



Elham
Historical
Society

February 2020

Volume 10, Issue 1

Interim Chairman's Message

As my year as Interim Chairman of EHS enters its last few months, I have been reflecting on the extraordinary potential of the Society's archives as a community resource. Their worth will be demonstrated once again in the spring, when an exhibition linked with Elham's VE Day celebrations and prepared by Derek Boughton and Bryan Badham will be held in the Village Hall's Peggy Pike Room over the weekend of May 8th. The archives are maintained and housed in the Village Hall with the help of members' subscriptions, and their value to Elham's sense of identity should not be underestimated.

Another example of a 'hidden' benefit of members' subscriptions – which I hope can be continued in future years – is the collaboration with Elham School, and the sponsorship of special projects in consultation with the Head Teacher and colleagues. EHS underwrote the cost of books awarded as prizes to the winners of last November's School Writing Competition, which took as its subject Patrick and Diana Wheeler's historic Manor House. In March we will be covering the expenses of a visit to Elham School by Bill Phillips, a volunteer from Herne Bay Museum, to talk to the children about the so-called 'Pudding Pans', pottery dishes which have been dredged up by North Kent fishermen from a Roman vessel wrecked in the shoals of the Thames estuary almost two millennia ago.

But the main purpose of the subscriptions is to ensure that we obtain outside speakers of quality and maintain parity with the rates paid by other local societies (in-house EHS speakers like Derek and myself, who are speaking in the Peggy Pike Room in February and March respectively, do not of course charge). Indeed, if there are any members of the society who have been researching a particular historical project and would like to enlarge upon it to their fellow-members, they would be very welcome! In any case, our finances have ensured some splendid talks from outside speakers this winter – Imogen Corrigan's 'What is Christmas?' and Will Palin's 'Sheerness Dockyard' spring to mind.

Looking ahead to the AGM of the EHS on April 24th, there is going to be what Personnel departments in large corporations describe as 'churn': that is, a number of EHS Committee positions are going to become vacant. My own year as interim Chairman will come to an end. Barbara and Dick Athow are standing down as Vice-Chairman and Treasurer respectively, as is Jackie Christian as EHS Secretary. Andree Sladden is co-ordinating efforts to identify and recruit replacement members for the EHS Committee, and if any members feel they could play a role and help maintain the Society's decade-long success, do please contact her at elhamhistorical@gmail.com. Will Palin commented to me in an e-mail after his visit to Elham last month that he was 'struck by how lively and engaged the members of the Historical Society were.' Lively engagement from EHS members will indeed be welcome through the next few months!

Finally, my own personal tribute to George Palmer, to set alongside Derek's obituary of him elsewhere in this Newsletter. George and I were exactly the same age, and perhaps for that reason he reminded me of the boys I went to school with at a country grammar school in the Sussex Weald. Many of them were farmers' sons, who had that quality of 'rootedness' that George had. So, in memoriam, a stanza from Hilaire Belloc's poem 'The South Country':

'The great hills of the South Country/They stand along the sea/And it's there walking in the high woods/That I would wish to be/And the men that were boys when I was a boy/Walking along with me...'

Andrew Joynes

Programme of Events for 2020

February 28th - Derek Boughton “Elham Women – Part 1”

March 20th - Bill Phillips - A volunteer from Herne Bay Museum - The Mystery of the Roman Pudding Pans. NB This meeting will be held in the morning at Elham School and a presentation and cartoon will be shown to the pupils. Members are welcome to attend at 9.30 am.

March 27th - Andrew Joynes, Chairman – “Down North on The Labrador – the life and times of Wilfred Grenfell” a story of ice, empire and evangelism.

April 24th - AGM There will be some changes to your Committee this year and agenda and nomination forms will be send out in due course. Don't hesitate to put your name forward if you feel you can be of help.

Weekend of 7th, 8th and 9th May - There will be many VE + 75 Commemorative events in the village and the Historical Society will have an exhibition in the Peggy Pike Room in the Village Hall. More details to follow.

May 15th - Wallace Murray – Education Volunteer Presenter for Walmer Lifeboat Station - The History and work of the Walmer Lifeboat.

June 5th - Imogen Corrigan (back by popular demand!) - “Put That Light Out!” - The Searchlight Girls of WW2 - The 93rd (Searchlight) Regiment Royal Artillery.

July 23rd - Together with Real Socialising we are hoping to arrange a day's outing to Churchill's Chartwell. There will be dedicated pick up in Elham.

August 14th - A visit to Godmersham Park Heritage Centre which will include a tour of the gardens, the outside of the house where Jane Austen's brother lived and a tour of the neighbouring church.

September - Hilary Tolputt – Fashionable Folkestone (its most decadent era!!!)

October 16th - Kristina Boulden - St Michaelmas - a Farming Calendar.

November 6th or 27th - Rob Baldwin – Finding Edwin - The Staffordshire Hoard and the helmet with possible links to King Edwin of Northumbria.

December 4th - Christmas Event at The Abbot's Fireside.

Some of the above events are awaiting confirmation but we should have further details available for you at the AGM in April.....we hope to see you there.

All the Village Hall Events will start at the new time of 7.30 p.m. and will be in the Peggy Pike Room.

CHURCHILL'S CHARTWELL

Thursday, 23rd July

Sir Winston said 'A day away from Chartwell is a day wasted'; now you can join Elham Historical Society's visit to Chartwell for a glimpse into Churchill family life. The National Trust actually acquired Chartwell 18 years before Winston's death when the Churchill family found the upkeep of such a large estate very expensive and allowed a group of businessmen to purchase it for £50,000 who then offered it the National Trust in 1946/47. Their one condition was that Winston and Clementine continued to live there for as long as they wished. It was decided that the house would be displayed as it was in the 1930s, the era when Winston, Clementine and their four children were all in residence. Apart from minor amendments and additions the house remains much the same as it was when it was originally opened for public viewing in 1966. It remains a great source of interest and enjoyment to this day.

Return Coach - EHS Members £15pp *

Non Members £16pp + *Chartwell Entry at group rate or NT Members FREE

Pick up points:

Village Centres, Barham, Elham, Lyminge, Etchinghill



Group Admission prices (NT Members FREE!)

Churchill Enthusiast package: House, Garden, Studio and souvenir guide book £19.50 Adult; £11.75 child (**NT Members Free but £4 payment required for souvenir guide)

Standard package: House, Garden, Studio £15.50 A; £7.75 C. Garden and Studio £9.10 Adult; £4.55 Child

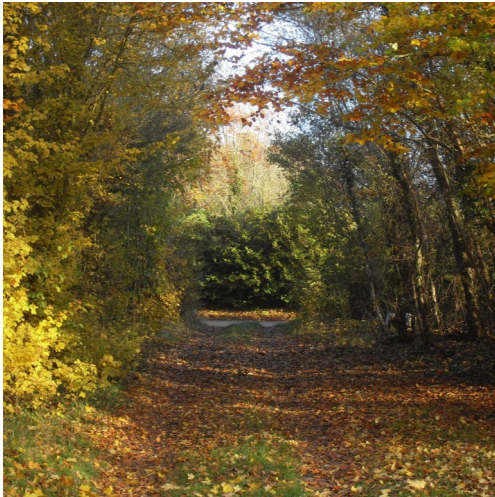
Organised exclusively for Elham Historical Society by REAL Socialising



Kent Archaeological Society

We recently had some correspondence from KAS enclosing a new membership card and I noticed that they mention that any of our paid-up members are entitled to use the extensive resource of the KAS library (situated in Maidstone Museum) on production of this membership card. If any member would like to take advantage of this please contact me (elhamhistorical@gmail.com) and I will lend you the card, which has to be shown at the Museum reception. Members are also entitled to go to events such as conferences at the member's rate.

Mapping our lost historical pathways



The Ramblers, who help us to enjoy walking the staggering 140,000 miles of public paths which criss-cross England and Wales, are encouraging us all to become detectives, to track down old forgotten footpaths. They tell us there are at least 10,000 miles of unrecorded rights of way that we are at risk of losing.

It is thanks to our path network that we can enjoy our country strolls with the dog or long distance hikes through local woods and farmland, but after January 2026 it will no longer be possible to add unrecorded rights of way to official maps based on historical evidence. Some of these missing paths have been used over centuries and date back to medieval times or earlier.

The Ramblers have created a project entitled “Don't Lose Your Way”, in an effort to get these unrecorded rights of way back on the map and to save them for future generations. Some go back to before Roman times, some are old drove roads and used to walk cattle to market and some are hollow ways carved out by ancient footsteps. They are part of our history, showing us how people moved about in the past and if we lose them part of our past goes with them.

Many of these blocked or overgrown paths could create new circular routes and connect people more easily to green spaces and lovely countryside and help them to enjoy the benefits of being outdoors.

In 1949 the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act required every local authority to create a definitive map of all the rights of way in their area but some authorities were more thorough than others and so those paths that didn't make it on to the map have become lost, overgrown or forgotten. Now the Government has introduced a cut-off date of 2026 after which it will be impossible to add paths to the map.

The Rambler's “Don't Lose Your Way” online mapping tool enables one to compare historic maps side-by-side with the current ones and provides a quick and simple way to spot and mark where paths are missing, from the comfort of your own home if the winter weather is stopping you getting out and searching for clues.

Once registered you can choose to check either your local grid square, or choose squares at random and by logging a missing path you'll become part of history, putting them back on the map for generations to come. They say that anyone who loves walking and exploring their area or likes to pore over historic maps will probably find it a bit addictive!

Clues for spotting missing paths:- As well as studying maps there are clues you can look out for while out walking -

- A worn stone stile may indicate an old entranceway and footpath.
- Rows of two hedges (often hawthorn) can show where a bridleway or carriageway might have once run
- A path which has been hollowed out by use over generations.
- Evidence of an old stone surface in a field may indicate an historical road.

Cobbles laid in a river might show the presence of an old ford.

Find out more: -

To find out more ways to get involved in the fight to save historic rights of way, download *The Ramblers guide about how to get started – from where to find historic maps to spotting clues to missing paths in the landscape:* www.ramblers.org.uk/dontloseyourway.

GEORGE PALMER

George's sudden death came as a shock to us all, and is a great loss to Elham Historical Society. He was one of our most loyal members, rarely missing a meeting or visit, but his commitment went far beyond that. From the very beginning of the EHS he was happy to share not only his knowledge of farming history and country lore, but also the documents and artefacts which he had acquired over the years. Some of these he donated to the Society, and they form an important part of our archive collection.

It had always been the intention to do a structured interview with George to record on tape some of his memories of old Elham (and preserve his voice for posterity). That we hadn't done so must be accounted a failure, and must serve as a reminder to remain active in the recording of local memories.

As Andrew has written, "I have always thought of George as embodying the 'spirit' of the Elham Valley and will miss my encounters with him and Thor when out walking on the hills. A great deal of tradition and wisdom and folk memory has been lost with George's passing."



D.B.

DISCOVER KIT'S CANTERBURY.....

I saw this mentioned in the Canterbury Index and thought it sounded interesting. You may recall we had a fascinating talk some time back by John Hunt on Christopher Marlowe and his life....

"International organisation The Marlowe Society has published a beautifully illustrated guidebook for Canterbury intended to evoke the age and atmosphere of the city where Christopher Marlowe grew up. A hugely enjoyable and educational walk, it begins a few yards from the home where Marlowe was born – the house stood in St George's Lane, just inside the city wall. Kit's Canterbury: A Guided Walk by Irene Pickering, with drawings by Judith Griffiths and David Utting, costs £4.50, including p&p (cheques payable to The Marlow Society), from 211b Old Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3ER. Remember to include your postal address."

I will order a copy and have it on display at the our AGM in April for members to peruse.

AS

In old Elham Square



I think that this photo was taken at the celebrations for the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. Most photos from such events seem to show lovely sunny days, but on this occasion there had clearly been an absolute deluge, which had put a damper on proceedings. Let us hope for better luck this year for the VE Day party in May and the Summer Market in June.

In 1935 the Rigdens' school was still open, and the main classroom was well lit by the large window to the right of the front door. The Rigdens didn't install electric light until the 1950s, and then only downstairs.

Next door at No. 3, occupied by the Sheppard family, there was no front porch, but the major difference from today was the row of cottages on the south side. They were condemned as unfit by the Rural District Council and demolished in 1940. Their frontage was thirty-nine feet from the churchyard wall, meaning that the Square was smaller in area than today.

When Les Ames, the Kent and England wicket keeper, married Leonie File from the King's Arms in 1929, the best man was Harold Larwood, famous for the "Bodyline" tour of Australia. Another guest was Leslie Todd, the Kent opening batsman. My mother asserted that he drove his car round the Square on two wheels that day. It seems scarcely possible, but Derek Ufton, who played with Todd at the end of the latter's career, says that if anyone was mad enough to do it, it would be Toddy.

The Kent Downs Trust

“There has never been a more important time to stand up for nature”

A new charity, The Kent Downs Trust, has been created to support the landscape of this unique area.

The beauty of the Downs has been loved, lived in and enjoyed by people through millennia but now, more than ever, it needs care and attention to maintain this precious environment. We are faced with unprecedented pressures, a population increase (predicted to rise by 25% by 2031) climate change, species decline and a likely lack of investment, which will all take their toll on the peace of an area we so often take for granted.

The Downs form the chalk backbone of Kent, separating the North Kent plains from the Weald and marshes to the south, and provide stunning views of both. We are rightly proud of our orchards, chalk cliffs, fruit growing, ancient woodland, pilgrims, hops and oast houses, which are all mixed in with travel and change, rapid developments in infrastructure and a rich and growing social diversity. The wealth of natural resources and wildlife habitats are recognised as being designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Trust says it looks forward to helping champion all that the Downs have to offer and to enabling a greater wealth of initiatives involving many more people as we move through these challenging times.



The official purposes of the Kent Downs Trust will be:

1. To promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical, natural and cultural environment of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting in particular but not exclusively by:

1a Carrying out work to improve the landscape, environment and built heritage:

1b Supporting traditional skills and promoting all arts inspired the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

2. To advance the education of the public, in particular in the conservation, protection and enhancement of the physical, scientific, natural and cultural environment of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

Find out more...

The Trust would love to hear from you, whether you'd be interested in becoming a benefactor or just to stay updated as the Trust evolves. www.kentdowns.org.uk/our-projects/kent-downs-trust

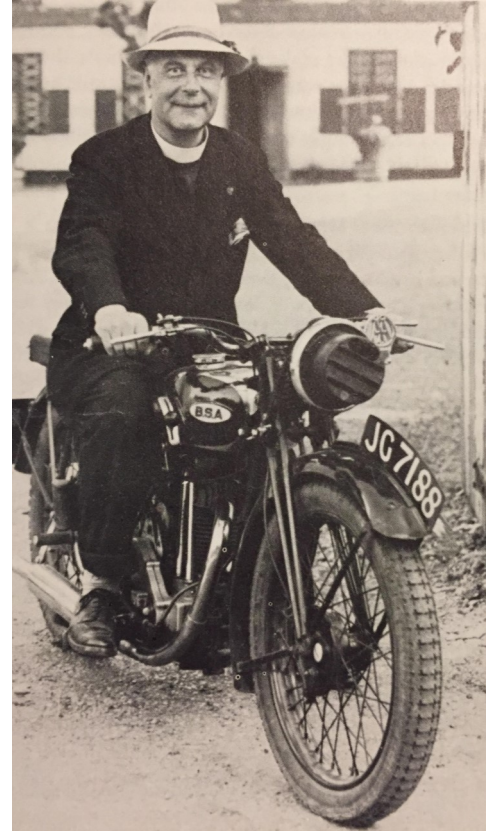
War and Rumours of War - An extract from the Elham Parish Magazine

May 1938, Vicar's Letter:

The Government has lately been at pains to instruct the public in the rudiments of Air Raid Precautions (A.R.P.), so that if ever the country should be engaged in war (which God forbid), every person should know what to do in case of a hostile air raid. And especially should we be exposed to danger in this corner of the country. A great number both of men and women have attended A.R.P. lectures and have enrolled for special service in case of war. This surely is excellent for the better we are prepared the less likely we are to be attacked. The question then, as it seems to me, is not so much why should I learn what to do in an air raid, as, is there any valid reason why I should not take the trouble to get as efficient as I can so as to offer my services.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for making a personal allusion. I volunteered as a Fire-warden to fight fire. I am now convinced however, that in the event of a hostile air raid my duty would be in ministering to the wounded and the dying. Therefore, with the full approval of the local A.R.P. organiser, I now propose to join a V.A.D. detachment (if and when one is formed) and try to become a little more efficient in "first aid", for although some years ago I passed the examination, I should pity the poor unfortunate casualty left to my mercies now!

Rev. Isaac Williams
Elham Vicarage



The Rev. Isaac Williams astride his BSA machine in the driveway of Elham vicarage

JESSICA BISHOP

We are sorry to record the death of Jessie Bishop at the age of ninety-one. She had been unwell for some time, but was a very loyal presence at meetings while her health permitted. Bryan and I were very grateful to her for her help with our 2014 exhibition, when she shared the rather sad story of her family's experiences in World War One.

D.B.

2020

Who is Who

Interim Chairman

Andrew Joynes

Vice Chairman

Barbara Athow

Secretary

Jackie Christian

Treasurer

Richard Athow

Membership Secretary

Richard Athow

Speaker & Visits Co-ordinator

Andree Sladden

**Any of the above can be contacted via:
elhamhistorical@gmail.com**

Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards at a cost of 60p each or £4.00 for a pack of eight. These are always available at our meetings in the Village Hall.



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

For more information about local events please visit www.elham.co.uk

Follow us on our Facebook page

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.

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:

elhamhistorical@gmail.com