

March 2016

Volume 5, Issue 1

## Chairman's Message

This issue of the EHS Newsletter includes your invitation to attend and contribute to the AGM on the 29<sup>th</sup> April. A large part of that evening will be devoted to the events of the past year, which included some really good meetings, and a major achievement in hosting the One Day Conference of the Kent History Federation (which yielded a small profit). The Society's much visited website and database has been regularly updated and improved. The "Why is Elham Here?" project has been concluded, and we are getting near to completing the survey of monumental inscriptions in the Cemetery.

However, though our focus as a history society is the past, that of the AGM must be the future. We hope to have further interesting talks and visits, and would welcome your suggestions. We hope also to start publishing printed material. The experience of our neighbouring society at Lyminge shows that publications generate interest and, eventually, profit. But initial costs can be high, which is why £500 has been set aside in the accounts for that purpose. The first publication will be a revamp of "Elham History A to Z", originally printed in the Elham Newsletter some years ago.

DMB

## A Date for your Diary

### Our 6<sup>th</sup> AGM

**will be held on 19th April, at 8.00 p.m. in Elham Village Hall**

We will be looking back at the talks and visits undertaken during the last year and update 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. 15<sup>th</sup> April.**

Nominations will be for the following positions:

**Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer**

If you have a nomination please forward it to the Secretary:-  
email: [alsladden@btinternet.com](mailto:alsladden@btinternet.com) or telephone 01303 840336

## Forthcoming Events

- Thursday 24th March**      **Guided tour of Broome Park**, former home of Lord Kitchener, followed by a cream tea. Cost - £8.50 pp  
Meeting in the Square for anyone requiring a lift at 1.00 p.m. Tour starts at 1.30 p.m. followed by tea at 3.00 p.m.  
Names and payment in advance to Andree Sladden – Cherry Cottage, New Road, Elham.
- Thursday 31st March**      **Real Socialising trip to Highclere Castle** – home of “Downton Abbey”. £43.00 pp. Details on Real Socialising information sheet.
- Friday 29th April**      **EHS AGM** 8.00 p.m. Elham Village Hall. Come and see what we've been up to all year!
- Wednesday 18th May**      **Visit to Samphire Hoe.** We'll arrive at 4.30 p.m. for their legendary tea and cake, then Paul Holt will take us for a walk around the site at 5.00 p.m. following by a fascinating talk about the site and the history of the people of Shakespeare Cliff. Cost - £5.00 pp (tea and cake extra) There is also a charge of £2.00 for parking. Please advise Andree Sladden (01303 840336 or alsadden@btinternet.com) if you would like to join the tour and if you would like to car share.
- June (exact date to be confirmed)**      **A visit to St. Cosmos and St. Damian's Church at Challock** for a tour of the church and a chance to see the wall paintings by John Ward RA, whose painting “The Annunciation” is in the ringing chamber of our own church. Details will follow.
- July or August**      Just to whet your appetite, we have in mind to arrange a guided tour of Acrise Church and Derek Boughton will tell us all he knows about the Papillon family of Acrise. Further details will follow.

### 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 alsadden@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.

## Elham Historical Society Website & Database

The committee would like to apologise for the recent disruption EHS members and other web users may have experienced when trying to access our online services. Although Barry and Bryan quickly spotted there was a problem, getting it resolved with the web hosting company 123-Reg, was a different matter.

## Talk on the History of the Kent Coalfield - By Jim Davies

Jim Davies gave an interesting talk on the history of the Kent Coalfield and the communities which grew up around the pits. The talk was accompanied by a number slides and short films which gave further insight into the lives of Kent miners and their families.

The talk started with a film clip showing women and children working underground, this practice ceased in 1842.

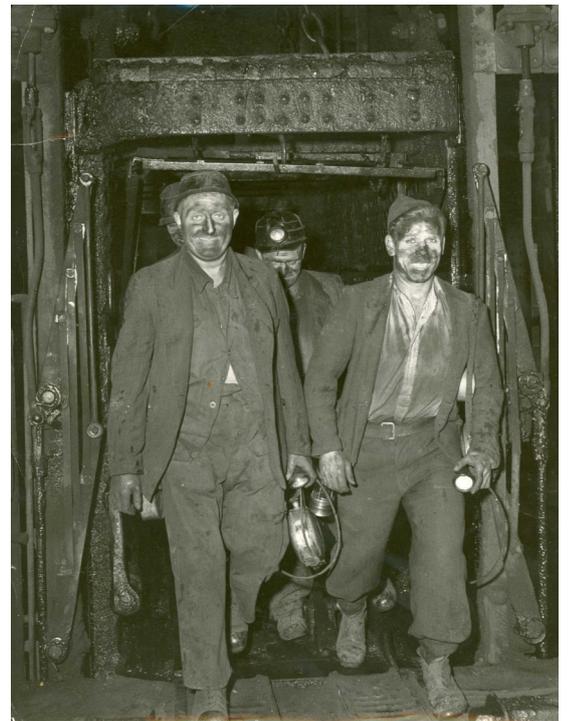
Kent Coal Concessions Ltd started work on the Shakespeare Colliery in 1896 which in turn led to the start of mining in Kent.

There were plans for numerous collieries in Kent but, only four went into production-Tilmanstone, Snowdown, Chislet and Betteshanger.

Villages designed by Sir Patrick Abercrombie were built away from the site of the collieries which were owned by Pearson Dorman and Long.

These villages soon developed into thriving communities with various sport and leisure facilities including Brass bands, Social Clubs and Sports Clubs for Football, Rugby, Cricket, Bowls and Fishing.

Jim also stressed the important role the wives and families of the miners played within each community, often several members of the family were working miners.



## Tales from the EHS Database

### 1871 Frances Palmer, Nursemaid, Old House, Elham

On Tuesday last an inquest was held at Elham, before Coroner Mr. Delasaux, on the body of Frances Palmer, aged 17, who died from the effects of an accident on the previous Sunday. Mr. Hubert Beadles, surgeon, said the deceased had been in his service as nursemaid. On Friday, the 13th instant, she was rather poorly. and gradually became worse till the 16th, when inflammation of the brain and lungs set in, and she died on Sunday, the 22nd.—Emma Lewis, a fellow-servant of deceased, said that on Wednesday, the 11th instant, the deceased was sitting on a chair, when Stephen Ottaway, a lad of about 14 years of age, pulled the chair from under her, and she fell, striking her head against the chair. It was done for a "lark" and not with a view to causing her any injury.—The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death."

*Whitstable Times Saturday 04 November 1871*

### 1870 Dr John Pitt Harris M.D. LL.D ( 1828 - 1870 ), Old House, Elham

We regret to hear that Mr. Harris, assistant to Dr. Beadles, of Elham, was thrown from his horse on Wednesday afternoon and killed instantaneously. The deceased had been to a patient at "Worlds Wonder" Farm, and was proceeding homewards when he met with his death. He was esteemed and respected by his friends and patients, although he had been in Elham but a short time. An inquest was subsequently held before T. T. Delasaux, Esq., when after hearing the evidence the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

*Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald - Saturday 16 April 1870*

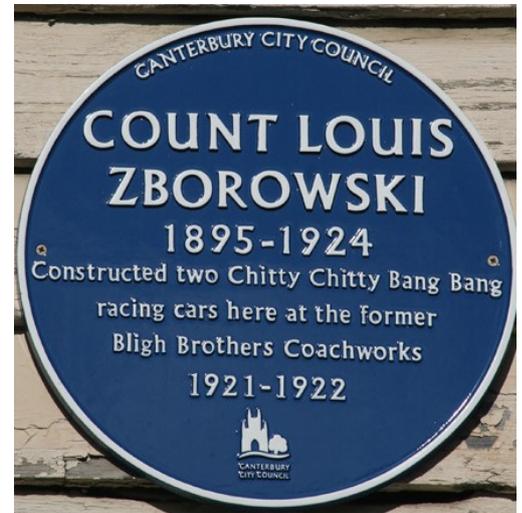
### 1859 Dr James Beattie, Old House, Elham

Considerable surprise, and not less regret, was caused among every class of the inhabitants on Monday, by the news that Mr. Beattie a medical gentlemen, long resident in the place, had poisoned himself by taking a large quantity of Prussic acid. The deceased was under 40 years of age, and no cause for the act can be given by his relatives and friends, except a depression of spirits which they had witnessed in him during the last six months. An inquest was held the next day, and the following witnesses called - Sarah Carswell, of Elham, said that she was in the service of deceased, and had been so for seven years. He dined at about one o'clock yesterday morning. Miss Godden and the wife of the deceased dined with him, and witness waited upon them. She did not observe anything particularly strange in his conduct. He seemed perfectly well at dinner, and had not been ill to her knowledge. At about half-past one she removed the dining-things, and she believed that deceased then left the house. About three o'clock she went into the dining-room, and saw the deceased lying on the sofa in the state in which the jury had just viewed his body. He was then breathing very short, and he died at twenty minutes before four, but she did not know from what cause. He had seemed to her very low for the last few days. Mary Godden, of Bristol, in Somerset, said she had been staying at the house of the deceased for the last two or three months, and during the whole of that time he had seemed to her very dejected and melancholy, he took but little dinner yesterday, and complained of a swimming in his head. He had told witness and his wife that he feared he should have a fit. Mr. D. S. Cresswell, of Elham, assistant to the late deceased, said that he had been in his service for the last ten years. Yesterday afternoon he went into his house at about three in the afternoon, and found deceased lying on the sofa in the drawing-room, breathless and pulseless. He found the bottle now produced under the head of the said sofa. Last Saturday it contained an ounce and a half of diluted Prussic acid (Cyanide). From the appearance of the deceased, and other circumstances, he was led to believe that he died by taking that poison. For the last six months deceased had been at times very low and melancholy. The jury retained a verdict of "Temporary Insanity."

*Kentish Gazette 1st February 1859*

## Did You Know?

**Chitty Bang Bang** was the informal name of a number of celebrated English racing cars, built and raced by Count Louis Zborowski and his engineer Clive Gallop in the 1920s. The cars were so loud that officials in Canterbury reportedly passed a by-law prohibiting them from entering within the city walls. The pair built four cars in workshops at 16, St Radigund's Street, Canterbury and stables at Higham Park, Bridge, nr Canterbury, one of which was later immortalised in Ian Fleming's fantasy novel and film production. The first was powered by a 23,093 cc six-cylinder Maybach aero engine, called "Chitty Bang Bang". A second "Chitty Bang Bang" was powered by 18,882 Benz aero engine. A third car was based on a Mercedes 28/95, but fitted with a 14,778 cc 6-cylinder Mercedes aero engine and was referred to as The White Mercedes. These cars achieved some success at Brooklands. Another car, also built at Higham Park with a huge 27-litre aero engine, was called the "Higham Special" and later "Babs" and was used in J.G. Parry-Thomas's fatal attempt for the land speed record at Pendine Sands in 1927.



In January 1922 Louis, his wife Vi, Gallop and Pixi Marix together with a couple of mechanics took Chitty Bang Bang and the White Mercedes across the Mediterranean for a drive into the Sahara Desert, in the tracks of Citroen's kegresse expedition.

Zborowski devised and built a 15 in/381 mm gauge miniature steam railway that circled the gardens. In a plan with fellow millionaire racing driver Captain J.E.P. Howey, he agreed to donate the rolling stock and infrastructure to a project that became the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on the south Kent coast, started after Zborowski's death.

Zborowski joined the Mercedes-Benz team in 1924, but while driving in the Italian Grand Prix that year at Monza, he hit a tree and died instantly. He was just 29 years old.

*Information source and further information:* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chitty\\_Bang\\_Bang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chitty_Bang_Bang) and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higham\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higham_Park)

## More Tales from the EHS Database and Items from our Archive

### MASTER AND APPRENTICE 1863

#### APPRENTICE 1863

Henry Hammon, of Elham, miller, was summoned for refusing to teach his trade of a miller to Stephen Court, his apprentice. Defendant did not appear, but service of the summons having been proved the justices proceeded to hear the case in his absence. It appeared that Stephen Court was by indenture, dated 16th August, 1863, bound by the trustees of Sir John William's Charity to Mr. Hammon for six years, to learn his trade of a miller. A premium of £25 was paid, and Mr. Hammon covenanted to find the apprentice with board and lodging. At Michaelmas last defendant left the business, and the mill was sold, and a Mr. Gilbert took it. Ever since that time, to within a few days Court had been employed by defendant in gardening,

and although he had been repeatedly requested to do so, he had refused to assign the apprentice to any one else, and would not allow Mr. Gilbert to take him, although he expressed his willingness to have him for the remainder of the term without any premium. The justices ordered that the apprentice should be discharged forthwith, and that £3, part of the premium, with 12s. costs, should be handed over to the apprentice's father forthwith, and that in default it should be levied by distress, and in default of sufficient distress defendant should be imprisoned for 21 days.

*Kentish Gazette - Tuesday 15 December 1863*

### SHOCKING Accident 1812

On Monday the 8th inst. a child, between three and four years old, son of Mr. Carswell, butcher, at Elham, being improvidently left in a room by its parents, set fire to its clothes. The neighbours alarmed by its cries, hastened to its assistance, and extinguished the flames, by wrapping it in a sheet, nor, however, till the poor victim was so dreadfully burned, that death relieved it from its torture in about four hours afterwards.- This is the second instance of the kind that has occurred at the above place within the last eight months, and it is hoped will prove a warning to those entrusted with the care of children.

*Kentish Gazette - Tuesday 16 June 1812*

**CORONATION DAY,**  
JUNE 26, 1902.

**PROGRAMME OF FESTIVITIES AT ELHAM,**

Open FREE to all Parishioners.

**2.30, SPORTS** In the Hog Green (by kind permission of Mr. Chas. Fife.)  
No entrance Fees. Many Beautiful Prizes.

**4.30, PUBLIC TEA** In the Sale Meadow (by kind permission of Mr. Long.)  
N.B.—Every child under 14 should come supplied with a Mug.  
ADULTS WILL OBLIGE BY BRINGING THEIR OWN SPOONS.

**5.15, GOD SAVE THE KING** AND LOYAL CHEERS.

**5.30, DISTRIBUTION** OF CHOCOLATE BOXES TO EVERY CHILD UNDER 14.

**6.0, SPORTS** RESUMED IN THE HOG GREEN.

**7.0, Distribution of surplus Bread & Cake** At the Boys' School.

**9.0, Grand Display of Fireworks.**

**THE ELHAM FIFE AND DRUM BAND**  
WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE THROUGHOUT THE AFTERNOON.

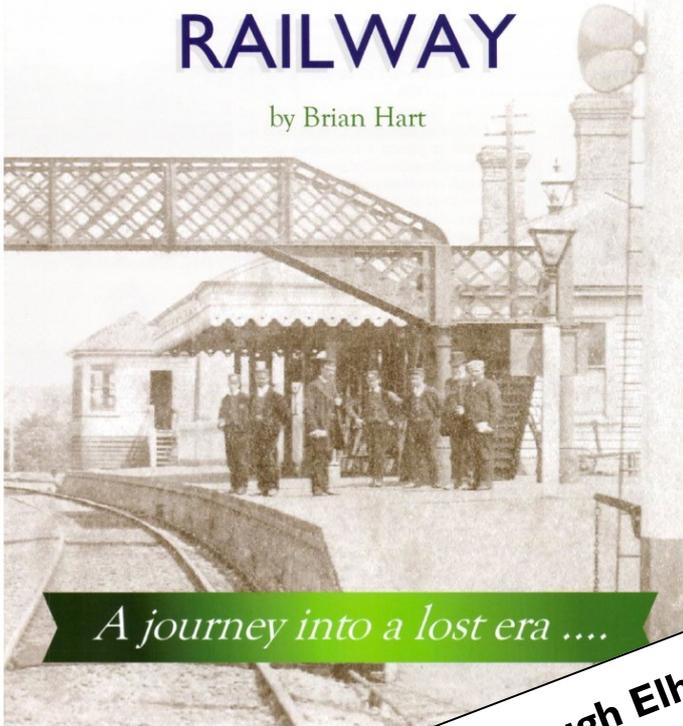
**LONG LIVE KING EDWARD.**

Leo. Fife, Hon. Secretary.  
Elham Coronation Committee.

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

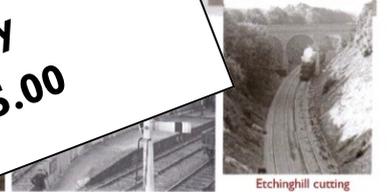
SOUTH EASTERN AND CHATHAM RAILWAY TO BARHAM STATION

Lyminge 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 onwards, as road transport increased, the railway's passenger numbers fell and people still much preferred the car.

Lyminge cutting



Etchinghill cutting

'A lovelier stretch of coast'

Official accounts provide a glimpse of the Elham Valley Railway as it was seen by the valley folk who made it their lifeline.

Lyminge station 1932



Available through Elham History Society  
Signed copy — £39.95  
Unsigned — £35.00

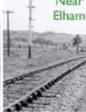
Despite being partly singled in 1931, the Elham Valley Line found new admirers who were delighted by this beautiful byway, whilst it remained indispensable to farmers and traders. Special trains often ran over the line, whilst the author describes the whole route in great detail, which is lavishly illustrated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



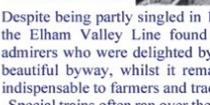
Harbledown Junction



Near Elham



Track gang at Bridge



Life in rural Lyminge and Elham 1932



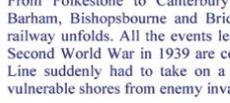
Whitsun Special at Elham



Cheriton Junction



Departing Lyminge



Barham station 1936



Bridge station 1938



Elham Valley goods train near Newington



SOUTHERN RAILWAY ELHAM STATION



Elham station 1932

SOUTHERN RAILWAY CANTERBURY SOUTH STATION



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.



Clementine 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

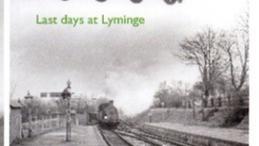


Boche-Buster

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 Lyminge

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>



2016

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# Bygone Kent

The county's history magazine

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your county in every issue, you need to read



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[www.ehs.elham.co.uk](http://www.ehs.elham.co.uk) and [www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk](http://www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk)*

## Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards are available from the Rose and Crown, 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)**

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