

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 13th NOVEMBER 2019

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	David Verlander
Heather Salvidge	Mike Rea	Chris Bush
Gill Hathaway	Margaret Rea	Diane Bush
Ray Rogers	Tim Snow	Vic Dowsett
Kevin Wood	Christine Hall	Lynda Bowcock
Carol Wylde	Jill French	Helen Mudge
Frances Lambert	Jill Hunt	Keith Smith
Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark	Tricia Holyomes
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Peter Clear
Therese Clear	John Quinton	Anne Player
Brenda Davidson	Valerie Austin	Ian Jackson
Moyra Jackson	Trevor Hackett	Do Hackett
Angie Wenlock	Sue Beeston	Sue Waite
Chris Waite		

Apologies:

Tony Bailey	Jackie Bailey	Campbell Dunn
Lynda Dunn	Nina Gaubert	Roger Kendrick
Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield	Tony Eatson
Gloria Eatson		

We welcome Brenda Davidson as a new member.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present and Mark Carroll, our guest speaker for the evening.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 11th September 2019

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Guest Speaker Dr Mark Carroll

The Chairman introduced Dr Carroll and his talk DNA, Surnames and Genealogy. For thirty five years a biochemistry lecturer in one of London's premier medical schools his other interest is family history and he is Secretary of the Waltham Forest Family History society.

The talk started by explaining that DNA analysis can help to overcome brick walls encountered when researching family history and although they complement each other, it is not without its pitfalls.

Every cell of the body contains a tightly wound DNA strand that itself contains twenty three chromosomes that is unique to that body. DNA can change (mutate) from time to time and it is these changes that can be used for DNA fingerprinting capable of identifying one person out of 1000 million! A father passes his surname to his son but also his Y chromosome and this Y chromosome will be present in all men with a common ancestor. If there is a Non Paternity Event (NPE) however, this link may be broken. NPEs can be caused by illegitimacy, adoption or in earlier times where an inheritance went to a different branch of the family on the proviso they changed their name. By mapping surnames it can be shown that rare surnames cluster in certain parts of the country and very rare surnames can be derived from one man in one village.

One percent of human DNA is contained within the cells mitochondria, known as mitochondrial DNA (mt-DNA) this is only passed on by the mother. Research has shown that mt-DNA from European people falls into seven clusters each derived from one maternal ancestor.

DNA analysis can be useful to trace both distant and recent ancestry, to find long lost cousins and to break down genealogical brick walls to give a clue where to look next. Conventional techniques can trace families back to Great Great Great Grandparents although there may well be gaps. Using DNA analysis, we can get a "back-in-time" facility that allows tracing of ancestral origins to earlier eras, in some cases back to the twelfth century. Taken to the extreme, it can be shown that Y chromosomal (paternal) DNA can be traced back to an ancestral "Adam" that lived in Africa c.180,000 years ago. Meanwhile tracing mt-DNA (maternal DNA) back leads us to an ancestral "Eve" living some 200,000 years ago.

These findings can be used to produce a migration map. Not generally useful for family history this technique was used to great effect in the identification of the skeleton of Richard III. When the skeleton was found, the deformities, wounds suffered (at the Battle of Bosworth) and age at death suggested that this was indeed Richard III. Confirmation came when DNA extracted from the skeleton was compared against that of the living descendants of his mother Cecily Neville.

The final proof if it were needed, came when the skull was used to reconstruct the face, the result bearing a striking resemblance to the last known portrait of Richard III.

The talk concluded with an explanation that genetic genealogy has limitations, it is no substitute for documentary research, costs are high and understanding the results can be difficult. Privacy can be an issue as well as unwelcome surprises such as illegitimacy.

Techniques for the interpretation of results are being refined and improved continuously however, so once you have your profile, it can be re-interpreted at a later date as new analysis techniques become available.

There then followed a brisk question and answer session.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival

Following the last meeting, the Fabric Fund has decided that this year's festival will be cancelled due to uncertainty over the end dates for works to replace the Abbotsford Bridge. Coincidentally, a walk past the bridge this morning revealed that the roadbed is to be reinstated shortly and tarmacking completed by 26th November, the road re-opening shortly thereafter.

5.2 WW1 Presentation at St Mary's Henham on 2nd November

The presentation was very good and Nina Gaubert has been prevailed upon to give her talk on the evacuation of Essex in the event of a German invasion during WW1 at a future meeting.

5.3 Recent Enquiries

We have had a number of enquiries that have opened new avenues of research

Maureen McDonald has contacted us with some stories of her Mother growing up in Elsenham and has sent a copy of a photo of the old Village Hall dressed for Harvest Festival, probably about 1910.

Terry Page contacted us asking for a copy of the School book as his Mother, Rosetta Powter attended there in 1930s. We were able to provide some information for him and he sent us a copy of his family tree and a photo of a Baby Show at Elsenham Hall c. 1928.

Angela Luddington got in touch to tell us of her Great Grandmother, Hilda Gray growing up in the Crown. She gave us the surprising news that in December 1915, Elsenham Hall was in use as the 60th (London) Casualty Clearing Station and sent us pictures of a programme for a concert held in the Village Hall in December 1915 given by musicians from the CCS.

Finally, Roger Taylor has given us some photographs of the School / New Village Hall being built and also of snow blanketing the village sometime in the 1970's

Therese Clear said that circa 1978/9 there had been very heavy snow around and about the Village that meant it was effectively cut off for a day or two.

5.4 New Road Elsenham – A History

Thanks to Heather and Paul Salvidge, there are a very few copies of a printed version of this book available to members for £3.50 each.

6. Thank You

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

7. Date of Next meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th March 2020 and marks the tenth anniversary of our Society. To mark the event, Ray Franklin will be reprising the talk by the late John Hurwitz about The Elsenham Jam Factory. This was one of the very earliest of our talks and to this day still one of the most popular so if you have old memories of the factory or have never heard of it, do come along to find out more about one of our most famous and loved institutions.

ENDS

Minutes Agreed: March 2020
Ray Franklin - Chairman