

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 12th November 2014

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	David Verlander	Paul Salvidge
Heather Salvidge	Gordon Fulton	Mike Rea
Tim Snow	Ruth Fulton	Kevin Wood
Margaret Shaw	Teri Williams	Avril Braidwood
Christine Hall	Vic Dowsett	Pauline Dowsett
Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson	Margaret Rea
Tony Eatson	Gloria Eatson	Valerie Austin
Lynda Dunn	Campbell Dunn	Ray Gaubert
Nina Gaubert	Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark
Carol Wyld	Malcolm Robinson	

Apologies:

Chris Bush	Brian Tully	Janet Tully
John Segar	Jean Beeston	Colin Smith
Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield	

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present as well as our guest speakers for the evening, the "For the Duration" editorial team.

He went on to advise members that Chris Bush had had an accident and was currently recovering at home from surgery to repair a badly damaged knee. All those present sent their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting 10th September 2014**

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

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. Guest Speaker The Memorial Team

The chairman introduced the editorial team responsible for "For the Duration – Elsenham in Conflict" the book tells the story of those men from Elsenham who gave their lives in the service of their Country in two World Wars and later, as well as serving as a record of the Elsenham War Memorial.

Avril Braidwood commenced the talk by explaining how, when she first received a pack of notes from Gordon Barker in 2010 she had no idea that it would grow into such a big book. Having looked at the notes Gordon gave her, she asked Kevin Wood for help. Soon after Gordon Fulton, David Henderson, Alan Taylor and Dave Verlander joined the team. She explained that the sudden and unexpected death of David Henderson was the catalyst that led to the decision to produce a book and indeed the book is dedicated in part to his memory.

Alan Taylor took over the narrative to give a flavour of life in 1914. At the time war began, the Army was very small, the main line of defence being the Royal Navy. It became necessary to recruit a larger army and in the event 500,000 men joined up to the so-called Kitchener's Army. At that time a Private was paid one shilling per day and it was no small bone of contention that a Private in the Newfoundland Regiment was paid five shillings a day. There being so many enlisted men, there was a shortage of Officers and many retired Boer War Officers were reactivated to lead the troops.

The daily routine started with Dawn Stand To, a state of readiness in case of enemy attack followed by Morning Hate, an exchange of small arms fire. The men then had breakfast and spent the day resting. Towards evening there was Dusk Stand To and Evening Hate, a re-run of the morning's activities. There then followed the highlight of the day, the daily rum ration of a thick treacly extremely potent brew with the evening meal. A frontline tour lasted between four and eight days.

Alan finished his piece by explaining that for every story in the book, there is a lot more information available than the man's service record and using the example of James Palmer, explained how other sources such as the Regimental War Diaries could be used to locate a man in the theatre of war and where he fell.

Kevin Wood took up the story by shedding some light on the men lost in the Second World War, Gunner Roy Purcell, Able Seaman Leslie Jackson of HMS Bursar and Captain Edward Smallwood, a Tank Squadron Commander. He explained how they first approached the War Graves Commission to locate the fallen and then obtained their Service Records which gave more or a less amount of information depending whether or not they could locate a next of kin to give consent to the release of information.

Finally, Dave Verlander spoke about some of the boundary changes that had complicated the research. For example the playing fields were located in Stansted until 1946 and the Pumhouse and The Crown Inn were officially in Henham. Only the south side of the High Street has always been in Elsenham. He went on to say that researching the book had sparked interest in the memorial itself and gave a brief overview of its history from erection in 1921, the removal of the original cross in the 1950s and its replacement with the current cross. He ended his part by saying that the Society was working with the Parish Council to advise how best the names of the war dead not yet on the memorial could be added. At the moment, slate panels have been mooted engraved with all the names of the dead to be mounted over the existing names on each of the front faces. In the longer term it is the History Society's hope that the original cross may be replicated perhaps in time for the centenary of the memorial's erection.

5 Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Clavering Day School 2014

The Secretary reported that ten members had attended this year's study day and had enjoyed an interesting series of talks outlining the history of designed landscapes from mediaeval deer parks to the 20th century country house garden.

5.2 Hall Road

MR briefly recounted the archaeology that had been found on the Hall Road Development Site. The investigation is being conducted by archaeologists from University College London and Chris Bush had been invited by them to visit the site.

Chris reported back that it is pretty sure that the footings found are the remains of the barns and a yard, occupied and owned by the Rev. Thomas Canning vicar of Elsenham 1818 to 1855.

Further finds include much first century Roman pottery, a ring ditch and the remains of a bone or horn drainage system. There is evidence of a possible barrow but this is problematic as there are no signs of burials in the vicinity.

5.3 Newport History Society

The next meeting of the Newport History Society on 20th November will feature a talk by Fred Nash about World War Two Defences in Essex. The meeting is in the Church House, Newport at 8pm.

5.4 St Marys Christmas Tree Display

The Society will be entering a small tree in this years' display at St Marys. Chris Bush was going to assist but in light of his accident, the audience was asked if there was anyone who would like to volunteer to help plan and decorate the tree? There were no takers at the meeting but please contact Mike Rea if you think you could help... please.

5.5 Crown Estates Survey results

Margaret Shaw asked whether any findings had been published from the archaeological survey of the Crown Estates development area. Paul Salvidge replied that he hadn't seen any reports published whilst Heather Salvidge commented that any reports would probably be referenced in the planning application list of documents on the Uttlesford Planning Portal.

5.6 RUH Memorial Book

Ray Franklin noted that the Recorders of Uttlesford History were holding a book launch the next day for their new book "Lest We Forget: The First World War Memorials of Uttlesford District.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th March at 8pm and will embody the Annual General Meeting . After the AGM, Dr Richard Nunn will give his talk "It's a Doc's |Life!"

ENDS