

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 12th SEPTEMBER 2018
MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	David Verlander
Heather Salvidge	Mike Rea	Chris Bush
Diane Bush	Margaret Rea	Tim Snow
Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark	Tricia Holyomes
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Anne Player
Christine Hall	Valerie Austin	Brian Tulley
Jean Platt	Tony Bailey	Jackie Bailey
Tony White	Anne White	Helen Mudge
Jill French	Vic Dowsett	Graham Morland
Ray Gaubert	Nina Gaubert	Ian Jackson
Roger Kendrick	J King	Caryl Benner
Trevor Hackett	Kevin Wood	Richard and Viv

Apologies:

Sue Johnson	Peter Johnson	Campbell Dunn
Lynda Dunn	Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield
Gloria Eatson	Tony Eatson	Moyra Jackson

We welcome Richard and Viv as new members and also Graham Morland as a returning member.

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

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 13th June 2018

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Committee Vacancy

Following the sad passing of Avril Braidwood we have a vacancy on the Committee. If any member feels they would like to join the Committee please talk to any Officer of the society to find out more on what it entails.

Secretary's Note: At the conclusion of the meeting, Anne White came forward to volunteer to join the Committee and was invited to the next meeting of the committee.

5. Guest Speaker Mr Terry Ward

The Chairman introduced Terry Ward, a local photographer who has held a number of exhibitions of his work and has been published.

Terry's talk was about the West Anglia railway line from Cambridge to Bishop 's Stortford and its environs. He prefaced his remarks by saying that what happens today is tomorrow's history and his aim was to document the present for the benefit of future historians. He started by discussing Mill Road Bridge just north of Cambridge station. At this point, to the east of the railway is Romsey, a development that was built to house the very many railway workers employed in and around Cambridge. To the west of the bridge lies the main City of Cambridge dominated by the university colleges and it might be argued that Mill Road Bridge personifies the split between Town & Gown. Until the nationalisation of the railways in 1948, four companies used Cambridge station and all had their own facilities and passenger and goods traffic was shared. To ensure that each company got the correct payments, an organisation known as the Railway Clearing House monitored all traffic and decided what proportion was carried by which company, a job they did all over the country not just at Cambridge.

Moving south, the route of the present guided busway follows that of the old Oxford – Cambridge (Varsity) railway that was closed by Beeching in the 1960s and is now scheduled to be re-opened.

As an aside, Terry noted that many of the level crossings along the line are being closed by Network Rail, many of which are along the route of centuries old footpaths.

At Shelford, the Stour Valley line to Haverhill and Sudbury diverged, another victim of the Beeching axe. The line has long gone but the route of the railway through Haverhill has been preserved as a footpath with all the infrastructure intact. There are various original buildings still extant along the present line, mainly crossing cottages such as the one just north of Great Chesterford but others include the grain siding and loading dock still visible at Whittlesford station.

Several of the station buildings along the line are modelled on Georgian houses, that at Audley End being equipped with a fine porteclochere probably for the benefit of the then Lord Braybrooke who only allowed the railway passage as long as it didn't impinge on the Audley End Estate. This necessitated the building of the two tunnels to the north of the station. It should also be noted that Audley End station is some distance from Audley End itself being built in Wendens Ambo. Just outside the station there are a row of railway cottages built to a very high standard by Lord Braybrooke and leased to the railway for 99 years. Audley End was also the junction for the branch line to Saffron Walden.

As we move south towards Newport, the railway crosses a 22 arch brick built viaduct that subsequently seen Newport grow around it.

Nearing the end of the journey we now approach Bishop's Stortford where the remains of the Flich Line to Braintree can be seen heading east. Along the line was Easton Lodge home of Daisy, the Countess of Warwick. A station was built nearby, reputedly on the orders of the Prince of Wales / King Edward VII who was allegedly having an affair with Daisy.

Finally we're at Bishop's Stortford. All that remains today is the Signal Box but in the past there were extensive sidings serving the maltings, gasworks and timber yard. There were also additional sidings serving the cattle pens and another laid across Station Road to the flour mill.

This concluded the talk which was followed by a question and answer session.

6. Open Forum and Any Other Business

6.1 The Well Ordered Town

We have acquired a number of copies of Jackie Cooper's book "The Well Ordered Town" a story of Saffron Walden from 1792 – 1862. These are offered free to members but a small donation to the Society would be appreciated.

6.2 St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival

In anticipation of this year's festival, Jean Beeston has again kindly volunteered to coordinate the EVHS offering she would however, appreciate assistance. Would anyone who would like to help out please speak to Jean.

6.3 What Elsenham Offers II

What Elsenham offers is back for a second year on 23rd September in the newly re-vamped Village Hall. We will have a stand there so do come along and say hello.

7. Thank You

Thanks go to Jean and Ian Beeston for preparing and serving the teas and coffees this evening.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on November 14th just three days after the centenary of the end of WW1. To commemorate this anniversary , Alan Taylor will be coming along to speak about the end of the Great War and what it meant for Elsenham and those returning home from the battlefield.

ENDS