

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 7th November 2012

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

**Gordon Barker
Chairman**

Mike Rea
Valerie Austin
Dorothy Dorman
Kevin Wood
Avril Braidwood
Brian Tulley
Jean Beeston
Charlie Mitchell

Ray Franklin

Paul Salvidge
Colin Clarke
Tim Snow
Vic Dowsett
John Segar
Janet Tulley
Ian Beeston

Chris Bush

Heather Salvidge
Colin Smith
Christine Hall
Margaret Rea
Margaret Shaw
John Todd
Eileen Kay

Apologies:

David Verlander
Barrie Adams
Roger Clark
Keith Merrifield

Gordon Fulton
Lillian Adams
Phyllis Clark

Ruth Fulton
Sue Johnson
Carol Wylde

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present. He introduced and welcomed our guest speaker for the evening, Mr Alan Taylor and members of the War Memorial sub-committee.

Mike Rea apologised for the cancellation of the September meeting due to the non-availability of our speaker at somewhat short notice. It was decided to cancel the meeting due to conflicting meetings on that evening. In the meantime, Mr Feather has agreed to address our June meeting next year.

2. Signature of Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Secretary apologised that Mr Colin Clarke had been omitted from those attending the last meeting. The Secretary reminded those attending to sign in so we can keep track of attendees.

The minutes were then agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Guest Speaker Mr Alan Taylor and War Memorial Research Team

Avril Braidwood introduced the talk by giving the background to the project. Some three years ago, Gordon Barker gave her a file with some information saying at the time 'there's some work to be done!' Gordon Fulton, David Henderson and David Verlander offered to help as did Kevin Wood. In April this year David Henderson died suddenly and unexpectedly and Avril asked that a minutes silence be held in his memory – this duly took place.

She then introduced Alan Taylor who explained that the purpose of the project was to produce a record of the memorial itself and the twenty five people remembered thereon who had fallen since the first World War. It was also intended to research those killed in action who were not on the Elsenham Memorial but were remembered elsewhere, in some cases on more than one memorial.

Alan gave an outline of some of the available sources of information. Some of this, such as casualty records, could be confusing as volunteers didn't necessarily sign up with the name they were best known by. The rule of thumb was to believe nothing in writing unless it could be corroborated by other evidence.

Some records have been lost over the years, for example, WW1 Service records were "trimmed" in 1937 of extraneous (i.e. the most useful) information. Of this, about sixty percent was lost during the blitz. Fortunately records from WW2 and beyond have survived intact.

Thus far it has been possible to identify everyone on the memorial and prove a link back to the Village bar two; Charles Johnson and Walter Turner. If anyone has information that can help, the team would be pleased to hear from you.

All this research is to go into a book which will be dedicated to David Henderson. It is hoped it will include some of the raw emotion of the time rather than just the dry facts. It will relate some of the stories of those left behind such as the Reverend Sant who lost his son and had a protracted correspondence with the War Office regarding his fate.

It is intended to complete research for the book and write the draft no later than Spring 2014 when it will go to a Graphical Designer to be prepared for printing in June 2014 ready to be distributed on 4th August 2014 to mark the centenary of the start of WW1 when Great Britain declared war on Germany.

He was pleased to note that funding for the book had been secured.

The talk concluded with an invitation to inspect the battlefield artefacts that were on display.

Secretary's Note: The following items are included for member's information.

4. Project Overviews

On Monday evening (5th November) the Parish Council agreed to accept the quote from the successful builder allowing work to commence on conservation of the Lych Gate at the High Street Cemetery. It was hoped that this would be completed by the end of the year. Meanwhile results from the investigation of the condition of the Chapel foundations are awaited. The results will determine the extent of work needed. The District Council have offered £3000 towards the cost of these works and an approach is being made to the Gilbey Foundation for further funding.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Visits

The visit to the Chelmsford Police Museum has had to be deferred to next year as Mr Fred Feather was unable to speak at our September meeting, which would have formed a useful precursor to the museum visit who in any case were mounting a special exhibition on our preferred date. Mr Feather has agreed to return in June which means we can now make the Museum our midsummer visit.

5.2 Village School Anniversary

Next year is the 150th anniversary of the formation of Elsenham School. The Society has been asked to put together a short booklet recounting the School history that could be given to the pupils. This we are going to do but need more information. If anyone can help with stories, anecdotes whatever, would they please speak to Mike Rea or Heather Salvidge who is coordinating production.

6. Dates of Next Meetings

Wednesday 6th March 2012

Mr Bruce Munro will host a "Chat About Saffron Walden with Slides"

Wednesday 12th June 2013

Mr Fred Feather will present "Arsenic and Olde Essex" an entertaining review of murder investigation before and after the formation of the Essex Constabulary.

ENDS