

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 9th MARCH 2016

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	David Verlander
Heather Salvidge	Mike Rea	Chris Bush
Avril Braidwood	Vic Dowsett	Diane Bush
Campbell Dunn	Lynda Dunn	Tricia Holyomes
Kevin Wood	Tim Snow	Margaret Rea
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Colin Smith
Christine Hall	Caryl Benner	Sue Beeston
Margaret Shaw	Ray Gaubert	Nina Gaubert
Jean Platt	Neil Bourke	Peter Clear
Tony Bailey	Jackie Bailey	Anne Player
Do Hackett	Valerie Austin	Brian Tulley
Janet Tulley	Peter Johnson	Sue Johnson

Apologies:

Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark	Keith Merrifield
Pam Merrifield	Moyra Jackson	Ian Jackson
Trevor Hackett	Gloria Eatson	Tony Eatson
Gordon Fulton	Ruth Fulton	

We welcome Tony & Jackie Bailey and Peter Johnson as new members.

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

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 11th November 2015

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual General Meeting

The Secretary opened the Annual General Meeting.

- I. Invitations were extended for nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

There were no nominations for these posts so the incumbents will serve for another year

- II. Invitations were extended for nominations for Committee members.

Again, there being no nominations, the existing members will serve for another year.

- III. The Chairman presented a review of the Society's activities over the past year.

- IV. The Treasurer presented the Society accounts for the last year.

- V. David Verlander was, with the agreement of members present, asked to serve as the Society's representative to the ECA.

Secretary's Note: Copies of the Annual Review and the Society Accounts are distributed with these minutes.

There being no other matters raised by the members present the Annual General Meeting was closed and business reverted to the main agenda.

5. Guest Speaker Mr Richard Priestley

The Chairman introduced Mr Richard Priestley who presented his talk on "The Last Days of Pompeii".

Subtitled Latin didn't kill me – a wander around Pompeii, Richard introduced his talk by pointing out some of the similarities between life in AD79 and today, things like central heating, running water, shops, fast food and entertainment to name just a few.

The subtitle refers to the modern way of teaching Latin, the Cambridge Latin Course which is based on the records kept by Lucius Caecilius Lucundus a banker who lived in Pompeii. He kept extensive notes that were preserved when Pompeii was inundated and give us much insight into life in the city before it's destruction.

Situated about 140 miles from Rome and ten miles from Vesuvius on the Bay of Naples, Pompeii was founded in the 8th Century BC. Over the years it came under the influence of the Etruscans from modern day Tuscany in Northern Italy, the Greeks who wanted it to grow crops and the Samnites. These people were from Samnium in south Central Italy and fought several wars against the Roman empire before being finally defeated in the first century BC when Pompeii came under Roman rule.

Pompeii today is about a mile from the sea but then the sea came up to the city walls by the Sea Gate and the harbour where mooring rings can still be seen attached to the harbour walls. There were several other gates around the city walls and a number of watchtowers to guard against ne'er do wells. It covers an area around 165 acres of which roughly two thirds has been excavated. There are several theories as to the origin of the name Pompeii but no-one knows for sure.

Just up from the Sea Gate is the Forum, the community centre of Pompeii. Within its walls were the Basilica or Town Hall and the Comitium or voting hall, a Town council being elected annually as modelled on the system in Rome. Entrance to the Forum was through the Temple of Apollo and at the other end of the Forum was the Temple of Jupiter, a grand affair that befitted the most important of the Roman gods, beneath the temple was the public treasury. Another interesting building is the Building of Eumachia built by the Priestess Eumachia in the first century AD. An inscription reveals that she "made the building with her own money" showing that women in Roman Society could be rich and powerful in their own right. There was also a large vegetable market and the all-important latrines or public conveniences!

The main streets of Pompeii were flagged with heavy stones and had high kerbs that meant one crossed the street by way of stepping stones to avoid the manure produced by the cart horses and general detritus left in the streets. Side streets were narrower but had the same high kerbs and were crossed by a single stepping stone with a gap at each end to accommodate the cart wheels which were of a fixed and defined width to negotiate the gaps in the stones. These roads were of necessity one-way to avoid a traffic jam if carts should meet head-on. Other traffic management features included stone bollards erected at the entrance to the Forum to keep wheeled traffic out of the pedestrian area. As Pompeii was significantly higher at its Northern end, the stepping stones were arranged to cover much of the width of the road to restrict the torrent of water that would otherwise flow down the streets to the sea when it rained.

Fresh water was brought to Pompeii by means of an aqueduct that was arranged to fill a large water tower at the Northern end of the city. This tower had three outlets that fed smaller towers situated lower down the

city which served to regulate the pressure of water. These towers served public water fountains and the public baths only the very richest having their own water supply. The public bathhouse was a bit like the local pub, somewhere where people could go and relax whilst socialising with their friends.

There is much graffiti to be seen on the streets of Pompeii, much of it was advertising for the various gladiatorial shows, theatre and other entertainments. There were also electioneering slogans and interestingly some were signed by the perpetrators suggesting that there were people whose full-time occupation was creating said graffiti.

For entertainment, the Pompeiians had the theatre that held around five thousand people that has been rebuilt and is still used today. Then, most productions featured Greek New Comedy, an ancient "Whitehall farce". Next door was a smaller thousand seat theatre where music would often be played. The main attraction was the 20,000 seat amphitheatre where the gladiatorial contests were held. There were some twenty-seven different kinds of gladiator identified by countries of origin, fighting styles and weapons of choice. Gladiators would fight themselves as well as wild animals. The floor of the amphitheatre was covered in sand to soak up the blood.

There are many shops and fast food outlets on the streets mostly identified by pictures. Pompeii was a seaport and very cosmopolitan, not everyone visiting the city spoke Latin. Every shop would have its shrine to the appropriate gods for their trade, these shrines often being decorated with pictures of serpents that were considered good luck in the mythology of the time.

The many houses in Pompeii all followed the same general style from the smallest to the largest. The most grand was the House of the Faun covering some 32,000 square feet and richly decorated. Originally, wall decoration was a plain Pompeian Red paint that was gradually overtaken by simple trompe l'oeil 3D designs that got more and more elaborate as time went on. Every house would have a shrine to the household gods for whom daily offerings would be left in order to bring good fortune to the family.

The Romans always buried their dead outside the city walls where there was plenty of space. Cemeteries were situated on the main roads where the elaborate and impressive monuments to the dead and accompanying inscriptions could be readily seen by travellers.

In August of 79AD it all ended when Vesuvius erupted. At 1pm on the 24th a cloud of dust and ash was ejected from the volcano that was blown across Pompeii causing much damage and some people started to flee the city. At one o'clock the following morning a series of hypocaustic surges sent superheated air into the atmosphere instantly killing anyone in its path and destroying nearby Herculaneum.

At six in the morning another surge hit Pompeii. A deadly burning combination of gases, volcanic debris and molten rock travelling at huge speed killed everyone who hadn't managed to get away. This was followed by a rain of dust and ash that covered the area up to a depth of twenty feet. The torrential rain that followed mixed with the dust and ash and set like concrete preserving this slice of Roman life.

Pompeii remained undisturbed until 1595 when it was discovered during the construction of an aqueduct. It was rediscovered in 1748 and dug up (looted) by the King of Naples who took away much of the treasure to be found there. The first genuine excavation took place in 1764 but it wasn't until 1920 when Amedeo Maiuri became Superintendent of Excavations that excavation restarted and carried on under his guidance until 1960. Following a severe earthquake in 1980, documentation of the uncovered ruins became a priority and in recent years conservation has taken precedence.

Richard concluded his talk by saying around 13,000 people lost their lives that night in Herculaneum and Pompeii, of these around 1100 or so have been excavated. Because of the nature of the ash that fell on Pompeii it has been possible to produce plaster casts of around 100 of the bodies producing a grim monument to those that lost their life.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Priestley for his fascinating talk and opened the floor to questions.

6. Open Forum and Any Other Business

6.1 Newport Local History Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Newport LHG will be held on March 11th, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in the Church House Newport. Ben Cowell will be speaking about "Some Essex Country Houses And Their Owners". This will be followed by a short walking tour of Newport Village led by members of the LHG.

Any members going were asked if they could offer a lift to anyone who needs it. Paul & Heather Salvidge kindly offered to take Avril Braidwood.

6.2 Hailes Wood

Mike Rea said he had received a query as to whether Hailes Wood should be written as one word or two. It seemed that the Post Office had it listed both ways as did the Uttlesford Council Offices. After a short discussion it was agreed that it should be two words, the name originally coming from the old field names. It was suggested that the Tithe map may be able to help and a chat with our President Gordon Barker might also be helpful.

7. Date of Next Meeting

At our next meeting on Wednesday June 14th at 8pm, the Society will be welcoming Carolyn Wingfield, Curator of the Saffron Walden Museum who will be speaking about Local Finds. This will hopefully be accompanied by a small display.

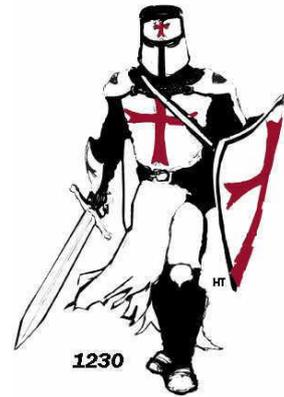
Meetings later in the year will feature Roger Clark in September presenting the "History of St Mary's" and in November we will welcome back Bill Hardy speaking about the "Bishops Stortford Union" and referencing the Elsenham Poor House.

ENDS

Review of the Year and Chairman's Report See Below

Elsenham Village History Society

Formed: 2010



Annual General Meeting 9 March 2016 – Review of The Year 2016

- The Society has welcomed a number of new members through the year but overall the total membership has remained steady at 65.
 - Speakers -
 - March – Bill Hardy spoke to the Society about Carpenters Marks in Wood Framed Buildings.
 - June – Peter Turrall, the Chairman of the Marconi Society came to Elsenham to talk about the life of Marconi – 1874 to 1937 – and the birth of wireless communication.
 - September – Dr Herbert Eiden gave a talk about the Peasants Revolt in Essex and the principal protagonists
 - November – we were pleased to welcome Moyra Jackson and Avril Braidwood to the podium who gave an entertaining account of the history of the Elsenham Women's Institute
 - Visits

- In July we visited the St Barnabas Barn in Thorley for a guided tour led by Bill Hardy

- We have held four committee meetings

- Gordon Fulton resigned from the Committee due to ill-health having served the Society tirelessly for several years. We were pleased however, to welcome Avril Braidwood to the vacant position.

- The Society has continued to work with the Parish Council to carry on the refurbishment of the Memorial Chapel. It became clear that we were going to need external funding so sources of grant funding were explored. The most promising was the National Lottery Heritage Fund who we approached for advice which led us to apply for a larger grant to cover the addition of a small outbuilding at the rear for kitchen and toilet facilities. A sympathetic local architect produced a basic plan together with baseline costings. The proposal was presented to the Parish Council who agreed that we should proceed so the first stage application went to the HLF to consider us for a grant. Unfortunately the application was turned down so we end the year very little forward from this time last year.

- The Society provided a display of photographs at St Mary's "Ring Our Bells" event

- The 8mm film given to the society by Jean Reay of life on Ugley Hall Farm in the 1950's continues to stir interest amongst other local history groups and indeed, your Secretary and Heather Salvidge will be presenting the film to Hatfield Registry Local History Society later in the year.

- We published our History of Broom Farm based on research by Jean Beeston. This has sold very well and the first print run has almost sold out

- Our Chairman has produced a talk on the Elsenham Jam Factory based on the talk given by John Hurwitz in the early days of the Society. This will be made available to other local groups

- The Society website continues to thrive and much new material has been added over the year and more is planned for the future including a short paper on the almost coming of the canals to Elsenham

- We have renewed our membership of the Recorders of Uttlesford History

- In June we had our usual stall and display at the village fete

- We have continued to add to our photo archive
- The sound recording of reminiscences of village residents continues as does transcription to make these available to a wider audience
- Work continues to progress on the directory of village place names and their origins

Mike Rea
Secretary EVHS

<http://www.elsenham-history.co.uk>

Chairman's Report See Below

Chairman's Report AGM March 8th 2017

It seems almost impossible that a year has passed since the last AGM. Much has been achieved and I thank all members of the committee and the membership who have contributed in so many ways during the past 12 months.

A special note of thanks to Treasurer, Paul Salvidge & secretary Mike Rae.

Now I realise much of what I report will have been covered or is going to be restated by Mike anyway. Sorry.

Memorial Chapel. Our initial research lead us to believe that we were not thinking big enough. We were then lead into much work. Thanks to Peter Clear & Stewart Pimblett, (Parish council) ably assisted by Mike here as we assembled a large grant Application (as directed). We were turned down it seems we did not make a suitably substantive "Heritage" case. I am not alone in thinking the financial outlay to do all the work at one time was such that it would have been better to do the work in stages. One can only do as advised . We shall continue.

The Broome farm Book. We started the year doing more work on the History of Broome Farm. There had been ongoing research for many years. Thanks in main to Jean Beeston the book, running to twenty eight pages tells the story of Broome Farm through the ages. There are a few copies left. The club is in profit on this venture. Price £3.00.

Our Web Site. The Broome Farm book was laid out by Chris Bush. Chris puts in many hours working on this site. I recently receives an Email from a guy in Bognor Regis. I had directed him to this site. He had to all accounts spent a long time looking at photos, listening to recorded conversations looking at Census returns and just looking around. The visitors to our site passed 15,000 some months ago. It has become a respected resource for the historian, this society should be very proud.

History Meetings. We continued to have speakers of a high standard throughout the year. I must commend Mike for all his hard work on tracking these guys and gals down.

A slight experimental change to meetings. Many commented on how nice it was to have refreshments during the "Women's Institute " Talk. As we closed Moyra W.I. President and History Society member kindly offered to make Tea and Coffee half way through our meetings.

Photo Archive. Our collection of photos increases. David Bright (lives in what was Robin Hood Pub) has given us some old photos. David Fright (Ex Director) Elsenham Jam factory has passed to me photos and documents.

Some of you may remember the Illustrated Talk given by the late John Hurwitz, I helped him put together his notes and assembled the photo show that accompanied it.. The aforementioned David Fright contacted me when I asked for assistance on the History of the jam factory. His pamphlets produced when he worked there plus his photos are absolute treasure trove. Encouraged by him and noted our publications on our Web Site we are looking into the possibility of producing a book on the history of The Elsenham Jam factory.

Almost finally . I will be giving a talk "The History of Elsenham Jam" at Stansted History society later in the year.

I have mentioned just a few of the many projects undertaken during the past year.

I realise I have not spoken on the additions to our Web site, the paper covering the coming – almost of canals to Elsenham by Dave Verlander

I have said nothing about our Trip to St Barnabas barn.

I have failed miserably to mention all the hard work done at the Church sponsored bell ringing where we assembled a collection of photos.

I have said nothing on the Crotal Bell saga.

I must not conclude without saying a fond word of thanks to Gordon Fulton who stepped down from our committee in November. Thanks Gordon and a special thank you for your work on "FOR THE DURATION" and assistance with the War Memorial.

A very full year, thank you all for