



May 2012

Volume 2, Issue 5

Chairman’s Message - History Telescoped

When she discovered my passion for cricket, probably fifty years ago, Miss Ruth Biron gave me her father’s copy of *The Hambledon Men* by E.V.Lucas, which reprints John Nyren’s *Cricketer’s Tutor*, one of the first great classics of cricket literature. The Rev. Henry Brydges Biron had played occasional matches for Kent, and had the distinction of being the first man to score a double hundred in Sussex.

Barry and I have been delving into cricket history since Geoff Clements asked about the occupants of *Spruce Lawn* in the 1911 census, including the 7 year old William Wenman, who had been born in Manitoba. His grandfather, also William, had played for Kent, and twice took the field with Mr Biron in 1863, against Cambridgeshire at Mote Park and against Sussex at Sandgate.

The previous year, 1862, Mr Biron had played in Richard Mills’s benefit match, Kent v. Yorkshire at Cranbrook, a famous match which Kent won by 12 runs. On that occasion the umpires were Fuller Pilch and Edward George Wenman, little William’s

great-grandfather. These two men, both born in 1803, were among the greatest Kent cricketers of the first half of the nineteenth century, and are celebrated in the poem with the refrain:

And with five such mighty cricketers ‘twas but natural to win,

As Felix, Wenman, Hillyer, Fuller Pilch, and Alfred Mynn.

I feel that owning a book which belonged to Mr Biron gives me a link back to the early days of cricket history.

Like the two old cricketers, my great-great-grandfather, Richard Boughton, was born in 1803. He lived to be over eighty, and told my grandfather about walking from Elmsted to the Red Lion at Dunkirk to view the bodies after the Battle in Bossenden Wood in 1838. I will touch on this incident when I talk about the Swing Riots.

So I had that story at just second hand, and these two instances show that the past is by no means as remote as it may sometimes seem.

D.B.

Monday 4th June
 11.00 am - 4.30 pm
 The Methodist Church Hall
 Silver Jubilee Exhibition
 and
 Film of Elham’s 1953 Coronation Celebrations

The film is only eleven minutes long, but full of colour and action, it's something not to be missed and will be running throughout the day



Do you recognise the young man in the green tights?

2012 AGM

Those members who attended the AGM on 20th April were treated to a short film of the Elham Church bells being rehung in 1970 following their refurbishment, and a slide show compiled by Bryan Badham from the EHS Photo Archive. However, the business of the AGM had to be dealt with first.

The Chairman, Derek Boughton, welcomed members and outlined progress that had been made on the key project of the Graveyard Memorial Inscriptions. It was fascinating to hear how low levels of winter light had helped him decipher the wording on stones that, in summer, had been unreadable. Vice Chairman, Bryan Badham, told the audience about the newest developments on the EHS Database and members who may not have had an opportunity to look at it were invited to use the laptops he had set up to access the site and browse for themselves. The Secretary, Andree Sladden, reminded members of the visits and talks that had taken place throughout the last year and there was a special mention of the visit to the Roman Villa dig at Folkestone in May where we had been shown their most treasured find – an exquisite brooch in the shape of a leaping hare, which has become the logo for “A Town Unearthed”. She outlined the plans for the forthcoming year and urged members to join in as much as possible and offer their own suggestions of topics they would like explored.



A Roman Brooch in the shape of a Hare – adopted as the logo for “A Town Unearthed “

Dilys Webb, the Treasurer, presented the accounts and explained the major expenses which had left the accounts slightly down on last year. There was an amendment to the Constitution to broaden the objects of the Society to include “study of the history pertaining to Elham, its surrounding area and additional historically linked material,” which was adopted by the members. Bryan Badham explained the addition to the team of two non-elected rolls, one a Membership Secretary and the other a Communications Co-ordinator, to help the Committee with their work load. The current Committee were re-elected and will serve for another year. It was agreed that membership rates should remain the same.

Question time followed and there were questions on how the bells had been lifted into position (ratcheted up through the tower), mention that there is a photo in the bell tower with a date and the weight of the bells noted, and a request that a notice is displayed in the church drawing visitors attention to an Inscription Book, an idea that is already in hand.

The meeting finished in fine style with a lively social time, while members renewed their memberships, watched the slideshow, and accessed the Database, other members chatted to chums over a glass of wine!



Church bells being re-hung in 1970



Right - The New Inn in the early part of the last century, before the amalgamation of George Beer of Canterbury with Rigden's of Faversham. It was a pub for over 300 years; the Three Tuns until September 1830, then the New Inn till it closed its doors after the lunchtime session on 1 January 2005.



Left - The newly refurbished "Elham" sign is rehung on 5th April 2012, organised by Ken Percival and the Parish Council

Forthcoming Events

Friday 11th May – Revolting People - Derek Boughton will be talking about civil unrest in Elham from 1381 – 1831 Village Hall 8pm.

Sunday 20th May – Steam in Elham – Did you miss Richard Moffatt’s talk last year? This is an updated talk and film show for anyone who remembers the Pegdens and Elham’s Steam Extravaganzas! £3.00 members £5.50 non-members. Village Hall **2.30 pm (note time)**

Monday 4th June – Jubilee History Exhibition – See how Elham celebrated the Coronation in 1953 with a short film and a display of interesting exhibits. Methodist Hall – 10.30 am to 4 pm.

Friday 13th July - An Elham Policeman Remembers - Tony Kirkbank, author of "A Uniformed Response, Recollections of a Kent Police Officer from the 1960s. Village Hall 8pm

Saturday 21st July – Visit to Western Heights with John Buss. There is a booking form attached for this trip – kindly complete and return to the Secretary with your remittance.

Wednesday 8th August – Visit to Pugin’s House. A chance to see The Grange, built and lived in by Pugin and his family, where he produced much of his finest work including the interiors of the House of Lords. Cost is £2.00 p.p. plus a small donation to his church next door. We will arrange cars from The Square leaving at 1 p.m. If you would like a lift a contribution to the petrol would be appreciated – reserve a place with the Secretary.

Friday 14th September – Folkestone’s Leas Lift A fascinating talk by Terry Begent who was instrumental in the restoration of this unique facility. Village Hall 8 pm.

Friday 5th October – The Man who never was A talk by Nicholas Reed about his father whose secret work in the 1940’s helped win the war! Village Hall, 8 pm.

Saturday 6th October – Ypres “In Flanders Field” A truly memorable day visiting WWI battlefield sites and memorials including Tyne Cot, Essex Farm and Hooge Crater with our own knowledgeable guide **John Buss!** The day ends in Ypres with a visit to the Flanders Field museum and a chance to watch the Last Post Ceremony at 8 p.m. at the Menin Gate. This will be a late return -10.30’ish and the costs are £37.00 for Realsocialising members and £39.00 non members. Book direct at www.realsocialising.co.uk or phone 0792 6939002.

“Why is Elham Here?” A new History Project to get our teeth into!

“Why is Elham Here?” is a working title for a project that has been suggested by Nigel Thomas. The idea was formed some time ago, when he helped with a school geography project, and it has been fermenting away ever since.

It could be a vast project but needs to start from small beginnings....and this is where our members come in! The idea was touched upon at the AGM but there wasn’t a huge response – probably because none of us really know where to start!

Nigel’s idea – which we have been calling “overlay maps” because this seemed to offer a way of collating and displaying the information in layers – starts with this question....why here? His thoughts ran along these lines....

“First, in very early times, the lee of a hill affording shelter from the prevailing wind and rain. Second, as settlements became more fixed, the existence of a valley river bed affording easier north-south travel and the possibility of richer mixed soils and more easily cleared land. Thirdly, the formation of a cross road from paths and byways and later, the configuration of the village with its bends and loops in the approach roads giving it some defensive integrity, and finally the square, with its capacity to form a defensive protection around the church in times of potential threat....”

We realise this project needs a team to work on it and Nigel has suggested some ideas to explore, at least in the first instance:

What, if anything, has been done before?

Prehistory; archaeological information, Roman roads etc.,

Domesday information and historical Ordnance Surveys.

Family archives and domestic deed maps, dated dwellings.

Diocesan, Church and Tithe maps.

Merton College records.

Any other?

And perhaps most importantly – is this worth doing at all? If it is, what is the best approach and how should the outcomes be presented (overlay maps?)

So, if this is something you think you would like to get your teeth into, please email me and we’ll see if we can get a working party together to take the project forward.

Andree Sladden – asladden@btinternet.com

Join us on a visit to The Western Heights, Dover
A guided tour with John Buss
Saturday 21st July
Meeting in The Square at 2.00pm

The Western heights at Dover have seen 2,000 years of momentous history, from the Roman occupation to World War 2.

The guided walking tour will last about one and a half hours, cover about 3 km. and involve quite a few steps and uneven footpaths, so stout footwear is advisable and waterproofs in case of inclement weather.

There is ample parking on site. Maps of both the route and the site will be provided.

Please indicate :

- (a) if you would like to come
- (b) if you have a car and any free seats available
- (c) if you would like to come but have no transport

Name:.....

Number of places.....

Tel No:.....

Email:.....

I have/have not transport.....

I can offerseats

I enclose a donation to EHS of £2.00.....

Please return to EHS Secretary – Cherry Cottage, New Road, Elham. CT4 6TQ

Membership Renewals 2012 - 2013

Membership subscriptions are now due and we do hope that you will continue to be a member of Elham Historical Society. The rates will remain the same again this coming year: Single £5, Family £10.

Please enclose this slip with your subscription and forward to:

EHS Secretary – Cherry Cottage, New Road, Elham. CT4 6TQ

I / we would like to renew my/our membership of EHS and enclose payment of £5 / £10

Name(s):.....

The Elham Valley Countryside Centre

Devotees of the Elham Valley Railway Museum at Newington might be interested to see that they have recently opened a new attraction. The Elham Valley Countryside Centre, housed in a 290 year old Kentish barn, which has been resited next to the museum from land at the Channel Tunnel terminal.

It has been reconstructed alongside part of the original embankment of the Elham Valley Railway Line and now houses a museum and craft market together with a model of the Channel Tunnel site – originally displayed at the exhibition centre which closed in the 1990s - and a model of the Folkestone to Canterbury Elham Valley Line. Under the same ancient soaring roof is a wood turner, a charcoal maker, locally produced produce and the Teashop (always worth a visit!)

It is open every weekend until the end of August, so do pop along.

New Home for County Archives

A new purpose-built centre, built to protect and display the county's historic documents was opened in Maidstone on Shakespeare's birthday (23rd April).

The shiny new Kent History and Library Centre houses archive records in 14 kilometres (9 miles) of bright welcoming space and includes a library of 40,000 books, a community history area, space for displays and events, and a public research room.

Letters from Jane Austen and Lord Nelson, an order for a Maidstone soldier's pension signed by Oliver Cromwell, a charter from King Wittred of Kent in 699AD, a speeding fine for Arthur Conan Doyle dated 1905....the list goes on.

It is hoped that this building will make all these treasures much more accessible and user friendly for members of the public and of course one can combine a visit with a trip to Maidstone Museum to see some of the local finds from our own area.

www.kent.gov.uk/news/_and/history_and_library_centre.aspx

Black Mill, Barham



Two fire engines at the scene of the fire on 3rd March 1970 at Black Mill, Upper Digges Place, Barham (off Mill Lane). The fire was started accidentally by a spark from a bonfire. The mill was razed to the ground. Remains can be seen on Derringstone Green.

Photos from Nicholas Ridley's family album



May 2012

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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/