the 4th July this year was no exception. These two engines were returning from the Preston Rally and stopped for refuelling in Elham on their way to Sellindge. This rally was an important event for both engines as Cornishman had only recently been restored by the father and son team of Robert and Malcolm Hobbs, they also built the attached wagon. The other engine, Ted Dyer's Burrell, spent most of its working life until 1948 in Essex, however it is now stored in Kent, having recently been transported down here from Hertfordshire. The Burrell was driven by the son of the man who restored it in 1967.



The Drivers View



Ted Dyer's Burrell



Cheers



Cornishman

Walter F Harris MM - Talk on 31st May 2013

EHS members were very fortunate to have the opportunity to meet and hear Walter's (Wally's) stories from WW2 when he revisited Elham in May of this year. As you will read Wally's story is unique in military history, he was an engineer, first serving in the Royal Army Ordnance Corp. and then with the newly formed Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME), which meant Wally and his colleagues were generally unarmed personnel working on vehicles and equipment, often whilst under enemy fire. The REME motto "Arte et marte - By skill and by fighting" was played out to the fullest by Wally and his colleague Swanny during WW2.

Wally first came to Elham in the spring of 1940 when he was with 168 Brigade HQ LAD of the 56 (London) Division. The invasion of Britain was the next part of Hitler's plans to rule Europe and the evacuation of the UK and allied forces at Dunkirk meant that the South of England was very weakly defended as both men and equipment were lost in Northern France. Wally and his men were tasked with commandeering vehicles and in this instance the Elham Service Garage in order to prepare the vehicles for use to defend the south coast.

Whilst here Wally was billeted in commandeered accommodation in The Row, possibly in the house that was next to The Forge, this is where Page Cottages and The Blue House now stand. Wally remembers sitting on the grass at the rear of the property and looking over the village to the hills beyond.



Being a young lad from London the possibility of meeting his sweetheart Dolly and her friend Daphne was an exciting prospect as they had managed to secure overnight accommodation at Hunter's Moon, which at that time was a Tea Room offering B&B run by two gentlemen, Norman and George. There was however one slight problem with this plan, how to meet Dolly and Daphne in Canterbury from the London train? Mr Fellowes the landlord of the New Inn, Elham had the answer. In the shed at the rear of the pub was an old motorcycle which Wally could get running, add some petrol and meet the girls.

When Wally arrived at the first set of traffic lights in Canterbury (probably those outside the Cross Keys pub) he had to stop, suddenly a lady ran across the road in front of him and stumbled to the ground. Wally went to her aid and whilst helping her a rather zealous policeman arrived, which resulted in Wally having to appear before the Canterbury Magistrates to explain why he was riding a motorcycle without the necessary tax, insurance etc.

In 2013 this piece of information proved to be very useful as we needed to ascertain exactly when Wally was here in Elham. With the help of the Magistrates Court admin team and the Canterbury Cathedral Archivist we found that the date of the offence was 8/06/1940 and the court hearing was 8/07/1940. This information was vital as Wally's other adventure whilst in Elham was to arrest a German pilot who parachuted into the village in 1940, but who and when? With the help of David Brocklehurst MBE, Chairman of the Kent Battle of Britain Museum, Hawkinge and the existing research material held by the EHS we knew it was either Oberleutnant Eckhart Priebe (shot down 31/08/1940) or Karl Bubenhofer (shot down 29/10/1940).

Wally's time in Elham was relatively short, so we now know he was here at the time that Priebe was shot down.



The George V playing field where Priebe came down

Having walked around the village without prompting Wally as to where he remembered the German airman descended into Elham, Wally was drawn towards the Triangle and down Vicarage Lane, where of course we know Priebe landed. Wally's account is interesting as he remembered running down the lane and jumping over the five bar gate to reach Priebe, who he remembered was an Oberleutnant, and relieved him of his pistol. In his book *Harvest of Messerschmitts* Dennis Knight refers to this event and we now know that Grace Champion and Grace Tupper subsequently appeared on the scene with PC Hampshire, although Wally does not recall anyone else there at the time.



After leaving Elham Wally moved around Kent, Sussex and Norfolk, although he did find time to marry his fiancée Dolly on the 7th June 1941.

Wally's war took him to many of the most challenging theatres of WW2, Iraq, Egypt, Sicily and perhaps not unsurprisingly the allied invasion of Northern Europe in the afternoon of D Day. What happened to Wally on the day and weeks subsequently have been made into a short film The Craftsman which EHS members were able to see during Wally's talk.

It must be remembered that Wally and his men were unarmed engineers, however whilst landing on D Day Wally and his men recovered a machinegun from a stranded allied tank, which was subsequently mounted on their jeep. A few weeks later the allied forces were held up on the narrow roads of Normandy and unbeknown to the allied army commanders a German 88mm field gun was being made ready to fire on the convoy which would have been devastating. Wally stumbled upon the gun and its crew as they were nearly ready to fire. He ran back to his jeep and with the help of his friend and colleague Corporal Swan (Swanny) they removed the mounted Browning 303 machine gun, ran back to the German gun and opened fired, these actions won Wally the military medal.



Wally is now 92 and last year wanted to return to Elham to find Hunter's Moon where his now wife of 72 years Dolly had stayed. That was in 2012 and now with the very generous help of John and Sue Brown at The Rose and Crown, who kindly provided B&B without charge for Wally and his son, the members of the EHS have been able to see and hear Wally's story in his own words.

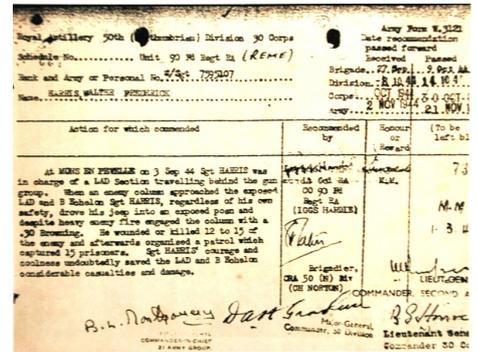
Wally's Military Medal citation reads:

At Mons en Pevelle on 3rd Sept 1944 Sgt Harris was in charge of a LAD (Light Aid Detachment) Section travelling behind the gun group. When an enemy column approached the exposed LAD and B Echelon. Sgt Harris, regardless of his own safety, drove his jeep into an exposed position and despite heavy enemy fire engaged the column with a .30 Browning. He wounded or killed 12 to 15 of the enemy and afterwards organised a patrol which captured 15 prisoners. Sgt Harris' courage and coolness undoubtedly saved the LAD and B Echelon considerable casualties and damage.

Signed B. L. Montgomery Commander in Chief 21 Army Group.

After the war Wally was demobbed in 1946 and resumed work as a motor mechanic ending up as a fully qualified Rolls Royce mechanic. In 2002 his actions were again recognised when the Rowcroft Company of the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright, Surrey created the Harris Platoon in his honour. The other five platoons were named after famous battles and campaigns of the second world war.

The EHS Committee and those who attended the talk would like to take this opportunity to thank Wally and his family for taking the time to return to Elham and tell us his story.



Wally Harris MM shows David Johnson his citation



Footnote: It has to be said that despite ill health Wally is as sharp as a tack and has a very jolly and optimistic outlook on life, it is always a pleasure to talk with him. Having just read this article to Wally on the phone to ensure the content was correct he went on to tell me two further stories from his "Wally's War" adventures where he had narrow scrapes with death. Perhaps these and the whole story will one day be put into print.

1914 Centenary Event in 2014

The project team have produced a list of possible ideas for next year and work has already started on some. The list below will give you an idea of what we are planning:

- School artwork and poetry competition in November 2013
- School pupils to investigate the social change in Elham brought about by the men going to war
- How Elham looked at the time of WW1, employment, shops and social make up
- Produce a map of where service personnel lived in Elham (this could link with our idea of producing information plaques outside their homes for a walking tour of the village). The project team have started drawing up a list of properties where service personnel were known to have lived, the current residents will then be contacted to see if they are willing to do further research.
- Animals during wartime, how were they fed (Gordon Young speaks of trains full of feed going through the Elham Valley by rail to Folkestone), where did the horses go, did they come back? What other animals went to war, dogs and pigeons etc
- School pupil imaginative writing project – having read about the service personnel mentioned on our spreadsheet, the animals and other aspects, the children could write about their feelings
- The school to hold a special week in June 2014 to cover some of the above work
- In 2019 hold a 100th Anniversary of the Peace Party held at the Vicarage in Elham. Now there is forward thinking!

On the 24th April the EHS committee had a meeting with Steve Owen, Head Teacher of Elham school and Trevor Gasson, School Governor to look at ways the pupils could be involved in researching and subsequently displaying the material for our Centenary event. The meeting was very productive and as you have seen from the above list has produced some excellent ideas. Steve will now be looking at ways these can be incorporated into the school curriculum for 2013/14.



Elham Residents Mr. & Mrs. Albert Johnson

Key dates are:

War Declared on 28th July 1914

War Started on 4th August 1914

The Elham Historical Society Talk and Exhibition is planned for Friday 1st August 2014 at the Village Hall

Step Short ceremony in Folkestone is Monday 4th August 2014
(see www.stepshort.co.uk/)

If you would like to help the project team then please contact us using our usual email address ehs@elham.co.uk

The EHS Committee have written to the St. Mary's Parochial Church Council Secretary, Gillian Ratcliff making the council aware of the importance and rarity of the Scott grave marker. The PCC have now agreed in principle to its removal and secure placing in the church. However, first they need to consult with the Parish Council who are responsible for the churchyard and they need to find a suitable location inside the church.



Captain C.L.M. Scott Grave Marker, probably sent home from the original grave in Northern France

2013

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*Keep informed about our latest projects and activities -
www.ehs.elham.co.uk and www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk*

Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards are available from The Cosy Tea Rooms or Elham Valley Stores, all in the High Street at a cost of 60p each or £4.50 for a pack of nine.



It's your Newsletter!

We've got lots of good "stuff" to tell you about in these newsletters but we hope that you, our members, will also provide contributions.

Everyone will have their own special areas of interest so, to stop us banging on about our own obsessions, send us your thoughts and photos etc. Letters to the Editor are always appreciated!

Please email me: dilyswebb@btinternet.com

Don't Forget EHS now has a Facebook Group

We now have our own Facebook group where people (EHS members and non members) can upload pictures and make comments about Elham's history. If you are on Facebook then please take a look at

www.facebook.com/#!/groups/317708811602063/