

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 11th NOVEMBER 2015
MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	David Verlander Deputy Chairman	Paul Salvidge
Heather Salvidge	Chris Bush	Diane Bush
Mike Rea	Margaret Rea	Jean Platt
Vic Dowsett	Avril Braidwood	Christine Hall
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Colin Smith
Kevin Wood	Valerie Austin	Caryl Benner
Tony Eatson	Peter Clear	Roger Clark
Phyllis Clark	Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson
Ray Gaubert	Nina Gaubert	

Apologies:

Brian Tulley	Janet Tulley	Margaret Shaw
Campbell Dunn	Lynda Dunn	Tim Snow
Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield	Graham Morland
Sue Johnson		

The Society welcomes our new member Diane Bush.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present and our speaker for the evening Richard Priestley.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 9th September 2015

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed off by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

There were no other matters arising from the minutes.

4. Speaker - Richard Priestley

The Chairman introduced Richard Priestley, our speaker, who introduced himself by saying that he had been at the School for twenty-two years, the latter fifteen or so as Headmaster. When presenting the history of Newport School, he said he drew on the work of Fred Thompson a former History master at the School.

The School was founded by Joyce Frankland who had married William Frankland in 1566. William was her second husband, her first, Henry Saxie died early after they had a son William, who died after falling from his horse. She was grief stricken and was comforted by Alexander Nowell, the then Dean of St Pauls who told her if she was to found a school, she could have “twenty good sonnes to comfort you in your sorrow”. So it was she remembered these words when writing her will and therein founded the “Free Grammer School of Newport” to be forever known as such. It opened in 1588 a year after her death with John Morden, who studied at Peterhouse College, Cambridge the first Master. The School motto was that of the Frankland family, “Suffer and Serve”.

The first school was set up in the Town House, near the Church for twenty boys from Newport, the children of paupers were admitted if they had the “rudiments of education”. Other boys came from the surrounding area but those not living in Newport had to pay. Pupils went to school 7 days a week from 6.30am to 11am and 1pm to 4pm, they were allowed Thursday afternoons off. The curriculum included Latin. Greek and Hebrew and all boys were expected to speak Latin whilst at school. There were four forms, or years, each form sat on two benches facing each other and all four forms were in one room.

In the second century of the School's life it was decided to appoint an auditor to manage the School's money and this turned out to be very significant because whereas other free schools were closing, Newport was put onto a sound financial footing that was to ensure its long term survival.

In the third century, English and Arithmetic were added to the curriculum and from this point the master was also required to provide paper and pens for the pupil's use.

In 1838 the School was moved into a new building on the same site, the old School closing in March that year and the new opening in October the same year. Classes were now taught in six one hourly lessons per day with Thursday and Saturday afternoons off. In 1851 the admission age was raised to eight and entrants had to be able to read two syllable words and do simple arithmetic.

In 1864, the Government graded all schools and Newport was declared grade two, boys left at sixteen having received a good education to

typically join the armed services. By 1874 the school was in something of a decline so a Board of Governors were appointed to manage the “fabric” of the school . They could still charge for admission but twenty places had to be kept free for the boys of Newport. In 1877 the Governors met and agreed to build a new school and £1500 was put aside to pay for it. The new School opened on the present site in 1878 having cost £3716, 18s and 2d.

By 1891 there were 50 boys attending the school and the then Headmaster, William Waterhouse introduced cricket and swimming, the boys being made to dig their own pool. At about the same time, a few old boys got together in the George Inn in Southwark and formed the Old Newportonians Society. In 1910 the School became a Secondary with entry at 11 and a preparatory school was set up to feed it with entry at 7.

Under the Rev. Dr Frank Wyeth (Headmaster 1911 - 1938) the School expanded and Essex County Council started to part fund the School taking more and more control of its affairs. Amongst their requirements was that boys should take the common entrance exam but in the end the Governors and Essex each held their own entrance exams for their intakes. Maurice Willmore took the Headship in 1938 until 1961. At the outbreak of World War II, RAF Debden wanted to take over the School as a billet so Willmore called the boys back to School two weeks early and when the RAF came to inspect the premises was able to say that the school term had started so it would be impossible for the RAF to use the buildings. Somewhat later Saturday school was abolished due to the railway cancelling the midday train that the pupils used to get home.

After the war, the RAB Butler Education Act saw the School become “Voluntary Aided” and there began a period of expansion with the major build being the new Science Block. After Willmore’s tenure the first girl was admitted to the School in 1968 and after Essex adopted Comprehensive education in 1976 the School became mixed ability despite a vigorous rear-guard action by the then Head. Following this, in the 1980s school numbers rose to 768 and it was no longer possible to get the whole school together for Morning Assembly so Lower, Middle and Upper schools were formed. In 1988 at the quatercentenary of the schools founding the new Music block was built.

Over the first four centuries of the School’s existence there had been just twenty-four Headmasters. In 1990 Richard became the 25th and the first not to come from a Cambridge College. At the behest of Essex CC Richard’s first act was to make the school co-educational and his title became Headteacher.

In 1993, the School divorced itself from Essex CC and became “Grant Maintained”. This release significant sums of money for new buildings and it became an International School and a Language College. It was at this point that Richard realised he was less a teacher and more the CEO

of a major business but always he tried to maintain the great mixture that was modern education founded on ancient tradition and values.

Finally on 31st August 2014, despite Dame Joyce's stipulation that the School would forever be known the Free Grammer School of Newport (sic), the name was changed to the Joyce Frankland Academy. It was also particularly disappointing that Dame Joyce's Damehood was ignored in the title.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 The 2016 Programme

The Secretary reported that speakers had now been booked for most of next year's programme. They are Bill Hardy who will be talking in March about Carpenters Marks in Wood Framed Buildings, Peter Turrall who will present a History of Marconi 1874 – 1937 at our June meeting and finally, Herbert Eiden will present his talk on The Peasants Revolt in Essex at our September meeting. Two further speakers, Fred Nash; World War Two Defences in Essex and Paul Rusiecki; The Home Front in Essex During WW1 have yet to respond.

Secretary's Note: Moyra Jackson and Avril Braidwood have volunteered to give a talk on the Elsenham Women's Institute and your Secretary has pencilled this in for 2017 but possibly earlier.

5.2 Clavering Study Day 2015

The study day takes place next Saturday 14th November and has the subject "Churches and Chapels – A Thousand Years of History". There will be nine delegates from EVHS attending of a total attendance of around forty. The Organiser has said that anyone who would like to come along on Saturday can do so and pay at the door.

5.3 St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival 2015

We have been asked to provide a tree for this year's festival, so if anyone would like to volunteer to give me a hand preparing same I would be pleased to hear from you.

5.4 The Society Website And An Appeal

Our website is still attracting interest and is receiving nearly a hundred visits a week, a very good performance for a small society site. Our Webmaster, Chris Bush does a very good job of keeping the pages fresh and adding new material such as the recent photo galleries covering the 1993/95 celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the coming of the railway to the Village.

Chris can only add new material as it comes to light so if you do have any photographs of Village events, please consider lending them to us so we can copy them for our archive. If you have memories of these events or significant happenings in the Village please consider being interviewed so we can have a record for the future.

5.5 Other Matters

Avril Braidwood drew attention to the new plaques that have been fitted to the Village War Memorial. It had been rededicated on 8th November by Gary Townsend using the original order of service from 1920. Avril also pointed out that all the men of the Village who had lost their lives in the service of their Country were now listed on the memorial.

Finally Avril said that our book, For The Duration, was still selling at the Post Office and it was agreed that your Secretary should write a note of thanks to Colin the Postmaster.

Ray Franklin asked whether anyone had a Betamax Video Recorder we could borrow as he had a Betamax tape of the mini-marathon that he wanted to transfer to a computer but no means of playing it. Peter Clear thought he might be able to help.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday March 9th and will include the AGM. As mentioned above, our speaker will be Bill Hardy who will be speaking about Carpenters Marks in Timber Framed Buildings.

ENDS