

May 2011

Volume 2, Issue 1

## Add Your Property to the EHS Database

An important aim of the EHS is to accurately record details about the properties in Elham and this is where we still need your help. If you can provide any details about the property you live in we will be very happy to add it in to the online records. The property does not necessarily need to be old as we are hoping that over time this information will add to the ongoing history of our village. The details we are interested in is:

- \* Full address
- \* Date of build (approximate will suffice)
- \* Architect (if known)
- \* Builder (if known)
- \* Listed status - if appropriate
- \* Type of construction
- \* Modification (e.g. change from two houses into one)
- \* Names and dates of previous occupants/owners

If you could help us with some (or all) of the above, please send the details to the EHS Secretary at [ehs@elham.co.uk](mailto:ehs@elham.co.uk)

## AGM & Birthday Party

At a well attended evening on 9<sup>th</sup> April, we heard reports on our first year's activities:

The Audio Archive, with a few interesting snippets

The Photographic Archive, with some good examples

The Monumental Inscriptions Project

Our Meetings and Outings, past and to come

Our Finances and our Membership

The Launch of the EHS Database - [www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk](http://www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk)

We then held a brief AGM, at which we resolved to become a Society, adopted a Constitution, and re-elected the officers of the Elham Historical Study (see last page). After that we enjoyed each other's company, and the delicious buffet that Dilys and Andree had prepared.

## Invasion 1940 – What If talk by John Buss

On the evening of 28<sup>th</sup> January at Elham village hall John Buss gave an excellent, and at times thought provoking, talk which detailed both the German and British views of a possible invasion of Britain in 1940. Over 160 illustrations were used by John to show the many aspects of a possible invasion and the counter measures employed here in Kent to thwart any invading army. Some of those techniques dated back many hundreds of years but were still highly valued by the British in 1940.

Many people approached John and the EHS team to congratulate us on a successful evening and it was great to meet people from outside of Elham who had responded to our advertising campaign. These included Philip Evans and Lucy Jeffreys from Ashford who are members of the Kent History Forum, they took the fantastic photos John used for the talk of the airship hollow, The Garth and Auxiliary Unit operations bunker. It was especially interesting to have with us that evening the relatives of Bill Hawkes who was himself a member of the Wootton Auxiliary Unit. It was also good to see people who had previously been involved with Elham for many years such as Chris Sheather, Daphne Osbourne and Don Southern

## A short time line of early Kent

**KENT** is the only County of England that has retained its original name since recorded history began. The Romans in 55BC landed in the county of the Cantii, which name in Latin became Cantium. During the Jutish-Saxon period the two halves of the county were known as East Centingas and West Centingas. The Domesday Book in 1086 begins with CHENT, pronounced as now, KENT.

- BC c.2500 Neolithic people living in the area. **Kitts Coty House**, near Aylesford erected and the stones at Coldrum and Addington.
- BC c.1800 The Bronze Age. Immigrants from the Continent arrive and trade with Europe flourishes. **Dover's Bronze Age Boat** is from this period.
- BC c 500 The Iron Age. Horses, oxen, sheep and dogs kept. Camps established at Bigbury, Castle Hill near Tonbridge, Hillberry and Keston.
- BC c.300 **Phoenicians** said to visit Kent.
- BC c.250 A gold coin, with a horse rampant, in use in Kent.
- BC c.100 The **Belgae** began to arrive in Kent.
- BC 55 27<sup>th</sup> August – Julius Caesar landed at Deal with an army said to number between 10,000 – 14,000 men. They withdrew after 23 days.
- BC 54 30<sup>th</sup> July. Second Roman landing, 2,000 horses and 35,000 men. A battle at Chilham and an advance to the Thames. The Romans withdrew leaving Mandubratius as the first British tributary King established at Dover.
- AD43 Final Roman invasion under Aulus Plautius with 40,000 men. There were battles at the Stour and the Medway where the Britons were defeated. Kent was conquered and in time the whole of England.
- AD50 **The Pharos Lighthouse** was built at Dover and is still standing.
- AD85 A marble monument gate was erected at Rutupiae (Richborough).
- AD180 Lucius became Roman King of Kent. He built a Christian church on top of the cliffs at Dover, which was possibly the first Christian presence in England. At this time there was great Roman influence throughout Kent.
- AD407 The last Roman Legion left Kent.
- AD449 The foundation of the English race. Hengist and Horsa arrived in Kent, invading with the three powerful German tribes, the Jutes, Saxons and Angles. They crossed the North Sea from what is present day Denmark and northern Germany pushing the Romano Brython inhabitants into Wales, Scotland, Cornwall and Brittany.

The Angles were named from Engle, their land of origin and their dialect was **Englisc** from which the word English derives

*Association of Men of Kent & Kentish Men*

## An Evening with Parkinson

I wonder if I was the only person who was a little anxious that the talk about C.N. Parkinson and his ideas, given by his son, might prove to be a little “dry”? How wrong I was and I am sure all who attended the Village Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> March will agree with me. It was an extremely entertaining and light-hearted evening. Chris Parkinson was a delightful man with many fond memories of his childhood in Elham. He was anxious to find out if some of his memories were true i.e. “Was there really a policeman called Wellington Boot?” and “Did Hubble’s compressed air system for sending money across the store?” Derek Boughton was able to confirm both. His recollections of the Manor House, backed up by the splendid display of old photos and documents that Derek had dug up from the archives, were illuminating, but the fun really began when Chris enlightened us with his father’s many aphorisms. Cyril Northcote Parkinson was obviously a singular character who had a rather cynical take on life and civil servants in particular, that he put to brilliant use throughout his literary career. Well, I for one, had not expected to laugh so much!

*Andree Sladden*

## Step Short

### WWI Project Third Commemorative March - 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Step Short will be holding their third Commemorative March down the Road of Remembrance in Folkestone on Sunday August 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 commencing at 11.00am.

We will be lining up as in previous years outside the Grand on the Leas from 10.30am and continue towards the Road of Remembrance and onward to the harbour area where many millions of troops left for the Western Front.

This year we are also having an Exhibition of the Unknown Warrior in the Grand, which will commence on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July until Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August.



We are currently working on creating a persona of those who went to war, which the public can join in with, by taking on the persona of a person whilst they march down to the Road of Remembrance onto the Harbour where they can find out what happened to that person during / at the end of the war. The public can purchase an individual persona in advance of the March. Obviously persona numbers will be limited.

Step short is also currently working on the digitisation of the eight books signed by 42000 troops and Dignitaries, (Winston Churchill was one) in the harbour café run by two elderly ladies as they had their last cup of tea / coffee before boarding the ships taking them to the Western Front.

One of our main aims is to enhance the Road of Remembrance in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWI

For more info contact Ann Berry on

01303 278644

email: [annber35@supanet.com](mailto:annber35@supanet.com)

[www.stepshort.co.uk](http://www.stepshort.co.uk)

## Natural History

For those of you interested in the natural history of our area the Kent Wildlife Trust have a number of study days planned for this year.

For more information go to their website - [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)



## A Town Unearthed – Folkestone before 1500

The sun shone from a clear blue sky, France hung faintly blue on the horizon, seagulls screamed their shrill cries overhead, and I was stuck down a damp pit searching for the early origins of the heart of ancient Folkestone!

“**A Town Unearthed** is a three year community archaeology project that will work with the community to research and record the rich archaeological heritage and early history of Folkestone (including a Roman villa and an early Anglo-Saxon Minster). The project is bringing together historians and archaeologists to work with the community in exploring and sharing their past and, for the first time, produce a full and accessible story of Folkestone and the history of the people who walked across, settled and formed its ancient landscape.”

Well, that’s what it said in the brochure!

I was volunteering in the Archaeology Group who offer training and the opportunity to work alongside professional archaeologists, helping to carry out a wide range of tasks including excavation, surveying, recording finds, processing and, eventually, publication of results. This was “**Unlocking the Bayle**”.

So, whilst the very hospitable residents of The Bayle welcomed a bunch of muddy footed volunteers traipsing through their homes, intent on wrecking their gardens in the name of keyhole archaeology, we, the volunteers, were desperate to find something that would establish this areas early origins.

What did we find? Bits of clay pipes, some fragments of

medieval pottery, a few bits of glass and creamware and a pathway made of old dressed stone that, though initially exciting, proved itself to be probably a Victorian garden path, given the piece of broken tile found underneath it! This was probably part of the Priory garden given that the Priory wall was still standing three feet away! What did I learn? How to always trowel towards you, how to keep your site clean, how to distinguish between differing types of soil which indicate different age/use etc....and that, given how much I ached the next day, that I am too old to spend a day down a damp hole. Yes, I might have another go, when I can walk properly again, but I’m not lifting those heavy buckets of soil again!

*Andree Sladden*

## Adopt a Feature

At a recent EHS Committee meeting it was suggested that some of our interesting features of Elham’s history are in a sad state of repair or perhaps just looking very tired. An example of this is The Well and the Telephone Box. John Goodson and Bryan Badham have already volunteered to get a project together to repaint the telephone box but sadly the well and other items need your help. Therefore if anyone is interested in adopting an item of historical importance that needs some TLC then please let the Secretary know. There may well be some considerations as to what and how things can be done and we are sure other parties may need to be consulted before any work starts – we do not want to upset official bodies or Elham residents in our quest to preserve and smarten things up.

## Origins of Sayings ....

In the Middle Ages most people got married in June (I don’t know if that’s verifiable) because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it! Hence the saying, “Don’t throw the baby out the bath water!” (This comes from an old German Proverb)

## Membership Renewals

We hope you have enjoyed your first year as a member of EHS - please don’t forget to renew your membership in order to benefit from the interesting talks and visits planned for our second year.

*Andree Sladden - secretary (contact details on back page)*

## Correction



In the February 2011 Newsletter we incorrectly identified George Benefield (senior) as being a member of the Auxiliary Unit during WW2. When in fact it was his son Bill (George) Benefield who is pictured here at a meeting of the Rat & Sparrow Club in the Rose & Crown.

George Benefield Senior on the left

Thank you to those members who pointed out this error.



Left to Right - George Freeman, Fred Boughton, ? Metcalfe, Unknown, Bill Benefield, Paddy Want (Bert Want's elder brother), Herbie Palmer, Dick Harmer, ? Cross, Bob Collard, Unknown and Unknown

## Letters to the editor

Dear Sir/Madam

I would be interested to find out the origins of the della Robbia plaque on the outside wall of St. Mary's Church, by the "back" door. It would seem to be a long way from home and I wondered if anyone knew how and when it had arrived in Elham, or even if it is genuine.

Yours sincerely,

Rupert Sladden

**Ed** ... can any of our members throw some light on this?

## Forthcoming Events – 2011

**Friday – May 27<sup>th</sup> – 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 24<sup>th</sup> – A talk by Elham resident and Lancaster bomber pilot, Henry Shackleton.**

Village Hall – 8.00 p.m.

**Tuesday - June 7<sup>th</sup>** – Private visit to Saltwood Castle. **FULL** Costs will be £25.00 per person to include the tour, a cream tea and donation towards building conservation costs.

**September** – "Steam in Elham" an historical talk by Elham resident Richard Moffatt.

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

Hopefully to be replaced by -

**Oral Historian, Lynda Pearce** who, working with local sources such as museums, archives, libraries and, most importantly, local people, will show us how she collects the memories and stories that are associated with our historic area."

### Proposed Future Visits and Talks:

Kent Battle of Britain Museum, Hawkinge

Canterbury and the Cathedral

Tour of The Grand, Folkestone

Churchill's War Rooms

Tappington Hall (2nd visit)

Talk about The Leas Lift at Folkestone

*We would welcome suggestions and ideas for other talks and visits which you would like us to try and arrange*

## Famous People... Anthony Eden

In his autobiography the Right Honourable Sir Anthony Eden says that during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War he “rented a little black and white house in Kent.” During this period (1940) he was Secretary of State for War and Sir Winston Churchill’s right hand man. The little black and white house he mentions was, in fact, Park Gate...a lovely half-timbered house dating back to 1460, on the way to Elham Park Wood.

He lived here, with his family, because his wife had been great friends with the lady who had just sold the property and it provided him with easy access to the Channel Defences and the action at Hawkinge Aerodrome. He and his family rattled around during the weekends on rusty old bikes!

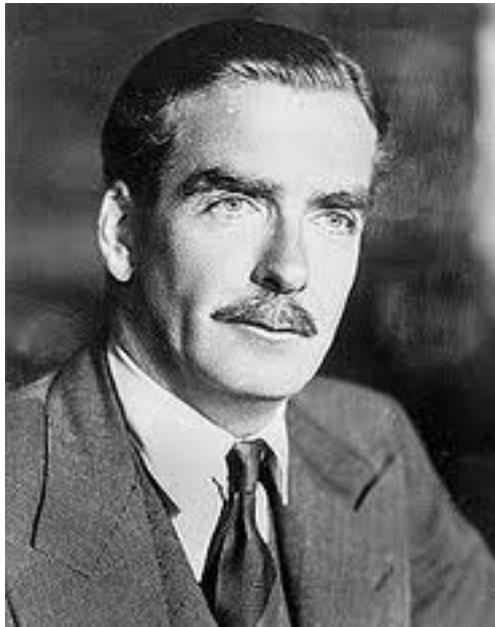
He was first spotted in the village by Mary Smith on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1940. She was leaning out of an upstairs window in Kingpost, in the Square, listening to an air raid. In “Harvest of Messerschmitts, the Chronicle of a Village at War – 1940” by Dennis Knight, he says that “to her great excitement, she saw a tall good-looking man, in grey flannels and white tennis shoes, stride down St. Mary’s Road and walk straight into the Post Office below her.” She had recognised him from the photos in the papers and there had been rumours that he was living at Park Gate for some time. He wanted to make an important phone call to London and her father, the postmaster, was careful not to eavesdrop on “affairs of state.” The villagers were convinced that the Germans knew that Eden was living at Park Gate and felt that this resulted in more than their fair share of bombs in this part of the valley!

Mary Smith reported in her diary when Mrs Eden and Lord Halifax (or Lord Holy Fox as she called him) attended church on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1940 and when on 8<sup>th</sup> September, Mr Eden asked to inspect the Elham platoon of the Home Guard before Church. In fact it was he who had first conceived of the idea of the Home Guard and had made a BBC appeal for volunteers. The Elham force was made up of agricultural workers and tradesmen.

Robert Anthony Eden was born the middle of three sons at Windlestone Hall in County Durham in 1897 into a conservative landed gentry family. He went to Eton and later Christ Church at Oxford graduating in Oriental Languages. His urbane, cultured appearance was enhanced by his fluency in French, German and Persian and his proficiency in Russian and Arabic. He had a distinguished military career in WWI receiving a Military Cross and at 21 became the youngest brigade-major in the British Army.

His first marriage, to Beatrice Beckett, who was the Mrs. Eden who had lived at Park Gate and who was often seen in Elham, broke up under the strain of a son lost in action in Burma towards the end of the war. They divorced in 1950 and he married Churchill’s niece, Clarissa Spencer-Churchill in 1952, who as a Roman Catholic was widely criticised for marrying a divorced man.

He was a handsome man and a leader of fashion, described by Rab Butler as “half mad baronet and half beautiful woman!” He was strongly anti-war and his reputation as a “man of peace,” was founded when, in 1934, as Lord Privy Seal and Minister for the League of Nations he realised that peace could not be maintained by appeasement of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.



Although he was one of Churchill’s closest colleagues his war-time role was restricted to handling relations between Britain and de Gaulle and he was often critical of the “special relationship” Churchill was developing with the United States and was disappointed with American treatment of Britain’s allies.

In opposition, after the war, he became Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party and Foreign Secretary for a third time when the Conservatives were returned to office in 1951. He was made a Knight of the Garter and became Sir Anthony Eden in 1954.

He became Deputy Prime Minister in October 1951 and, when Sir Winston Churchill finally retired, became Prime Minister in April, 1955. Due to his long wartime service, charm and good looks, he was a popular figure, remembered for his famous saying “Peace comes first, always.”

His career was blighted by his handling of the Suez Crisis in 1956 and his attitude to Nasser’s nationalisation of the Suez Canal. Following the invasion of Egypt, together with France and Israel, he was forced to bow to U.S. pressure and, with increasing hostility at home, to withdraw. The fiasco ruined his reputation and resulted in a breakdown in his health. He resigned in January, 1957 and was succeeded by Harold Macmillan. However, he remained popular and was made Earl of Avon in 1961.

His official biographer, Robert Rhodes James, has sympathetically re-evaluated Eden’s stance over Suez and, in retrospect, puts more emphasis on the achievements of his foreign policy and his deep held convictions for world peace and security. Perhaps he was a man ahead of his time.

The Earl of Avon died, aged 79, from cancer of the liver on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1977 and is buried in the country church yard at Alvediston in Wiltshire.

May 2011

## Who is Who

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## 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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