



September 2015

Volume 4, Issue 2

## Chairman's Message

Welcome to the latest Newsletter, which reflects the diversity of subjects that we cover as we study the history of our community. In time of course, from the Romans and the Normans, including the odious Odo, right up to the Battle of Britain, and Sid Waghorn working for the East Kent Hunt in the forties and fifties. In space too, only just over the Channel in the case of Jean Paul Dekooninck, whose ancestor Eliza Fowler was born in Elham in 1813, but we have also heard from Nicholas Baxter Moore in Canada, whose grandfather, Albert Castle, was the village tailor before Frank Verney. Older residents will remember Nick's mother, Bidy Moore, a lovely lady who lived latterly at the Poor's House.

## Forthcoming Events

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| September 11th       | Talk at the Village Hall – 8.00 p.m. Richard Filmer – Traditional Kentish Trades, Crafts and Industries.   |
| October 9th          | Talk at the Village Hall – 8.00 p.m. Nick Onslow – History of the East Kent Hunt. He will have copies of his latest book for sale.   |
| November 13th        | Talk at the Village Hall – 8.00 p.m. Andy Linklater – The History of More Elham Houses – the latest research.  |
| December 4th<br>2016 | Another Evening with Hezekiah Tumbleweed. Kings Arms, Elham  |
| January 22nd         | Talk at the Village Hall – 8.00 p.m. Jim Davis – The History of Coal Mining and its impact on the local community.   |
| February 26th        | Talk at the Village Hall – 8.00 p.m. John Buss – Walmer Castle and Its Lord Wardens  |
| March 25th           | Guided tour of Broome Park – 1.30 p.m. start. Cream Tea at 3.00 p.m.<br>N.B. Places must be pre-booked. Costs to be confirmed.   |
| May 18th             | Samphire Hoe – Start provisionally 7.00 pm Guided Walk and Talk - "Shakespeare Cliff – A People's History" Followed by catering provided by Spindrift Catering. Costs and exact timing t.b.a. Places will need to be pre-booked. |

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:info@realsocialising.co.uk).

## Sid and Lily Waghorn

Whilst watering flowers in St. Mary's Church, Gillian Ratcliff was approached by some visitors who enquired where the cemetery was and how they could find the East Kent Hunt. Just as they were leaving they produced a packet, which they said they would like to donate to Elham Historical Society, and when she opened it she found inside a note book full of poems, ditties and stories written by a Lily Waghorn. The visitors told Gillian that Lily had been the wife of Sid Waghorn, their uncle, who had looked after the foxhounds of the East Kent Hunt. He had been born in 1882 and they both died in 1963. Derek Boughton remembers that Sid once told him that he was the first cook to have joined the Royal Flying Corps. I wonder if other members recall him or his wife?

Lily's note book is not dated but contains poems she has written about rural life, especially hunting (she mentions that the Ashford Valley Hounds had a Boxing Day Meet in 1926 at 'The Swan') and also a number of her poems refer to the life lived by maids and the lot of orphans before and during the 1st World War. The Royal Oak in Sandgate, (she had an uncle who was the innkeeper) gets a mention and the 'Coal Strike', all treated with a wry sense of humour, but there is also a terrific story entitled 'My Pet Lamb', which would make an amusing children's story, with the right sort of illustrations.

The poem below is about Dr. Rees of Elham which we thought so charming that you might like to read it:

### THE VILLAGE DOCTOR: DR. REES OF ELHAM

If you listen just a minute I'll tell you a short tale  
About a village doctor and a girl who looked so pale.

I was feeling very seedy and not knowing what to do  
I asked the Doc to call on me as he was passing through.

Now perhaps you think it funny but when he did arrive  
He said who is the patient- and I felt scarce alive!

Now what do you complain of to me he crossly said  
Why didn't you send for me before- and packed me off to bed.

Of course he thought me grumpy, but when one gets the flu  
It makes a body dumpy and all the world seems blue.

Now I should like a doctor every time I'm feeling ill  
But my pocket will not run to this for who would foot the Bill?

My little poem's ended, I'm feeling very well you see  
Many thanks from your grumpy patient- enclosed you'll find the Fee!



## A Visit to Lullingstone Castle

There's so much to see at Lullingstone Castle that we packed in a very full day when we visited at the end of June courtesy of Real Socialising.

Not just a lovely historic house that, although playing host to royalty through the centuries, still retains a homely atmosphere, but home to Tom Hart Dyke's fabulous World Garden. Set in 120 acres of quiet, unspoilt grounds with a 15 acre lake, through which the clear waters of the River Darent flow.

For me, the icing on the cake was the famous Roman Villa, down a quiet lane some distance from the house. The reason for its fame is the evidence of the Christian house-church, which is a unique discovery for Roman Britain and its wall paintings are of international importance. Not only do they provide some of the earliest evidence of Christianity in Britain, but they are also almost unique. The closest parallels come from a house-church in Dura Europus in Syria. Persecution of Christians ceased in AD313 and the paintings here date from about 40 years after this, so maybe the owners hedged their bets and maintained worship for Roman deities along side the new Christian religion.



## Saved for the Nation!

You may remember some time ago we asked you to sign a petition to protest at the dispersal of volumes and manuscripts from the Mendham Collection which had been deposited in Canterbury Cathedral. The Law Society, who at that time, had become the owners of the collection, decided to sell some of the items at auction.

The collection for sale included a printed treatise on clerical marriage annotated by the then Bishop of Winchester, John Ponet c1514-56. It was entitled "*A Traictise declaryng and plainly proving that the pretended marriage of Priestes ... is no marriage.*" It was written by Stephen Gardiner who had been ejected as Bishop of Winchester, replaced by Ponet, and later reinstated, and Thomas Martin, and was published in 1554.

There was also Ponet's handwritten drafts and extensive working notes for his reply to the treatise. These notes show his revisions, made over time, and some passages were later changed or not published at all. This evidence of the authorial process is rare and enhanced the significance of the treatise.

When rebound, and sold to a foreign buyer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the volume fetched £116,500. It was deemed to be of outstanding significance for the study of the history of the reformation as in the mid 1550's the doctrine of clerical celibacy was a contentious issue.

As the export licence was deferred for three months, a generous individual donor was able to aid the British Library in matching the purchase price, and so add this edition to its collections.

## A French Connection

In May we had an enquiry from Jean Paul Dekooninck, a retired teacher who lives at Merville in northern France, about his ancestor Eliza Fowler, who was born in Elham in 1813.

Using the Survey of Elham made for Merton College by Richard Crabtree in 1815, I was able to establish that her father William was a substantial tenant farmer. He rented 377 acres of land at Water Farm and Standard Hill from Thomas Papillon of Acrise Place. He

suffered a considerable loss in October 1817, when a barn full of the product of thirty acres of oats was destroyed by fire. He appears to have been uninsured, and at some point, probably in 1818 he gave up farming and became a ship's officer.

William died at Cork (date unknown). His wife



Mary Ann, whose maiden name was Claringbold, a good East Kent name, had died at Dunkerque (Dunkirk as we know it) in May 1834, and it was here that Eliza married Joseph Ignace Dekooninck on 24 October 1840. He was a carrier from the village of Uxem, just east of Dunkirk (almost destroyed in June 1940). Their descendants have lived in northern France ever since.

Jean Paul and his wife brought their bikes across the channel and spent some days camping at Densole in June. I had a very pleasant few hours with them on the 17th and was able to show them Water Farm, and other sights Eliza would have known. We may never know how the Fowlers came to move to France, but such unanswered questions are part of the fascination of local history.

## St. Oswald's Church, Paddlesworth

A lovely summer's evening was the perfect time to visit the tiny, ancient church of St. Oswald, conveniently positioned close to that famous hostelry, The Cat and Custard Pot and EHS members managed to fill it up!

After a short service Derek Boughton addressed the congregation and told us some of the history of this most interesting building with its early Norman architecture and connection with St. Ethelburga of Lyminge. He reminded us that she was the widowed consort of King Edwin of Northumbria, and daughter of Ethelbert, King of Kent, and who founded, and was the first abbess of, a nunnery in nearby Lyminge. Apparently no other church in Kent commemorates the name of the royal martyr, St Oswald, though the dedication is found in the churches of Northumbria, over which he reigned.

The present flint built church seems to date from early Norman times, but earlier structures were discovered in 1870 and it is considered probable that the original church owed its foundations to St. Ethelburga, whose name seems to be recorded in the hill between Etchinghill and Paddlesworth "Tata's Lees" (now Teddars Lees.) Apparently the historian Bede states that Ethelburga was "otherwise called Tate".

Derek pointed out some of the lovely features of this building including an arched recess in the south-east corner of the nave where an altar had once stood, with a squint or hagiocope in the chancel wall, enabling those in the side chapel to see the high altar. Also a beautiful little 13<sup>th</sup> Century bowl of a piscina resting on a corbel of stiffleaves, and the ambry in the north wall in which the sacred vessels were kept. Outside, on our way to the pub to enjoy refreshments offered by the congregation of the church, we saw the Sun-Dial or Mass Clock, from the period 1350-1500, set about 5 feet from the ground.



## Bishop Odo, Earl of Kent

### One of the least popular figures in Kent's History

We know from old documents that, following the conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy, in 1066, Elham was given, along with a great many lands and properties, to his half brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux.

Odo was the son of Herliin of Conteville and Herleva of Falaise and although his exact date of birth is unknown he was probably only 14 when William made him Bishop. As a trusted adviser to William he contributed 100 ships to the invasion fleet and later commissioned the famous tapestry which depicts him as an important figure in the conquest. In order to quell the English unrest following the Battle of Hastings and the death of King Harold, William placed his loyal and trusted associates in strategic positions across the country. Thus, Odo became Earl of Kent, holding 184 lordships in the county, and along with Elham, he was given custody of the strategic Dover Castle – the 'lock and key' of England.



Despite being one of the richest men in the kingdom, he was considered to be ruthless, arrogant and power hungry, by contemporary chroniclers. Orderic Vitalis, a chronicler monk, shows him to be a regent who abused his responsibilities, oppressed the poor and seized wealth and land from the landowners of Kent. In Dover he confiscated homes and even the Old Guildhall for his household and allowed the building of a mill at the harbour entrance which had a devastating effect on shipping. We must wonder what impact he had on Elham!

This tyrannical Bishop made so many enemies in Kent that by 1067 he had driven the county into open revolt, the first major uprising against the Normans. The Kentish rebels, focused around Dover, the centre of Odo's oppressions, appealed to Eustace of Boulogne for help but their attempt together on the castle failed.

Another strong landholder in the area was Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury. He resented Odo's encroachments into his area and their feud ended in a 3 day trial with both men vying for control of Kentish lands. The feud led to bloodshed and a client of Lanfranc, Earl Waltheof, was beheaded by a group of men led by Odo. As Count Palatine, Odo possessed power over all other Earls in England and as William's most trusted deputy acted as regent in his absence. It was said of him that Odo "oppressed all the inhabitants of high and low degree" and "heaped shameful burdens upon them."

However, in 1082 this "Tyrannical" and "Rapacious" Bishop overstepped his authority by making a bid to purchase the papacy! This caused a split with William, who arrested him and tried him for sedition. He was imprisoned and only released after William died. Still arrogant and greedy he then led a revolt against the new king – William Rufus, and his supporters ravaged the royal possessions in Kent, and those of Lanfranc. Rufus crushed the rebellion which ended with a siege of Rochester Castle and Odo was permanently exiled from England.

His ruthlessness and harsh rule had left a bitter taste amongst the men of Kent who called for him to be hanged as he left Rochester Castle. Still it must be remembered that, as William's right hand man, he had served his purpose by defending the coast and securing the county when Norman rule was still in its infancy.

## The Battle of Britain

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain and to mark the occasion EHS members and guests had the opportunity to hear David Brocklehurst MBE, Chairman of the Kent Battle of Britain Museum in Hawkinge recount some of the details of the battle which was fought in the skies over Elham.

Over the years many eye witness accounts have been collected from people resident here during that time, this originally formed part of Bryan Badham's Elham Valley Website project and more recently has formed part of the EHS Elhamer's Remember project. Here is a taste of life in Elham during that time:

**Peter Verney recalls** "I remember that we were advised to stay indoors when the Germans invaded, otherwise the roads would be grid locked. We were also advised to put sugar in the petrol tanks of vehicles to immobilise them.



*Photo by Horace Cook*

There was a strafe attack by a German plane on an engine parked under Lickpot bridge. Shells for the long range guns had been stacked on the platform

of Elham Station, covered in a tarpaulin. The plane strafed the engine hitting Lickpot bridge, almost cutting down a telegraph pole close to the stationmaster's house and setting the tarpaulin on the platform alight.

In one incident during the battle 4 aircraft came down around Acrise and Lyminge. A Polish and a German pilot who were taken to the Elham Doctor at Ayckley House had to wait as the doctor was out attending to another pilot. They sat on the wall on either side at the top of the steps leading to the property with an armed guard between them and trading insults.

I watched many dogs fights from the front lawn at Briar Bank. I saw the Messerschmitt come down by the Chalk Pit, Elham. Quickly cleared away and left no impact hole."

**Gordon Young recalls** "It was a Sunday, in fact, and mid afternoon or just about tea time perhaps and we were indoors and we heard ratatatat. Mother said, 'Don't go out!' We went outside when it was quieter and the troops were on leisure at their camp at Hog Green and it was all quiet, you see. Dead silence. And the guns, of course, were just over there and on the siding just over here was the wagon of shells. Twelve inch gun Howitzer. And on the other siding was this steel bogey wagon with these shells in trays covered with a green tarpaulin and we looked there and it had burst into flames. No signs of the troops at all. Father said, 'Here this won't do!' We went over the fence ... fortunately it was tied down with slip rods .... between us we managed to hall this thing off, the big tarpaulin and fortunately we managed to drag it over. First the troops came dribbling down looking a bit sheepish. We thought it might be tactful at that stage to retire from the scene.

Then of course it was only after we discovered ... the upper part of the telegraph post ... hanging from the wire."

## The Battle of Britain cont/...

**Alan Mercer recalls** “Yes, I can remember the war years. Most exciting years of my life. I’d just got this new bike. Mother and father clubbed together somehow and got enough money – eight pounds for a bike and eight pounds was money then. A new Raleigh Three Speed bike. I was top of the heap then! At eleven o’clock on the 3rd September 1939 I was down outside the school and along come the policeman – all officious – on his bicycle, tin hat, blowing his whistle like a maniac and made us all go home. God knows why. There wasn’t a hope in hell of a German bomber coming along.”

**Derek Boughton recalls** “My grandfather’s stepmother was Mrs Elizabeth Boughton who lived at Cherry Garden Bungalow at Stelling Minnis and well, the details seem slightly disputed by various experts, but I think it was a Spitfire engine that came through the roof and did for her on one Sunday morning – at the end of September 1940. And she unfortunately was killed whereas her daughter and son in law, who were in the bedroom at the house at the same time, were unharmed. She was just checking the joint in the oven (before church) and Sally and Jarvis, daughter and son-in-law, were in the bedroom sort of putting on their Sunday best ... Presumably, they didn’t go!”



*Messerschmitt Dump in Elham*

**Sally Wheatley recalls** “Now when the Churchill tanks were about and that, they used to manoeuvre at night time and you would go out in the morning and find all your fences had gone. Your sheep were everywhere. Your milking cows were everywhere. You had to go and look for them.”



**Gordon Young recalls the railway mounted guns in Elham** “Yes, they had to fire, of course, for ranging and practice purposes, you see, and the whole village was warned to open their windows, you see, and they fired five rounds each, and we had goats at the time and I think a pig in a pigsty or something and we thought the goats might be upset so we took them on leads up to the chalkpit while the firing went on, and when the all clear sounded we came back and there was ... we got down to the gate there and out of the door came a little grey cat. We didn’t have a grey cat – we had a white cat. The whole of the ceiling had come down and mess – you never saw anything like it! Anyway, Major Basset came over and said, ‘Oh, this won’t do,’ and sent two or three squaddies over with buckets and shovels to help clear up.”

2015

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## 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](mailto: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/](http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/317708811602063/)