

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 11th SEPTEMBER 2013
MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Chris Bush	Mike Rea
David Verlander	Paul Salvidge	Heather Salvidge
Valerie Austin	Tim Snow	Margaret Rea
Avril Braidwood	Janet Tulley	Brian Tulley
Christine Hall	Colin Smith	Caryl Benner
Keith Merrifield	Roger Clark	Dorothy Dorman
Jean Platt	Phyllis Clark	Margaret Shaw
Vic Dowsett	Carol Wylde	Roger Taylor
Andy Elliott	Trevor Hackett	Dennis Haslam
G Eldridge	G Howell	+ 1 Visitor

Apologies:

Gordon Barker	John Segar	Gordon & Ruth Fulton
Ian & Moyra Jackson	Peter Clear	Sue Johnson
Kevin Wood	Jan Westcott	Pam Merrifield
Jean Beeston	Lillian Adams	

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present as well as Mr Peter Paye, our guest speaker for the evening.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 12th June 2013

The Secretary apologised for demoting our new Chairman to Deputy!

There were no other amendments to the previous meeting's minutes.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Guest Speaker – Mr Peter Paye

Peter gave us a very informative and interesting talk about the Saffron Walden Branch Railway. Originally conceived as early as 1848 to link Audley End and Saffron Walden, it finally gained Royal assent in 1861. The first sod was cut in 1862 albeit with the help of a borrowed spade and construction began; at this time an extension to Bartlow was also authorised.

The line finally opened to Saffron Walden in November 1865 and throughout to Bartlow in 1866. With the exception of a few trains carrying through coaches to London which ceased in 1939, the branch was worked as a self-contained entity unusually having separate branch line platforms at each end. Some goods trains ran, mainly associated with the Maltings at Saffron Walden and during the war petrol trains ran to a dump established just outside Saffron Walden. It saw fame briefly in 1957 when main line engineering works saw Cambridge trains diverted via the branch to Bartlow and Shelford.

Never a very busy line, bus competition saw receipts fall even more and it was recommended for closure in the Beeching Report of 1964 and despite objections finally closed to Passengers in September 1967 and freight by the end of that year. Attempts were made by the then Lord Braybrooke to reopen the line but BR were adamant it should stay closed so Lord Braybrooke demolished the embankments and filled in the cuttings on his land. Today there is little or no trace of the railway in the landscape between Audley End and Saffron Walden.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Clavering Day School

November 9th sees the Clavering History Circle hosting a full day of talks centred around "Landscape History in NW Essex". This event features a number of first class speakers including Carezza Lewis once of Time Team. I know a number of members are intending to go to what promises to be a very interesting day for just £10. If you would like to go please let the Secretary know no later than 22nd September so a booking can be made.

5.2 Gordon Barker Slide Show

The Secretary reminded members that Gordon is intending to present a slide show on 18th October in the Village Hall. Covering the history of Elsenham in 100 slides, many of which have never been seen before, Gordon promises a show full of interest with much to be learned. Tickets are now available from Robin Barker, the Post Office and Poppins.

5.3 School History

It was noted that celebrations to mark the 150th Anniversary of Elsenham School had passed off very successfully. The book we produced has been very popular with nearly 100 copies sold.

5.3 Memorial Chapel

Mike Rea reported that the latest phase of work had now been completed satisfactorily. To briefly recap, this saw repairs to the cracked brickwork of the door arch and the brickwork above including the fitment of suitable reinforcement to tie the repaired areas into the existing masonry. Missing bricks were replaced with suitable contemporary items and existing mortar raked out and repointed with modern materials chosen to match the original so as to blend the new works as seamlessly as possible with the old. The next stage is to put in hand work on the Bell Structure and the interior. It is envisaged that a power supply would be provided to the building but this however, could involve seeking some form of Grant Aid.

5.4 War Memorial Project Update

Gordon Fulton has provided a very full update of the project which has been sent to members in the Quarterly Report. There are many stories coming out to flesh out the sparse details on the Memorial itself not least that of the Sandford Family. He adds a final plea to his report. The team are unable to find any record of the military service of Walter Turner, all that is known is that he died in 1917. Having exhausted all the usual avenues, if anyone has any idea where else they can try please let us know.

5.5 And Finally...

The Chairman read out a rather strange letter that he had received. If anyone can cast any light on this strange missive, please let us know.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday November 6th when Pat & Steve Schorah from the Dunmow Maltings and Museum will be here to talk about the Dunmow Flicht.

ENDS