



Elham
Historical
Society

September 2018

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Chairman's Message

It has been good to work with the new team of Barbara, Jackie and Dick on the EHS committee, but equally good that Andrée and Bryan are still very much involved in various projects, and that Dilys is continuing to use her skills to edit the Newsletter. My thanks to all of them.

Just a few words about the two talks by me in the upcoming programme. I did the talk on **Fred Palmer's War** in 2014. It was topical then as we commemorated the start of WWI, and is so again as we approach the centenary of the Armistice. Much of the material will be the same, but it will include the results of further research, and I will expand my coverage of the other Elham men who Fred met during the years of his service.

I have entitled my February talk **Elham Women, Part One 1217-1914**. The terminal date is because WWI played such a pivotal role in changing the working, social and political expectations of women, and there is also plenty of material for **Part Two**. And that very specific start date? Well, you'll have to come along and find out.

DMB

November 9/10/11th EHS Exhibition to mark 100th anniversary of the Armistice.

This three day exhibition in the Methodist Church Hall will need a substantial rota of volunteers to meet and greet and generally man the event so, if you have an hour to spare on any of the three days, Bryan Badham is the co-ordinator, please contact him to offer your services on elhamhistorical@gmail.com

The exhibition is well advanced in its preparation and promises to be comprehensive in its covering the period immediately following the cessation of hostilities and through the following years.

OBITUARIES - Gordon Young 1918-2018



Photo Bryan Badham

The K&ESR lost one of its longest-standing supporters with the passing of Gordon Young on 1st March, sadly just short of him becoming a centenarian.

Born on 4th April 1918 at No.1 Station Cottages, Elham, he lived there for virtually all his life. He was almost a fourth-generation railwayman (with his K&ESR service) as both great-grandfathers had been London station masters (Charing Cross and Waterloo SER). His parents moved to the Kentish village on the Elham Valley Line in 1911, when his father Bill graduated to signaller. Fascinated by railways from infancy, childhood days frequently involved watching trains passing through, and a treat was an occasional supervised visit to the signal box. Gordon went on to travel regularly by train to Canterbury South station, attending Simon Langton Grammar School. Upon leaving school he started as junior clerk at Canterbury City Council's Education Office, travelling mostly by train - despite the SR rationalising the branch services during 1931. Gordon developed a passion for cycling and photography, having been given a box Brownie when he was 11. He saved enough from his wages for an Agfa camera, as well as a touring bike with drop handlebars and pannier rack. Thus equipped Gordon venturesomely set off on cycling holidays around the UK in the 1930s, using the increasingly popular Youth Hostel Association network. An extensive knowledge of the railway system and its timetables enabled him to connect with trains and thus cover considerable distances.

At home, an improvised darkroom furthered his interest in photography. In his late teens he ventured abroad, cycling through France, Belgium and even into Germany where an unsettling experience occurred when one of his films was confiscated by unyielding Third Reich officials who suspected him of spying. During the war Gordon was assigned to fire-watching duties in Canterbury, where he had a narrow escape during the infamous Luftwaffe blitz on the city in June 1942.

In the 1950s he resumed cycling trips to Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, but home would always be the family's modest railway cottage in the picturesque Elham Valley with its allotment, geese and chickens.

The family had seriously considered moving when Elham box was abolished with singling of the Elham Valley Line in 1931, but decided otherwise. His father's new position at Pluckley involved cycling to Sandling Junction to continue by train. Fortunately vacancies became available around Folkestone and finally Cheriton, where Bill remained until retiring in 1952.

After his mother passed away Gordon looked after his father, who died in 1971. Continuing to happily reside in Station Cottages, he always kept busy, contented with growing vegetables and little DIY projects. He enjoyed Christmases with his younger brother Eric (who died suddenly in 1998 aged just 72), his nieces and nephews; and 'Uncle Gordon' was loved by everyone.

Retiring as Council Education Office Manager in 1978 he bought a greenhouse with his retirement gift. New horizons opened up, with more time to indulge his railway interests. A very early member of the original K&ESR Preservation Society, his fascination with the line was of long standing, having first visited it with his father in the mid-1930s when William Austen was struggling to keep Stephens' enterprise afloat in the harsh economic climate.

Gordon spent many days at Tenterden and was very proud upon receiving his Guard's qualification, delighting in the operation of trains.

Written by Brian Hart for the Newsletter of the Kent & East Sussex Railway

A Call from the Graveyard

On the evening of 28th June I received a phone call from Elham Cemetery, not from one of the residents you understand, but from an English friend of Sandra Jones from Queensland, who was looking for the grave of her great-grandparents, Sarah Anne and George William Cole, who died in 1931 and 1935.

Mr Cole had retired as Elham's blacksmith in the 1920s, and the grave was not marked by a memorial, but I was able to take them to the exact spot, and then spent a very pleasant evening in the King's Arms with Sandra, her husband and their English friends. Sandra was over the moon when I produced the photo, reproduced here, of Mr Cole working in the forge (on the Cosy Tea Rooms site) in 1922. It also includes his assistant and successor, George Baker, and came to the EHS from our member Kevin Williams, his great nephew.

I regret that it was a few days later before I remembered that there is one very tangible link with Mr Cole, the elaborate metal cross on the top of the War Memorial, which he made at the forge in 1920. Fortunately I have since been able to email some close-ups of the cross taken when Henry Shackleton and I repainted it in 2010.

There was a romantic reason for the Jones's visit. They are a blissfully happy couple, but with a modest lifestyle, and had never contemplated coming to Europe, but their daughter, an international lawyer, was married in Italy and paid for their trip. It was an obvious add-on to visit their English friends, Ten Pound Poms who had eventually returned to the UK, and the visit to Elham was the icing on the cake. It was a privilege to share their joy.

DMB



Diary of a village at war

AT ONE time during the Battle of Britain, so many enemy aircraft were brought down in the fields around the village of Elham that they were rounded up like loads of hay.

That fact is recalled in a fascinating new book published this week — *Harvest of Messerschmitts: The Chronicle of a Village at War, 1940* — by Dennis Knight.

The narrative is woven around the diary for that year kept by Mary Smith, one of the two daughters of the village postmaster.

By the end of the year, the

battle was over, but nothing would ever be the same again.

At least 17 aircraft, cockpits from both sides, had been shot down or crashed within the Elham parish boundaries.

Bombs had fallen in the main street and the nearby military aerodrome at Hawkinge had been blasted and smothered many times.

Regular soldiers were billeted in many of the houses and most people in the Elham area could claim that the war had arrived literally in their back gardens.

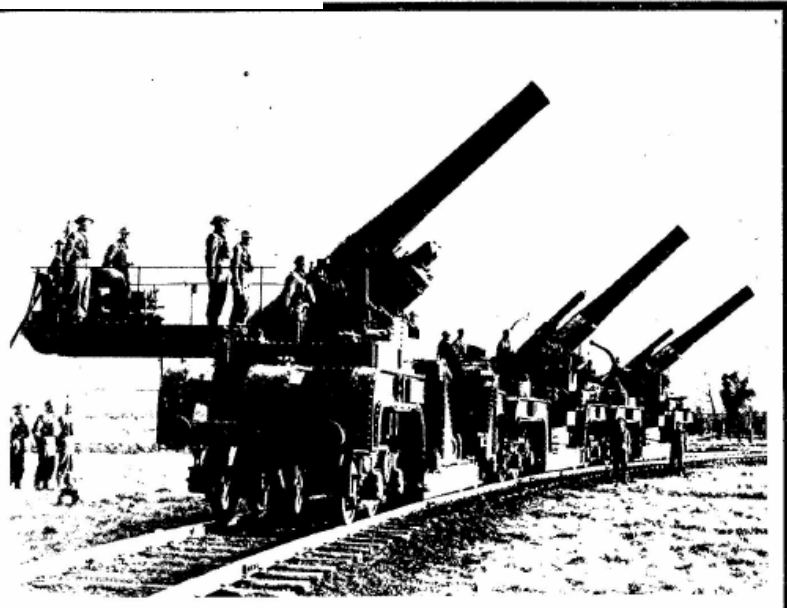
Mary Smith and her sister Margaret still live in the same house where they witnessed

the aerial conflict 41 years ago. Mary recalls the day Anthony Eden called at the post office — dressed in grey slacks and white tennis shoes — to make a telephone call.

Although Elham has now slipped back to its quiet and sleepy past, away from the spotlight of history, there may still be some fame to be had in the future — for Mary still keeps a diary!

Much of what she writes in it each day is the same as those days in 1940 — except for the bombs, sirens and dogfights in the sky.

Harvest of Messerschmitts is published by Leo Cooper/Fredrick Warne at £8.95.



● The Elham Valley railway line was closed to civilian traffic when these railway-mounted guns arrived.

50p FIND AT THE FESTIVAL

At Acrise Flower Festival on 4th/5th August I cast my eye over the mountain of 2nd hand books and glimpsed an old favourite of mine, "A Harvest of Messerschmitts", a book I treasure, yet I picked it up anyway just out of curiosity.

It was a first edition, and tucked away under the dust cover I spied a newspaper cutting. It was dated 19th September 1981 and was the local press release for the newly published book.

I felt it was perfect timing to include this find in our newsletter.

Barbara Athow



● Unknown to the local population, a dump containing the wreckage of crashed German aircraft was situated in this paddock at Elham.

● Pilots of 32 Squadron pictured at Hawkinge in 1940. They are (left to right): pilot officers Smythe, Procter, Gillman, Brothers, Gardner, Grice and Eckford.



Don't buy ty without this

Hair-raising ride for the vicar!



VICAR of Elham during the Battle of Britain was the Rev Isaac Williams, who soon realised that his big 18 horse power Austin would use too much fuel—so he bought a motorcycle.

He invested in a large BSA sports model and is pictured astride it ABOVE, in the driveway of Elham Vicarage.

He had never ridden a motorcycle before, recalls Mary Smith in her diary, but before he could be given tuition the Canterbury dealer who sold the bike had to dash

off for ARP duties!

Mr Williams wobbled his way home, gaining confidence as he gathered speed. However, it was when he reached the war memorial in Elham that he realised he could not locate the brake lever.

He entered the High Street with his shoes scraping along the ground, flushing past several surprised parishioners, into Vicarage Road and through the gateway of the Vicarage before plunging into the soft-clipped hedge bordering the lawn.

Going to School in Elham

On 11th May Dan File, the head teacher of Elham C of E Primary School, welcomed about 65 people to an evening of memories from many old pupils' schooldays. Although most present were members of the Society, several were guests or visitors including one from Australia and another who had travelled down from London just to attend the evening.

Derek Boughton gave us a rundown of the various schools that have existed over the centuries, the earliest record was as long ago as 1582. One aspect that came out of the evening was how the school served a relatively small catchment area, and that the various pupils were closely related. There are still local families whose children are at the school as had been their parents, grandparents and great grandparents. We tend to forget that up until very recent times primary schools served only the local community, whereas nowadays the pupils come from several surrounding villages and towns. Indeed, only a small proportion of the current pupils live within Elham village, although a few more are from outlying areas of the Parish.

Tales were recounted of how pupils managed to avoid the "nit nurse" by being absent, usually because their parents required their labour on their family farm at peak times such as harvest, no matter how young they were. Other reminiscences were of how to avoid the cane/slipper. This in at least one case involved the miscreant snatching the cane from the teacher and posting it down a knot-hole in the floorboards!

The School Log illustrated daily life with tales of how they survived the very cold winters with frozen pipes everywhere and the only form of heating was a coke burning stove in the middle of the classroom - all of this and the outside loos! The Punishment Book recorded those who had caused the teachers some anxiety, with several well-known local names appearing in it. There was a wealth of old photographs and items on display, many from the Society's archives, and others from either the School or past pupils.

Barbara Athow talked about more recent times – well about 50-75 years ago! She had spoken with several past pupils, some who had attended as far back as the 1930's. They had dug out old photos, school sports day certificates and similar memorabilia. One former pupil, John Palmer, was unable to attend but gave a good description of how life in a village school was in the 1940's, and others had the similar experience of not liking their first days at school, presumably because they felt out of their depth with all of the new faces and routines. Most of them, however, changed their views after a while and all have fond memories of those early days.

The evening was rounded off with Trevor Gasson, the Chair of the School Governors, bringing us up to date with the news that the School was in the process of achieving Forest School status, that and the fact that the past 2 Ofsted inspections have given the School an "Outstanding" report.

Yvonne Goldup arranged for a photograph of those past pupils present on the evening to be taken for posterity.

Going to School in Elham cont/....



copyright Mrs Y Goldup

BACK ROW – Janice Catt (Newing), Steve Elgar, Mick Stupple, Rachael Basford (Christian), Reg Hoare, Rosemary Selling (Hoare), Abby Bourn (King), Janet Munns (King).

MIDDLE ROW – Nigel Craig, Graham Martin, Mick Athrow, Keith Goldup, Jim Baker, Yvonne Goldup (Dingle), Janet Tritton (Edney), John Murray, Andrew Edney, Barbara Daniels (Murray), Liz ?? (Piper), Derek Burr, Caroline Burr (Sole), Bill Sole.

FRONT ROW – Anne Craig (Newing), Sally Wheatley (Palmer), Ann Laker (Goldup), John Newing, John Fittal, George Palmer, Derek Boughton, Barbara Athrow(Freeman), Gillian Gilbert (Edney), Eileen Hopkins (Dingle), Hilary Zurakovsky (Edney).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 27th - Thursday 2.00 p.m. Minster in Thanet

A tour of the Abbey followed by a cream tea in their Parkminster Gardens Tea Rooms (booking essential). The Abbey is thought to be the oldest inhabited house in the country and now home to 12 Benedictine Nuns – donations please. At 4.15 pm there will be a conducted tour of the lovely church in the centre of the village.

OCTOBER 12th - Friday 8.00 p.m. Village Hall

A talk by Derek Boughton - "Fred Palmer's Diary". An update on the only known Elham WWI diary, and the Elham men who Fred met in Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine.

NOVEMBER 9th 10th 11th Methodist Church Hall

EHS exhibition to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice which came into effect at 11.00 o'clock on 11th November 1918. The exhibition will include the EHS's research into those who served during the War as well as those back at home in the Parish of Elham. There will also be an opportunity to see how the residents of the Parish celebrated the end of the War following the signing of the Peace Treaty on 28th June 1919.

DECEMBER 6th – Thursday – Abbot's Fireside

EHS Christmas Supper– Menu and booking arrangements to follow.

2019

JANUARY 11th - Friday 8.00 p.m. Village Hall

A talk by Nicholas Reed entitled "Turner and Constable and their Paintings of Folkestone, Hythe and Saltwood".

FEBRUARY 22nd - Friday 8.00 p.m. Village Hall

A talk by Derek Boughton on "Elham Women, Part One 1217 - 1914".

MARCH 22nd - Friday 8.00 p.m. Village Hall

A talk by James Dickinson entitled "The In-Laws" which includes the story of Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent.

APRIL 12th – Friday 8.00 p.m. Village Hall

AGM - A review of the past year and membership renewals. It was agreed at the last AGM for subs to increase to £10 per member for the year 2019/20 with subs becoming due on 1st April. Smart new membership cards have been designed and will be issued on receipt of your subscription renewal.

MAY (date to be confirmed)

A visit to Canterbury's Roman Museum with a guided tour - £5.00 per head. Followed by lunch (optional but booking essential) at The Vineyard, Elham Valley.

JUNE (date to be confirmed)

A boat trip on the "Kentish Lady" on the River Medway from the Archbishop's Palace to Allington Castle. The cruise takes us, with commentary, to the 13th Century Castle, which has beautiful Italian gardens, where we will have a private tour. The return trip includes tea and cake and the cost (cheaper if there are more than 10 of us) is £32.50 pp. This trip is not suitable for anyone with reduced mobility.

Further events being planned are a visit to the Isle of Sheppey, and Stelling Minnis Windmill. If you have any suggestions of other visits we could plan or talks we could arrange please do not hesitate to mention it to the EHS Secretary at elhamhistorical@gmail.com

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 emailing elhamhistorical@gmail.com Members £3.00 and Non-Members £5.00.

What a really good trip today to see Fordwich Town Hall and the Church

On Friday 16th March the EHS visited Fordwich the smallest town in England, with the smallest Town Hall! We were treated to an excellent film show, which gave us a comprehensive overview of the town's history, followed by a guided tour of the Town Hall.

Not only were we given an excellent talk by the curator of the Town Hall but also by the Mayor of Fordwich. We then had a very informative visit to the ancient church of St. Mary the Virgin, followed by lunch at a local pub. And the weather couldn't have been better!



Prisoner at the bar, he looks guilty!



Shorncliffe Army camp talk

It was the 8th June 2018, a cold and blustery evening when a fair crowd had gathered to hear Chris Shaw's impassioned talk on Shorncliffe during the Napoleonic wars, and beyond. Being a 95th Rifleman, heritage Warrior, Amateur Adventurer and Renegade Historian, the crowd's expectations were high.

Having inspired his followers, the time came to defend the Village Hall. Dialogue over - action was needed - fire action. Suddenly from out of the crowd stepped a volunteer, an 8 year old boy, who proudly donned a helmet and took arms (a Baker Flintlock Rifle no less). The smell of gunpowder, the smoke and the deafening blast did nothing to shake his resolve to be a Rifleman. Many cowered and covered their ears, but not he. When the battle was o'er, and the crowd took cover in the hall and comfort in a glass of wine, it was only then our gallant volunteer was allowed to leave his post - and go home to bed!! Goodnight you brave Rifleman

Moral of story - Should it be conceived the EHS membership are all old codgers and cobwebs, think again. One 8 year old boy gave it a try and had an absolute BLAST.



2018

Who is Who

Chairman

Derek Boughton

Vice Chairman

Barbara Athow

Secretary

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Treasurer

Richard Athow

Membership Secretary

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Communications Co-ordinator

Jackie Christian
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Newsletter Editor

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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.ehs.elham.co.uk and www.ehsdatabase.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 at:

www.facebook.com/#!/groups/317708811602063/

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:

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