



February 2011

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Elham in the Snow

There has certainly been an excellent opportunity during the beginning and end of 2010 to go out and snap a few pictures of our lovely village in the snow. Therefore the EHS Committee feel that it would be a good time for you to send us your own favourite photographs that you have taken. They need not be from 2010, in fact the older the better, so here are a few to get you thinking. Ideally we would prefer you to email them to us, making them no bigger than 5 MB in size – Thank You.



Elham, March 1909



Elham, Dec 2010

Move to formally become the Elham Historical Society

The members of the EHS committee cannot believe that twelve months have gone by since they “volunteered” to help set up the Elham Historical Study and the sight of over 40 prospective members at the first public meeting in May 2010 was very encouraging. Since then we have gone from strength to strength and now have over 80 members, therefore your committee are keen to ensure the ongoing success of the group. From the outset it has always been the aim of the committee to seek to formally become a society and with the upcoming first birthday event in April of this year we feel that the time is right for that move.

We have now drafted a constitution and have determined a small number of elected roles so that members can vote for their favoured candidate at the April meeting. The roles and nominations received to date are as follows:

Chair – Derek Boughton

Vice Chair – Bryan Badham

Secretary – Andree Sladden

Treasurer – Dilys Webb

Other non elected roles will be appointed to the committee as required by projects and other activities.

If you feel that you would like to stand for election to one of the above roles then please send your nomination to the Secretary before the 1st April 2011.

The committee promise that, although this is a very important part of the event, we will make the first birthday celebrations as enjoyable as possible!

Keep Those Photos Coming!

Hot on the heels of the personal photographs supplied by David Johnson and Grace Tupper we have had a further family photo album loaned to us by Gerald Hogben. Gerald and his family have a long connection with Elham and Gerald himself has some very interesting stories to tell. His father George worked for the Palmer's at North Elham and Gerald remembers the time when his father used to bring the Browning machine gun home during the time he was in the Home Guard. His father also told Gerald of the day when Ludwig Lenz was shot down over Elham in 1940 as George was delivering milk for Frank Palmer along the Back Row, from nowhere the radio from Lenz's plane landed right next to him! Gerald spent many years working for the Pegden Brothers and here are just a few photographs from Gerald's collection for you to see.



Gerald Hogben in the company vehicle at a farm on Stone Street



Pegden's Yard Elham - Gerald Hogben and Fred Pegden on the Fowler as they were about to take part in the Festival of Britain Parade in Elham in 1951.



Gerald Hogben, Bill Pegden, Frank Roberts, Peter Scott, unknown, Granddad Pegden, Dave Lewis & Fred Pegden.



Pegden's Yard Elham - Unknown, Unknown, Richard Moffatt sitting on George Hogben's lap, George Benefield and Fred Pegden

Elham's Secret Army

The following is an extract from Dennis Knight's book "Harvest Of Messerschmitts"

25th September. Quite a reasonable day. Attack on Bristol. I took the dogs out. Opposite the chalkpit, the dogs scampered and played on the grassy banks dotted with red field gentians. During the previous night London received a heavy attack and a Wren church and five hospitals had been hit.

Lord Lovat, an extraordinary Scottish nobleman who had formed one of the first commando units choosing gillies and gamekeepers for its personnel, was up to his tricks in Elham during 1940. He arrived wearing a major's uniform with a tam-o-shanter and, after inspecting the Home Guard, was closeted for a long time with Major Kingsley Dykes, to whom he presumably outlined his plans for the formation of special squads. These units, in the event of a German invasion, would stay behind on Romney Marsh or in the hills, hiding during daylight and creating havoc behind enemy lines at night. For these suicide squads, he was looking for men who had special qualities and knew the ground like the backs of their hands.

After his visit, it was noticed that leathery, reliable 'Foxy' Sturmeay the huntsman, shepherd George Austin and the immensely powerful George Benefield no longer trained with the Elham Home Guard platoon. Nobody asked questions and the little underground bunkers with camouflaged steel lids still exist on Romney Marsh and in the coastal hills.

The secrets of those brave men and, in some case women, have mainly been lost forever and their efforts have certainly gone unrecognised by any form of award or medal. The small amount of information contained in Dennis's book has always intrigued me and we now hope to record as much as possible about the men from Elham and the neighbouring parishes that joined Britain's Secret Army or to give them the official title Auxiliary Units.

George Benefield (mentioned above) worked for Pegden Brothers during this time and this photograph from Gerald Hogben's collection shows him with Fred Pegden.



George Benefield & Fred Pegden

The Wootton unit would have played an important role during any invasion as they would have been responsible for delaying any German advance along the A2 from Dover towards Canterbury and eventually London. This unit was led by Mr Lines and his men came from all walks of life as can be seen from this photograph taken from the book "The Last Ditch".



A typical Resistance patrol from Kent, brought together again in 1967 by the patrol leader in order that this photograph might be taken. Seated, left to right: S. Martin, coal merchant; W. Hawkes, farmer; C. J. Lynes, farmer (the patrol's leader and also a group leader in the area north of Dover); H. G. Burrows, farmer; G. Pickard, butcher; Colonel Field (now a mushroom farmer but once the local Intelligence Officer). Standing, left to right: W. Roberts, shepherd; G. Marsh, engineer.

The entrance to one of the group's wartime hideouts, dug into the side of an embankment at Woolton, just south of the junction of the Dover and Folkestone roads. Another entrance, at the crest of the bank, has caved in. The one here is in fair condition, although some of the timbering inside has given way. Originally this entrance was reached by passing through a dummy manger in a cattle shed, which effectively concealed it. Mr Roberts, the shepherd member of the group, stands by the entrance



Bill Hawkes (pictured above) was Rose Wilkinson's (King's Arms, Elham) father and her family believe that it is Bill Hawkes pictured next to the secret bunker and not W. Roberts. Well they did spell Wootton and Mr Lines incorrectly!

Further reading and information about the Auxiliary Units can be found at <http://www.coleshillhouse.com/>

Update on the Graveyard MI Project

The graveyard monumental inscription project is coming along with several hundred inscriptions now recorded together with corresponding photographs of the gravestones. We are now at the data verification and integration into the EHS database stages which will keep Barry Webb and the project team very busy over the next few days and weeks.

Unfortunately we have not been able to progress this work as quickly as we had hoped and therefore we will let you know when the MI information will be available for you to see. It is hoped that when completed a fully indexed copy will be printed out and available in the church for visitors to look through. Here are just a few snippets for you to see.

Ref - NE 17

In Loving Memory
of
MY DEAR HUSBAND
EDWIN MARTIN
DIED AUGUST 29TH 1909
AGED 53 YEARS
—
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
AND OF ANNIE
WIDOW OF THE ABOVE
DIED JANUARY 7TH 1913
AGED 58
ALSO
In Loving Memory
of
BANDSMAN FRANK MARTIN
THEIR YOUNGEST SON
1ST BATTN THE BUFFS EAST KENT REGT
KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE
AUGUST 9TH 1915 AGED 20 YEARS **

Ref - E48

Double headstone.
Left side:
George Downe
of this parish
Died 7th Nov 1771
Aged 78 years
He left issue by
Alice his wife
One son and one daughter
John & Elizabeth
Right side:
Here lies the body
of Eliz Downe
Wife of
George Downe
of this parish
Who departed This life Jan 13th
1749
Aged 56 years

Ref - NW 20

Here lieth the Body of
THOMAS PREBBLE [Son]
of Thomas and Judith
Prebble who departed
This Life May 26 1733

Ref - SW 11

In loving memory of
ELO Eleanor
The beloved wife of
Henry Burrows
Of this parish
Who died May 17th 1877
Aged 50 years
Affliction long time I bore
Physicians were in vain
Till God did please to give me peace
And free me from my pain

**Bandsman Frank Martin is not mentioned on the Elham War Memorial (possibly as he was born in Barham) however Derek Boughton spotted Bandsman Martin on NE17 a couple of years ago. After discussion with Henry Shackleton (Royal British Legion), it was decided that it would be impractical to add his name to the Village War Memorial, however his and one or two others have been added to the church War Memorial, and the names are therefore read out on Remembrance Sunday. Derek also found Frank's name mentioned on the Menin Gate on one of his visits to Ypres.

Forthcoming Events – 2011

Friday – March 25th – Prof. Cyril Northcote Parkinson. An illustrated talk about the life of sometime Elham resident and inventor of Parkinson's Law by his son Chris Parkinson.
Village Hall – 8.00 p.m.

Saturday - April 9th - Our first AGM, where we will celebrate our membership which now stands at 86! This will be a social event, when we will elect officers, review our progress, plan our future projects and give you the opportunity to renew your membership.
Village Hall – 8.00 p.m.

Friday – May 27th – The Town Unearthed Project – Andrew Richardson of Canterbury Archaeological Trust will talk about last year's finds on the site of Folkestone's Roman Villa and how they relate to our understanding of East Kent's history.
Village Hall – 8.00 p.m.

Friday – June 24th – A talk by Elham resident and Lancaster bomber pilot, Henry Shackleton.
Village Hall – 8.00 p.m.

Tuesday - June 7th – Private visit to Saltwood Castle. Costs will be £25.00 per person to include the tour, a cream tea and donation towards building conservation costs. **If you are interested please let the Secretary know as soon as possible as demand is likely to be high and availability is limited.**

September – “Steam in Elham” an historical talk by Elham resident Richard Moffatt.

October – Book Launch of a new Elham Valley Railway Book by Brian Hart – to be confirmed.

EHS Database Project Update

This project is growing and moving ahead in a number of different ways, which on one hand is great news, however it does mean that as it grows different information is required for each new field. The project team are actively compiling information in the form of record entries, locally researched information e.g. the grave yard inscription project data, historical and recent photographs of properties, grave stones and people, together with anecdotal references and further demographic information. A number of search flags have also been set in the database to highlight for example notable people and places, which will aid researchers of this kind of information.

We will soon be at a stage where the initial structure of the database will be set and populated with information that will be worthy of release to the EHS members. The database is currently off line from an internet point of view and further work is needed to ensure that a secure working copy can be loaded on to the Elham website. We also have some additional Data Protection Act issues to clarify and resolve before we go live.

In short we have created the structure of a truly unique asset for the EHS members and the village as a whole which we will need further time to refine things. However with the help of our members and the wider residents of Elham we will create an important record of the buildings, people and life in our village.

We hope to have a demonstration of the database ready in time for our first birthday event in April, until then be assured we are working hard to make the project a great success.

AGM & Birthday Party

Saturday 9th April, Village Hall - 8pm

This event will be free for members, and we hope for a really good turnout. It will deal with the serious business of formalising our future as the Elham Historical Society, but will also be an opportunity to celebrate our successful first year. There will be displays of the work already done (Churchyard Memorial Inscriptions, Census, Collection of Photographs, Database, etc.), which will show that historical research can be fun, and sometimes funny!

See you there! D.B.

Famous People...The Reverend Richard Harris Barham

It is surprising how few local people can claim to have read "The Ingoldsby Legends" or have even, heard of their author, the Rev. Barham, given that he was a contemporary of Charles Dickens and wrote for the same publications. However, when we visited Tappington Hall at Denton last summer, which features in many of the legends, we were all intrigued to discover more about the history of this ancient property and the stories the author wove around it.

Born in Canterbury, the only son of an immensely overweight city alderman and mayor and his housekeeper, he was only seven when his father died and left him the Manor of Tappington. The family claimed descent from Reginald Fitz Urse, one of the Norman knights implicated in the murder of St. Thomas Becket, and the ancient house itself is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Tupton, later known as Tapton Everard.

Richard Barham grew up in Canterbury and went to school at St Pauls in the cathedral precincts. During this time he suffered a severe coaching accident which left him with a permanently crippled right arm. He went on to obtain a BA in law at Oxford where his extravagant undergraduate behaviour caused him heavy gambling debts. His guardian, Lord Rokesby of Monk's Horton refused to settle the debts but instead gave Richard the money. Thus shamed, he was inspired to change his way of life, and returned to Canterbury where he founded the Wig Club, whose members held light-hearted debates and paraded in fancy costume along Burgate!

He had a further change of life in 1813 after his mother's death and his own serious illness. He decided to give up the law and enter the church and in 1814 he was appointed curate of Westwell and married Caroline Smart, daughter of a captain in the Royal Engineers. They went on to have eight children but not all of them survived into adulthood. In 1817, the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed him to the living of Snargate and curacy of Warehorne, an isolated Romney Marsh parish where his parishioners tended to be smugglers, using his church to stow their ill-gotten goods!

He started his writing career when laid up with a

broken leg but his first novel "Baldwin" was not well received. He and his family moved to London in 1821 and he was given the living of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Gregory By St. Pauls and was made Priest in Ordinary to the Chapels Royal. He now came into contact with many interesting literary people including an old school friend, Richard Bentley, publisher of "Bentley's Miscellany", which was edited by Charles Dickens, and who persuaded Barham to become a contributor.



"The Ingoldsby Legends" were the first burlesque and horror tales in verse in the English language and were written under the pen-name of "Thomas Ingoldsby". As the verses, published periodically,

were so successful Bentley had the idea of collecting them into a book which, when published, caused such a stir that Richard was finally obliged to admit authorship. Fortunately, there was no adverse reaction from the church and his literary career advanced as a contributor to the "Edinburgh Review" and the "Literary Gazette". He also wrote articles for Gorton's Biographical Dictionary and even appeared as a character in George Macdonald Fraser's historical novel "Flashman's Lady". His last poem, written when he was dying, "As I laye a thynkyng" was set to music by the composer Edward Elgar and published in 1888,

The death, in 1840 of his favourite son, Little Ned, aged 12, gave him a dreadful shock from which he never fully recovered. He attended the opening of the Royal Exchange, in 1844, where he caught a cold which developed into a fatal illness. Richard died in London on 17th April 1845 and was interned at St. Mary Magdalene, Old Fish Street Hill, but when the church was destroyed by fire in 1886 he was re-interned in Kensal Green Cemetery.

However, "The Ingoldsby Legends" live on and a few years ago the BBC featured them as their "Book at Bedtime", making them very spooky and atmospheric. If sufficient members are interested we will arrange another visit to the fascinating old house, Tappington Hall, this summer, and they can hear for themselves the stories, told in their original spooky setting. Please contact the Secretary if you are interested on 01303 840336.

February 2011

Who is Who

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

Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards are available from The Cosy Tea Rooms, the Rose and Crown or The Abbot's Fireside, 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 at

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