



April 2015

Volume 4, Issue 1

Chairman's Message

We look forward to the Society's AGM, when the committee will present a review of the past year, and members will have the opportunity to influence the year to come.

There have been some excellent talks in 2014/15 and the Exhibition and Guided Walk organised for the centenary of the start of WWI was judged a resounding success by all who visited (and they came from far and wide).

Please come along on Friday 1st May, bring your ideas and suggestions, and share what will be a social as well as a business evening.

Forthcoming Events

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| May 1st | AGM - Elham Village Hall |
| May 9th | EHS to host the Kent History Federation's One Day Conference – Morning – Speakers in Elham Village Hall, Afternoon – visits and tours. |
| May 10th | Real Socialising visit to RAF Hendon |
| June 12th | Battle of Britain Talk by David Brocklehurst in Elham Village Hall |
| June 27th | Real Socialising visit to Lullingstone Castle, the World Garden and Roman Villa. |
| July 8th | Talk on churches by Derek Boughton at St Mary's Church, Elham |
| August 5th | Talk on churches by Derek Boughton at St. Oswald's Church, Paddlesworth |
| September 11th | Gaye Giuntini talks about her father, Terry Ashwood OBE, Pathe News cameraman and reporter - Elham Village Hall |
| September 19th | Real Socialising visit to Ghent |
| October 9th | History of the Hunt, a Talk by Nick Onslow – Elham Village Hall |
| October 31st tbc | Ghost Walk – Canterbury |
| November 13th | Elham's Historic Houses Talk - Andy Linklater, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, Elham Village Hall |
| December 4th | An Evening with Hezekiah Tumbleweed (to include supper in a local hostelry) |

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. 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.

Annual General Meeting

Our 5th AGM will be held on Friday, 1st May
at 8.00 pm in Elham Village Hall

We will be looking back at the talks and visits undertaken during the last year and updating you on the various projects that the team have worked on during 2014.

Entrance will be free and the bar will be open.

Please bring any old photos of life in Elham that you might like us to scan into the historical archive and any items of interest you might like discussed.

Renewals will be taken by our Membership Secretary,
Moira Wiltshire.

Don't forget we will need to receive any nominations for the Committee

14 days before the AGM i.e. 17th April.

Nominations will be for the following positions:

Chairman
Secretary

Vice Chairman
Treasurer

If you have a nomination please forward it to the Secretary:-

email: alsladden@btinternet.com or telephone 01303 840336

FOUND IN THE LOFT

The picture below shows a very ancient shoe found in the loft of a house in The Square in Elham some years ago, when the owners moved in. When shown to an archaeologist, he thought that the back part was probably missing. It is made of coarse material and stuffed with straw and appears to be an adult shoe.

Shoes are among the many items found to be concealed in old houses often around hearths, in roofs, between walls or around windows and doors.

A dried cat was found in Rigdens when that was refurbished about sixty years ago

Dried cats, cattle hearts stuck with pins, children's toys, witch bottles, or written charms have all been found and all sorts of buildings contain them

Northampton Museum maintains a Concealed Shoe Index, which by 1998 contained more than 1100 reports of concealed shoes, mostly from Britain but some from as far away as Canada. By 2012 it had increased to 1900 entries, of which almost half date from the 19th century. It is thought that their concealment ensured the well being of the household and protected the inhabitants from evil spirits.



Folkestone's HEART

Folkestone's HEART is a 3 year project to establish an accredited local history museum, gallery and education room at the Town Hall. The vision is to create a vibrant cultural hub for the benefit of the whole community and visitors to the town. The project is led by Folkestone Town Council in partnership with Kent County Council. It is funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund with additional contributions by The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, Queen Victoria Memorial Trust and Kent County Council.

More information on the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Folkestone-Museum/1718201028404296>

Folkestone's HEART is a project that will make a lasting difference to local heritage and the community. By bringing the extensive and diverse collections of Folkestone together under the roof of the Town Hall the Town Council aims to establish an innovative local history museum and vibrant community space for events and exhibitions that will engage local people and offer opportunities to learn about Folkestone's past. The project aims to provide access to the rich and vibrant history of the town and create a show case for our amazing heritage. The diverse collections include social and military history, rare geological and natural history items, important Roman and Anglo Saxon archaeological collections as well as an impressive art collection. Folkestone's HEART aims to protect, preserve and promote these collections, and their stories for the good of the community and the town. The Town Hall is a focal point for the local community and is owned by the town council, it currently houses the town councils office and the Silverscreen cinema. It was built in 1860 and over the years has been used for a variety of purposes from council offices, magistrates courts and police station to retail space.

A Roman Villa, An Historic Castle and a “World Garden” all in a day's outing for EHS members

We've got a super day out planned for Saturday 27th June 2015, organised for us by Real Socialising.

A coach trip to Lullingstone Castle, which is an historic manor house, set in a 120 acre former deer park near Eynsford. It has been inhabited by members of the Hart Dyke family for twenty generations, first mentioned in the Domesday Book, and the present house was started in 1497. Both Henry VIII and Queen Anne were regular visitors to the Manor House and what survives today is largely of the Queen Anne era, although the Tudor gatehouse is believed to be one of the first to be built entirely of brick.

The castle was previously home to the Lullingstone Silk Farm which produced silk for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation gown.

The grounds contain some of the oldest oak trees in Britain, St Botolph's medieval church with the oldest stained glass window in England, Queen Anne's bathhouse, Tom Hart Dyke's now famous 'World Garden of Plants' and the Roman Villa.

The villa was built in the 1st century, around 80-90 AD and was destroyed by fire in the 5th century. It is thought it may have been used by the governors of the Roman province of Britannia as a country retreat. The frescos you can see here contain the only known Christian paintings from the Roman era in Britain.

The cost of the day trip, which includes the coach, entrance to the castle and the gardens, will be £30.00 and the entrance to the Villa will be £7.10 or, for concessions, £6.40. If we can arrange for sunshine it sounds like a fascinating day out!

Bookings can be made by contacting Viv at Real Socialising www.realsocialising.co.uk
Mob: 0777 3946828



Kent in World War One

We understand that the Kent in WWI film “Echoes from the Kent Coast” is now available to watch on the Kent in WWI website on the home page. <http://kentww1.com/>

The film can also be viewed on the Kent in WWI YouTube page https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_r7ObdtcVnR-WQuw3nhqYw which you can also subscribe to. The video has also been put on Facebook and Twitter, so, if you haven't seen it yet, please do have a look.

It is hoped that you will enjoy and appreciate the film's significance in telling the stories of Kent in WWI.

Dating a Postcard

A copy of this postcard recently appeared on eBay, which prompted me to look again at the one in my collection. It clearly dates from after 1938, when the first houses in Cherry Gardens were built, but before the second phase of building soon after the Second World War. The lead on the church spire shows that it is before the spring of 1948, but it is not possible to see the old school, which had air raid shelters from early in the war, nor the cottages on the south side of the Square, which were demolished in 1940. The card on eBay has a George VI stamp, but the postmark is unclear. I was only able to conclude that it is in fact pre-war from another card in the same series, which bears a 1941 postmark. One intriguing feature is the visible chalk in the field above the present cricket ground; it would still have been practice at the time to extract chalk to treat fields with a low pH.

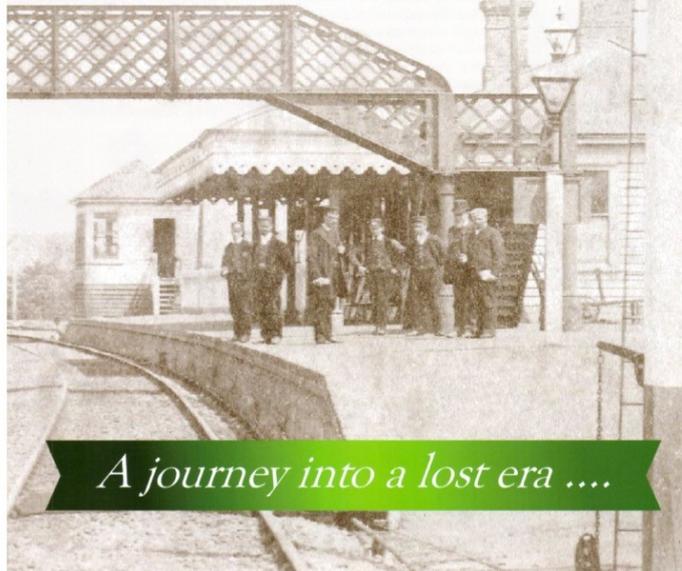
DMB



**A NEW BOOK ~
a complete history of the**

ELHAM VALLEY RAILWAY

by Brian Hart



A journey into a lost era



FORBES (LC&DR)



WATKIN (SER)

PROPOSED NEW LINE TO FOLKESTONE!

The Elham Valley Line came about through competition between Kent's two Victorian companies – the South Eastern Railway, and the London, Chatham & Dover Railway. What started as an innocent enterprise in the 1860s to promote a local railway, suddenly erupted into one of the most vitriolic battles when the LC&DR planned to build its Alkham Valley Line from Kearsney right into the heart of Folkestone's prestigious West End.

Throughout this 'railway war' of the 1880s, the author uncovers a captivating tale of intrigue, counter-strategy and reprisal which embroiled the companies' chairmen – Sir Edward Watkin and James Staats Forbes.

The struggle between these two 'railway giants' resulted in the victorious SER constructing a main line through the loveliest area of rural East Kent, but the unresolved tragedy was the Elham Valley Railway's lack of purpose and its ultimate fate as a rural 'branch' line.



Platelayers at Elham

Hours spent researching Victorian and Edwardian newspapers has enabled the author to present a fascinating account of the life and times of this railway – the people who worked on it, travelled on it, as well as all the events associated with life in the Elham Valley during this era.



Edwardian days at Bishopsbourne – and at Barham before the Great War

SOUTH EASTERN AND CHATHAM RAILWAY TO BARHAM STATION



Lyming station staff 1890s

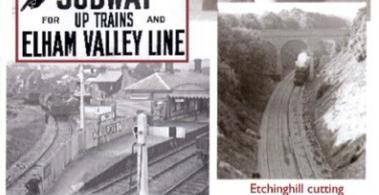


Its prosperous era ended with the outbreak of war in 1914 when many soldiers were billeted in the Elham Valley. From 1920 competition from road transport increased; however, many people still much preferred going by train.

SUBWAY FOR UP TRAINS AND ELHAM VALLEY LINE



Lyming during the Great War 1916



Etchinghill cutting

'A lovelier stretch of country in East Kent would be difficult to find'

Official accounts provide a wealth of information on the operation of the Elham Valley Line. Interviews and anecdotes from former staff and valley folk who remember their local line with immense affection bring this remarkable railway history to life.

Lyming station 1927



Track gang at Bridge



Life in rural Lyming and Elham 1932

Harbledown Junction



Near Elham

Despite being partly singled in 1931, the Elham Valley Line found new admirers who were delighted by this beautiful byway, whilst it remained indispensable to farmers and traders. Special trains often ran over the line, whilst the author describes the whole route in great detail, which is lavishly illustrated by his extensive collection.



Canterbury South



Whitsun Special at Elham



Departing Lyming



Barham station 1936



Cheriton Junction

From Folkestone to Canterbury – through Lyming, Elham, Barham, Bishopsbourne and Bridge, the story of this long-lost railway unfolds. All the events leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 are covered, when the Elham Valley Line suddenly had to take on a new role defending England's vulnerable shores from enemy invaders poised across the Channel.

Bridge station 1938

Elham Valley goods train near Newington



SOUTHERN RAILWAY ELHAM STATION



SOUTHERN RAILWAY CANTERBURY SOUTH STATION



Elham station 1932



Consigned to the War Department in 1940 to become 'The Elham Valley Military Railway', trains were operated by army personnel. The public could travel on it, but entirely at their own risk! The massive 250-ton anti-invasion howitzer named *HMG Boche-Buster* was housed inside Bishopsbourne tunnel and inspected by Britain's wartime prime minister Winston Churchill.



Clemence Churchill and Eleanor Roosevelt at Barham station in 1942



Military crew driving WD locomotive at Bishopsbourne. Driver Brown (right) had his train shot-up during a 1942 air attack

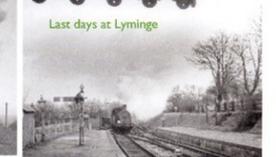


Boche-Buster

Military and railway papers provide interesting details about this period, whilst poignant personal and tragic accounts bring to life Britain's 'darkest hour' and the important role the Elham Valley Line played.



Final era of goods traffic near Canterbury



Last days at Lyming

Handed back to the Southern Railway in 1946, prospects initially seemed bright, but national crises and pressure from the government sealed the line's fate, whereby closure swiftly followed in 1947.



Porter Fred Heathfield locks-up Barham railway station in 1947

The author's long-held passion for this largely forgotten but popular rural byway comes across in ten lovingly-written chapters.

The Elham Valley Railway is a story that is both absorbing and crammed with interest for everyone. Profusely-illustrated, including maps and diagrams, the book is a chronicle spanning sixty years and a worthy addition to the annals of Kent.



Gone but not forgotten

For further information please visit <http://www.brianhartsrailways.com>



Visit to Belmont House and Gardens

At the height of last summer (August) members of the Historical Society paid a visit to Belmont House near Faversham, where we had a wonderful tour of the house, including the fine collection of clocks, and a wander in their beautiful gardens.

For once, we were lucky with the weather!



Members of the EHS and friends were treated to a pre Christmas evening at the Abbot's Fireside with that lovable character Hezekiah Tumbleweed. The atmosphere was perfect for the occasion and Hezekiah did not disappoint with tales of Elham Valley characters past and present. We are hoping to get Hezekiah back again this year assuming we can persuade Derek Boughton!

WANTED - Publicity Officer

Is there a member out there who would be keen to take on the roll of publicity manager?

It's not an onerous position and wouldn't take up much time, but it would relieve me of one of my many tasks!

It would require emailing the local newspapers and asking them to include a note of any forthcoming events – I have a list that I always mail out to – and the distribution of posters around the village.

If you are itching to get involved but can't give up too much time.....this would right up your street!

Give me a ring on 01303 840336 or email me on asladden@btinternet.co.uk Andree Sladden

Events Organiser required!

We really need someone to help us with the organisation of visits and talks for our meetings and 'get-togethers'. It would be ideal if we had a whole year's plan worked out in advance but this is proving too difficult along with other projects. It would involve booking the venues and the speakers and promoting the events to our members and to the wider village. Also liaising with H.S.s in other villages. Once a year is planned, you can sit back and relax! Get in touch if you are interested.

2015

Who is Who

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Bygone Kent

The county's history magazine

Under new ownership

Fully illustrated, unique features on Kent
— Britain's most historic county

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your county in every issue, you need to read



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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/