

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 8th JUNE 2016

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	Heather Salvidge
Mike Rea	Chris Bush	Diane Bush
Anne Player	Patricia Holyomes	Teri Williams
John Brown	Valerie Austin	Tony Eatson
Carol Wylde	Ian Jackson	Margaret Rea
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Colin Smith
Brian Tulley	Janet Tulley	Caryl Benner

Apologies:

David Verlander	Gordon Fulton	Ruth Fulton
Avril Braidwood	Sue Johnson	Roger Clarke
Phyllis Clarke	Dorothy Dorman	Christine Hall
Moyra Jackson	Gloria Eatson	Kevin Wood

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

Before moving on to the main business of the meeting, the Chairman asked that members take a moment to remember John Segar and Charlie Mitchell who had both passed away since the last meeting. They were both friends to the Society and we send our condolences to their families.

Also it was noted that Avril Braidwood had been taken to hospital after a "Heart Episode". She is now back home and recovering well. We send our best wishes to Avril for a speedy recovery.

We welcome Patricia Holyomes as a new member of the Society

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting 09th March 2016**

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

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. Guest Speaker Mr Peter Turrall

The Chairman introduced Mr Peter Turrall, Chairman of the Marconi Society who presented his talk The History of Marconi 1874 – 1937.

Our speaker introduced his talk by saying that Marconi was born in 1874 of an Italian Father and Irish Mother. He was educated in Bournemouth before going to Bologna University where he had a less than distinguished academic career and spent most of his time working on a practical application of the work being done by Hertz and Tesla amongst others, into Wireless – never radio – Communication using very crude spark gap transmitters.

Having successfully tested the first of these devices with the help of his Mother and Brother Alfonso, his Mother took him to Rome to see the head of the Post Office who were not at all interested. Nothing daunted his Mother then took him to London to meet the head of the British Post Office who was very interested in his work but would only accept equipment that was factory built. So Marconi set up his first factory in Chelmsford in 1900 using money raised from the Farming Community around and about Chelmsford and employing 26 men and 6 boy apprentices to build his equipment for the Post Office. The Post Office regularly sent down Inspectors to check the work but the equipment was so new that it was unlikely that they had any real idea what it was or how it worked. Marconi therefore set up the very first Wireless Training School in Frinton to teach the users how it worked and how to operate it.

All the while Marconi was experimenting to improve the range and efficiency of his equipment. The next step was to prove his signals could cross water which he did by sending a message across the Bristol Channel before building a huge aerial array in Poldhu Cornwall. Having built the receiving station he embarked for Newfoundland where with the aid of six giant kites he would suspend an aerial to send a signal to Poldhu across the Atlantic. Unbeknownst to Marconi, the day after he set sail, a storm swept through Poldhu destroying the aerials. The engineers there immediately set to and erected makeshift aerials so that they could be ready for Marconi when he sent his message. Meanwhile, things were not going well for Marconi either as strong winds damaged five of his six kites and meant that the full aerial system could not be raised. Nevertheless at the appointed time in 1901, Marconi sent his signals which were successfully received on the temporary array at Poldhu and Intercontinental communication was born.

Over the next few years Marconi experimented with better equipment and was the first to set up a mobile transmitter using a Clarkson Steam Bus that operated the Baddow bus service. In 1912 he outgrew his first factory and built brand new larger premises that were built in just three and a half months. Outside the factory he built two 450 feet tall metal

towers which were used to support an aerial system. At this time Marconi was supplying equipment and operators to the great liners amongst them the Montrose and the Titanic. The Montrose was the ship carrying Dr Crippen to America in 1910. When he was recognised as travelling on the ship, the Marconi operator on board sent a message to shore that allowed the Police to be waiting to arrest him when the ship made landfall in Canada. Later in 1912, when Titanic struck the iceberg, the Marconi operators sent out distress signals but the only wireless equipped ship was 60 miles away and got to the scene of the tragedy too late to help.

In 1914 the Marconi factory was turned over to war work and Marconi developed equipment for the forces including the newly formed Royal flying Corp.

Following the war, Marconi turned his attention to sound broadcasting and after a period of testing the first production equipment was produced in 1920. This allowed Marconi to set up his own broadcasting station, call sign 2MT, broadcasting from the Chelmsford factory. The first broadcaster was Winifred Collins who sang a song called Absinthe. She was on air five evening a week and earned half a crown. The first professional singer to broadcast was Dame Nellie Melba and when a technical problem delayed transmission, a helpful technician showed Dame Nellie around and pointed out the aerial towers. Dame Nellie who was most put out when she thought she was being told she would have to climb to the top to perform! Marconi opened a second station in London on Kingsway broadcasting with the call sign 2LO. After a while the Government of the day decided that they could not allow a private individual to have a monopoly on broadcasting and in 1922 the BBC was formed which under Lord Reith took over the Marconi broadcast empire lock, stock and barrel!

By 1928, Marconi had a network of wireless stations sending and receiving telegrams all over the world. Once more the Government intervened and the Marconi telegraph interests together with number of other cable operators was subsumed into a new organisation, Cable & Wireless.

During this period, Marconi was working on many other inventions including the first broadcast television equipment. Marconi joined with EMI to form a joint Company to develop TV cameras initially for studio use and later outside broadcasts. Until relatively recent times, EMI cameras were pre-eminent in TV broadcast circles.

In 1924, now living in Italy, Marconi divorced his wife and in 1927 had the marriage annulled so he could marry again to the daughter of an Italian Count. Marconi died in Rome in 1937 of a heart attack.

There followed a short question and answer session before the Chairman thanked the speaker for his entertaining and informative talk.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Visit to St Barnabas Barn

Following the talk by Bill Hardy at our last meeting, we are arranging a visit to the St Barnabas Barn in Thorley. Having consulted their Parish Diary, the date has been set for the 23rd July at 10.00AM. Participants should make their own way there although there will be lifts available if anyone needs one. There is no charge for the visit but a donation to the upkeep of the building would be appreciated. Any members who haven't already expressed an interest please let your Secretary know and those who have already signed up for the visit, please confirm the date is suitable.

5.2 EVHS On Tour

The Secretary reported that the Society would be out and about over the next couple of weekends. June 11th will see us manning our stand at the Village Fete where we will have a display of photographs and the stand alone website together with sample copies of our new books on Broome Farm and the Robin Hood. We will also have some photographs that we hope people will be able to help us identify and provide dates for.

On Sunday 12th we will be providing a display at St Mary's "Ring Our Bells" event. Hopefully our President Gordon Barker will also be along with some artefacts of his own.

June the 18th and 19th we will be back at St Marys with a basket entered into the Church Flower Festival. Our thanks go to Jean Beeston who is coordinating our entry.

5.3 RUH Visit to Thaxted

On Saturday 18th June, RUH are organising a tour of Thaxted hosted by Bruce Munro who you will know from the talks he has presented to us. We had our own tour with Bruce some years ago and it was a very entertaining experience. If anyone would like to go on the RUH tour be at the North door of Thaxted church at 11.00AM, again it is free of charge. If you can let me know if you are going, I will pass your name on to Jackie Cooper so that she knows to wait for you.

5.4 New Road Names

We have just been advised that the suggested names published in the Village magazine have been accepted by the Developers and will feature in the new estates.

5.5 Web Site

The website continues to show a healthy amount of traffic maintaining an average of 100 visits per week.

New material has been added to the site regularly but sometimes it is difficult to get everything onto the page without clutter. For this reason, a new info button has been added to the photo album pages. Clicking on this button brings up additional information pertaining to the photos without getting in the way.

5.6 Sarsen Stone

The Chairmen noted that Stewart Pimblett was making arrangements to move the Sarsen Stone to Tye Green where it will be positioned by the "Pond" to serve as a seat to rest weary limbs.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th September when Dr Herbert Eiden will be speaking about The Peasants Revolt in Essex.

ENDS