

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 14th MARCH 2018

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	David Verlander
Heather Salvidge	Mike Rea	Chris Bush
Avril Braidwood	Vic Dowsett	Diane Bush
Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark	Tricia Holyomes
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Anne Player
Christine Hall	Valerie Austin	Brian Tulley
Jean Platt	Tony Bailey	Jackie Bailey

Apologies:

Sue Johnson	Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield
Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson	Colin Smith
Tony White	Ann White	Margaret Shaw
Kevin Wood	Caryl Benner	Campbell Dunn
Margaret Rea		

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present and Dr Herbert Eiden, our guest speaker for the evening.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting 8th November 2017**

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 agreed to 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 Chairman's Remarks 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.

Chairman's Remarks attached Below

5. Guest Speaker Dr Herbert Eiden

The Chairman introduced Dr Herbert Eiden who presented his talk on "Holidaying at the Seaside in NE Essex".

The idea of a holiday away from home came with the Industrial Revolution, prior to this the only days off were the Holy days at Christmas and Easter and on these days the entertainments would come to the people and with the growth of the railway network, it became practical for people to travel away on holiday.

In these early days it was believed that swimming in the sea offered great benefit and the seaside offered the best chance of fresh air away from the busy towns so the burgeoning railways lost no time in creating seaside resorts by connecting them to the towns and cities.

Initially people would take day trips to sample the delights of the seaside but as industry became more established and machines were worked harder it became the norm to shut the factories and mills for a week in Summer when maintenance could take place, these became known as Wakes Weeks named after the early Christian tradition of holding a vigil or wake for one's Patron saint.

In 1871, the Bank Holiday Act established four more holidays – Easter Monday, Whit Monday, First Monday in August and Boxing Day and it became practicable for people to go away for longer than just a day so the seaside boarding house was born. At first families rented a room and bought their own food to cook but gradually the Bed and Breakfast trade grew up to cater for these families and hotels for the better off. To pay for these trips, savings clubs were set up and people would save enough each week to be able to afford their excursion to the seaside. Things carried on in this fashion through to 1938 when Neville Chamberlain enacted the Holiday Pay Act entitling manual workers to time off with pay and by the mid 1950s, some 95% of workers were so entitled.

As the people came to the seaside, so the towns developed more amenities and piers became fashionable offering visitors a novel view of the resort from “out to sea”. As time went on, piers became more elaborate offering attractions such as theatres, music halls, amusement arcades and even swimming pools.

Not all resorts were of good quality and in 1936, Billy Butlin, appalled by what he saw available opened his first holiday camp in Skegness. Costing from thirty-five shillings (£1.75p) a week, families were housed in mock Tudor design chalets with bathrooms and hot & cold running water. Butlin worked with the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) to advertise his camps and was so successful that the railway paid 50% of the advertising costs.

As said earlier, bathing in the sea was seen as beneficial and in the Georgian Period it was seen as fashionable to go to the seaside to take of the waters and mixed bathing was not unknown. This was frowned on however and in the early 1800s bathing machines appeared and their use continued throughout the 19th century. Swimmers would enter the back of the machine and whilst changing into bathing attire, a pony or horse would tow the machine down the beach into the sea where the bather would leave the machine down the steps into the water before turning around and climbing back into the machine. There was very little actual swimming because the local byelaws didn't allow bathers to stray from their machines. As time went by these laws were observed more in the breach than the observance and by the early 1920s most bathing machines had been converted to chalets.

By the 1930s “sun-worshipping” became popular and bathing suits for men and women became more skimpy to allow the sun to get to one’s skin and a tan was considered chic. Most byelaws by this time were amended to say that it didn’t matter what people wore to swim as long as public decency was upheld.

Finally it was noted that whilst most resorts wanted to attract visitors, others such as Frinton worked to keep the general populace away, even building the station as far from the sea as possible to benefit locals but disadvantage the visitor.

6. Open Forum and Any Other Business

6.1 Possible Visit to Stow Maries WW1 Aerodrome

Stow Maries Aerodrome is an original WW1 airfield that has been preserved and with the aid of a big National Lottery Grant has developed into a WW1 aviation museum. Housed in the original hangars are replicas of WW1 vintage aircraft as well as other items from the period. They offer guided tours for private parties and it is proposed that given sufficient interest, we will arrange a visit in the Summer. Dependent on numbers, we may look to hiring a minibus. Anyone interested in visiting Stow Maries is asked to put their name down on the sign-up sheet.

7. Thank You

Our thanks go to Jean and Ian Beeston for preparing the teas and coffees this evening.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 13th June. Our speaker for the evening will be Richard Priestley who will be returning to talk about the history of Wimpole Hall. Richard has been associated with Wimpole Hall for many years and with his detailed knowledge, this promises to be a particularly good talk.

Later in the year, in September, we will feature Terry Ward presenting Station to Station, a wander along the railway from Bishops Stortford to Cambridge and in November Alan Taylor will conclude his trio of appearances talking about the end of WW1.

ENDS

CHAIRMANS REPORT 2018

Before I begin I must apologise for omitting some members of the Committee from my comments and indeed not mentioning some of our members. This is quite frankly because the amount work done by everyone, by ALL MEMBERS has been quite remarkable.

I shall attempt to list the majority.

1. We began our year with a change on the committee. We were saddened to receive Gordon Fulton's resignation but gladdened to welcome Avril Braidwood. We all hoped she would become a valuable addition to our committee and I am pleased to say our hopes have been realised.
2. The Sarsen stone unearthed in Tye Green has been placed by their pond. I Thank Stewart Pimblett for storing and then physically placing the huge artefact.
3. There is one project which has (as yet) not been realised. The Memorial Chapel. Despite much work preparing grant applications which involved seeking quotes and meeting on site on numerous occasions to lease with Architects and tradesmen not much has come to pass. Although not entirely true, much work has been done to the fabric of the building, the costs borne by the Parish Council. Many repairs have been done the EVHS being happy to advise. Currently the building is being used mainly for storage it contains chairs and other things donated to our society and some Parish council papers in a filing cabinet. We are still looking for the elusive grant aid need for further works.
4. In May we had as stall at the "What Elsenham Offers" event which gave groups like ours the opportunity to advertise their presence. We are hoping to repeat this this year. I thank the members who manned the stall last year and thank them in advance for manning it this year.
5. Web Site. Very much a "Jewel in the Crown," of the Elsenham Village History Society. There have been 28,393 visits to the site since 7th December 2013, that equals on average 127.8 visits per week → The number of visits per week is on the increase which indicates the site is becoming much busier.
It incorporates. Village snapshots and more recently our Web Master, Chris Bush having seen on Facebook the conversations and photographs has moved some of that material to our web site.

You also can find the 22 Transcripts (both audio and in a printed format). More interviews and recordings are planned. The Web site is vast. Many happy hours can be spent perusing its content. I have received compliments from numerous persons who have visited the site. I MUST thank Chris for the many hours he has spent working on www.elsenham-history.co.uk Chris has also leased with our President, Gordon Barker and received a number of historical documents. These include Marriage Banns & marriage registers. He now has the old Minutes from Elsenham village Hall. He has spent many hours transcribing those and producing legible documents. Thanks for that Chris.

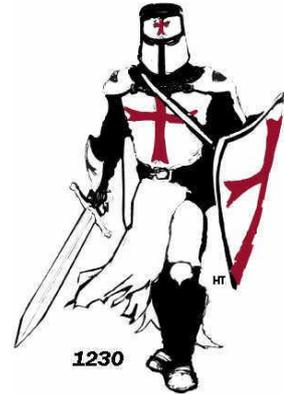
6. We continue to have history meetings within this hall. The quality of our Speakers continues to be superb. I thank Mike Rea for organising those speakers and for all his work in his capacity as secretary.
7. David Verlander has done much work researching village boundaries. Heather Salvidge continues her work on old street names.
8. New publications have been produced by the society, I thank Jean Beeston for the "Broome Farm" booklet. More are on the horizon.
9. It would be totally remiss of me if I closed without mentioning the work of our Treasurer, Paul Salvidge. The Society does have outlays but Paul keeps us all in order. He manages us (and the books) superbly. My thanks go to him for all his hard work.

Thanks for your attendance tonight and throughout the pass year. It is a pleasure being your Chairman.

Review of 2017 Attached Below

Elsenham Village History Society

Formed: 2010



Annual General Meeting 10 March 2018 - Review of The Year 2017

- During the year we did a membership audit and although we welcomed a number of new members, overall the total paid membership has dropped to 54
 - Speakers -
 - March – Richard Priestley gave a vivid and fascinating account of the “The Last Days of Pompeii”.
 - June – Carolyn Wingfield, curator of The Saffron Walden Museum gave a talk about the museum and local finds.
 - September – Roger Clarke told the story of St Mary’s Church from its 12th century origins to the present day.
 - November – Bill Hardy returned to give an account of The Bishops Stortford Union Workhouse and the Elsenham Poorhouse
 - Visits
 - There were no visits this year

- We have held four committee meetings
- Unfortunately, work on the refurbishment of the Memorial Chapel has stalled this past year as following the rejection of our bid by the National Lottery fund, we have not been able to find alternative funding.
- The Society had a stand at the “What Elsenham Offers” event and was able to provide a snapshot of Elsenham’s history for would –be and new residents.
- The 8mm film given to the society by Jean Reay of life on Ugley Hall Farm in the 1950’s was presented to a meeting of the film to Hatfield Registry Local History Society and is booked later this year at the Bishops Stortford NT Supporters Group.
- We have published a History of The Robin Hood Public House. This started life as an article by Chris Bush for the website but was subsequently expanded into a book.
- Our Chairman has further refined his talk on the Elsenham Jam Factory based on a talk given by John Hurwitz in the early days of the Society. This was presented to our neighbours at the Stansted History Society where it was well received.
- The Society website has continued to grow over the year and even more new material has been added. A recent analysis of usage has shown that it has continued to grow week on week since Christmas 2013 when we first put it on line, a very creditable performance for a small specialist site such as ours.
- We have renewed our membership of the Records 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>