

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 10th SEPTEMBER 2014

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

David Verlander Vice Chairman	Paul Salvidge	Chris Bush
Heather Salvidge	Jean Beeston	Mike Rea
Gordon Fulton	Ruth Fulton	John Segar
Ian Beeston	Jean Beeston	Avril Braidwood
Christine Hall	Colin Smith	Vic Dowsett
Brian Tulley	Janet Tulley	Margaret Rea
Jean Platt	Kevin Wood	Valerie Austin
Lynda Dunn	Campbell Dunn	Phyllis Clark
Roger Clark	Andy Elliott	Frances Elliott
Teri Williams	Dorothy Dorman	G. Eatson
H. Eatson	Ray Gaubert	Nina Gaubert
Margaret Shaw	Malcolm Robinson	

Apologies:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Carol Benner	Ian Jackson
Moyra Jackson	Tim Snow	

1. The Vice-Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present as well as Mr Tony Kirby, our guest speaker for the evening.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 11th June 2014

The minutes of the last meeting were presented and there being no comments they were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Guest Speaker Mr Tony Kirby

The chairman introduced Mr Tony Kirby who gave a very interesting and informative illustrated talk on Railways in the Essex Landscape. He started by contrasting the intensive service run by the Great Eastern Railway out of their Liverpool Street terminus with the quieter backwaters of the Thaxted Branch and the Kelvedon – Tollesbury railway the latter in particular being a very rural line that relied on “hand-me-down” rolling stock to keep going. These branches were

relatively latecomers built in the early 20th century and were closed by 1952 proving the unfortunate adage; last built first closed.

Another notable branch line was from Epping to Ongar part of the longer line from Stratford taken over by London Transport after WW2 as the Central Line. Never really wanted by LT, passengers for Ongar faced the incongruity of getting off a modern, relatively comfortable electric train at Epping to get on vintage steam hauled trains for the last part of their journey.

The GE had two main lines across Essex. The one to Ipswich and Norwich was built across the grain of the country and resulted in some heavy gradients which caused problems for train timings that weren't really resolved until the advent of electrification. The Cambridge line meanwhile was built more in sympathy with the countryside following a more sinuous course and in the main avoiding steep gradients and structures such as the Chappel Viaduct, a major engineering feat of the time. A lesser piece of engineering are the Newport arches built to allow the line to climb to Audley End. If the line had followed the preferred path it would have passed close to Audley End House but the then Lord Braybrooke wouldn't allow this so the line had to pass through the ridge to the west of the house necessitating the arches at the foot of the climb and two tunnels at the summit. To placate Lord Braybrooke, Audley End was given a station somewhat larger than might be expected and provided it with a porte-clochere so that important visitors could mount and dismount their carriages without getting wet.

Great Chesterford was also given an imposing station building possibly because it was to be the junction for a line to Newmarket as well as Cambridge. The line to Newmarket was built but ended up bankrupting the promoters and after a period of financial restructuring the line to Cambridge was built using material salvaged from the closure of the Newmarket branch.

When the railway arrived, industry was not far behind and many places saw a growth in industry around their stations. There was also a large number of Maltings built as brewers took the opportunity to take control of their malt supplies. Some towns such as Bishops Stortford were hardly affected by the coming of the railway whilst others such as Chelmsford were changed almost out of recognition as heavy industry moved in. Others such as Shenfield suffered a housing boom as people could afford to move out into the country and still commute to their jobs in London. The coming of the railway transformed Stratford from a sleepy hamlet to a vast industrial complex housing a major locomotive works, engine sheds and marshalling yards covering a huge area. Today this is all gone having been replaced by the Olympic park and a huge shopping centre

Essex wasn't largely affected by the Beeching cuts, mainly losing a few under used and loss making branches. The end of the 20th century saw this reversed however as a new branch was built to serve Stansted airport and designed to be extended to serve future new airport terminals.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Clavering Day School 2014

The secretary reminded members that this year's Clavering Day School will take place on Saturday 25th October 2014. Always an interesting and informative day, this year's subject is Designed Landscapes and several speakers have agreed to present including Dr Tom Williamson, Anne Rowe and Alison Moller. A number of members had already signed up to go and anyone else who would like to go should give their ten pounds to Mike Rea who was arranging a group booking.

5.2 Newport History Society

The next meeting of the Newport History Society on 18th September will feature a talk by Paul Rusiecki entitled The Home Front in Essex during the First World War. The meeting is in the Church House, Newport at 8pm.

5.3 "For the Duration – Elsenham in Conflict"

After the very successful launch of the book, the Secretary noted that copies were still available to buy at the meeting for anyone who had not yet got their copy.

5.4 Broxted People and Places

Roger Clark advised that Alf Wright would be presenting a slide show on Local People and Places at the Broxted Village Hall on 4th October at 8pm. Tickets £5 to include refreshments.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 12th November at 8pm when Alan Taylor and the Memorial Team will present For the Duration – Elsenham in Conflict; the story of the book..

Wednesday 4th March next year will see Dr Richard Nunn, late of Elsenham Surgery, give a talk about the story of early General Practice entitled It's A Doc's Life!

ENDS