

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 11th MARCH 2020

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Paul Salvidge	David Verlander
Heather Salvidge	Mike Rea	Chris Bush
Tim Snow	Margaret Rea	Diane Bush
Tony Bailey	Angie Wenlock	Vic Dowsett
Peter Clear	Therese Clear	Kay Curtis
Eileen Kay	Gill Hathaway	Tony Eatson
Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson	Gloria Eatson
Roger Clark	Phyllis Clark	Tricia Holyomes
Mike Lilley	Diane Lilley	Liz Knight
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Anne Player
Christine Hall	Valerie Austin	Brian Tulley
Sue Waite	Carol Wylde	Lynda Bowcock
Trevor Hackett	Do Hackett	John Beeston
Sue Beeston	Keith Hunt	Jill Hunt

Apologies:

Helen Mudge	Roger Kendrick	Jean Platt
Jackie Bailey	Linda Dunn	Campbell Dunn
Nina Gaubert	Keith Merrifield	Pam Merrifield
Margaret Shaw	Kevin Wood	Nigel Lusby

We welcome Mike & Diane Lilley, Linda Bowcock and Angie Wenlock as new members.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present to our tenth anniversary and AGM.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 13th November 2019

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.

There were no nominations so the existing members will serve for another year.

Secretary's Note: To remind members, Officers and Committee members remain as follows

Gordon Barker – President
Ray Franklin – Chairman
Dave Verlander – Vice Chairman
Paul Salvidge – Treasurer
Mike Rea – Secretary

Jean Beeston – Committee
Chris Bush – Committee and Webmaster
Nina Gaubert - Committee
Heather Salvidge – Committee

- III. The Chairman presented a review of the Society's activities over the past year.
- IV. The Treasurer presented the Society accounts for the year 2019.
- V. David Verlander was, with the agreement of members present, asked to continue 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.

5. Speaker, Our Chairman , Ray Franklin

Ray started the talk by dedicating it to John Hurwitz, one time Managing Director of the factory and Chairman of the Parish Council for some thirty years. It was John who was instrumental in negotiating the land for the playing fields.

The jam factory was started by Sir Walter who was a great benefactor to the village having over the years given land for the High St Cemetery and the Elsenham to Thaxted branch railway as well as paying for many other improvements, all for the betterment of the villagers. Sir Walter had experimented with jam making in the kitchens of Elsenham Hall using fruit from the gardens. These experiments were successful so he set up the factory to give employment to his estate workers during the then agricultural depression registering the name 'The Elsenham Jam Company' in 1890 and the trademark in 1893. The jam was produced in small thatched and corrugated iron roofed sheds near Gaunts End, the jam being made in open copper pans heated by steam and holding around ninety pounds (40Kg) of jam. In the first years the factory produced "Little Scarlet Strawberry" jam using a special type of small fruit that was grown locally in fields near the jam company. This tiny fruit was a beggar to pick and little strawberry jam ceased to be produced a few years prior to the company being closed.

Influenced by his travels on the Continent, Sir Walter also planted lavender fields. To extract the oil, the lavender was placed in a large cylindrical contraption with a fire in the base and a ladder up the side. Standing some ten feet (3M) high a worker would climb the ladder and drop the lavender in the top to be heated. After a while it was reported there would be a loud bang whereupon a drop of lavender oil would drip from the tap at the bottom! Growing, harvesting and producing this oil was very labour intensive and consequently the oil was very expensive.

Following Sir Walter's death in 1914 and the eventual dissolution of the estate, the factory was acquired by a Commander Carr who ran the company until 1959 when he sold to Tony Blunt. During the Commander's time the emphasis changed and jam production was reduced in favour of fruit growing. However, when Mr Blunt, a fruit farmer took over, the collapse of the apple price in 1964 however forced another change as the decline in jam making was reversed and the fruit growing was rationalised retaining ten acres of strawberry fields outside the factory and some apple and pear orchards. Lavender was no longer produced because of the competition from France and the company concentrated on raising the quality and image of its jam. In this period experiments were conducted adding alcohol to the jams. These were successful and sold well, it was said that the Rum & Blackberry were particularly good!

By 1969 the firm was doing very well but on the night of November 1st the packing shed caught alight and the factory was destroyed by fire leaving just the boiler house standing and a couple of boiling pans. The fire brigade used some 16,000 gallons of water dousing the flames. Notwithstanding this disaster the factory was back in production in a building near Stansted Airport within days using borrowed equipment to fulfil their Christmas orders. A meeting was held and the decision was taken to rebuild and a new state of the art factory was built. Future production would be sold in smaller 12oz jars and this change inspired the famous tagline 'Most Expensive Jam In The World'.

During the 1970s the extensive range of jams and marmalades were exported in large numbers and in 1976 Elsenham Quality Foods won a First prize at the prestigious International Foods Exhibition (SIAL) in Paris – the only British company to do so.

In 1971 the company acquired the rights to Patum Peperium – Gentlemen's Relish. John Hurwitz went to the factory in East London to conclude the deal and was given the only copy of the recipe, in two halves. This was given to his Solicitor who was told to copy it PDQ!

Due to inheritance problems however, the company was sold in 1979 to James Borrough then makers of Beefeater Gin - from one gin to another - and new labelling and marketing was introduced. In 1987 Borrough was taken over by Whitbread who, not wanting a jam factory sold it to Smuckers who reduced prices and quality in order to compete in the wider market. This was the end of Elsenham Jam and the brand eventually ceased to be in the early 2000s.

Patum Peperium survives, now made in Poland but connoisseurs of the product insist it is not what it was.

There then followed a question and answer session.

6. Open Forum and Any Other Business

6.1 History Walks Around Elsenham

Marking the tenth anniversary of our Society, we have published our latest book, History Walks around Elsenham. Priced at just two pounds copies may be purchased at the meeting together with copies of our other books. We have also reprinted a limited number of copies of History of Broom Farm which are available at £3.50 each and Paul & Heather Salvidge have a very few copies of New Road – A History available to members at just £3.50.

6.2 “The Cold War”, A Talk by David Morson

You will recall that in November David Morson presented a talk about the political situation in Europe following the first World War. On Friday 17th April at 7.30pm, David will be presenting another talk at St Mary’s Henham. Following on from the first, this will cover the Cold War years and promises to be another interesting and informative evening.

6.3 Willis Toys

Willis Toys used to have a factory and warehouse just off Stansted Road Elsenham on what is now part of Saunders Close. Does anyone have any of these toys that could be photographed or any photographs of the toys or the factory? We would like to produce a feature on this subject so any material would be gratefully received.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10th June. Our speaker will be Anthea Hawdon from Raking Light and she will be presenting a talk on “Church Graffiti” including examples from our own St Mary’s.

ENDS

Minutes Agreed: March 2020
Ray Franklin – Chairman

Chairman's Report

Ten Years, where did it all go? Not just a yearly report but a Ten yearly account.

We must be doing something right. Over the last decade we have witnessed

Increased membership and attendance. This has happened due to a number of factors.

1. Our Secretary, Mike has maintained the high quality of our Speakers by much research and hard work.
2. The continuing production of high-quality Publications. From the initial works on Elsenham Pantomime Society through Elsenham Primary school, Jean Beeston's epistle on Broom farm up to the latest work "History walks" which was the work of Heather Salvidge. The lay-out and photographs on each occasion were the work of Chris Bush.

I must mention our largest work "For the duration". Contributing to that were Gordon Fulton, Kevin Wood and our Vice chairman Dave Verlander.

At this time, we remember Avril Braidwood Editor in Chief. Also, David Henderson, both sadly no longer with us.

3. Our Web Site. Much praised by Historians from other local societies. Chris Bush who I mentioned earlier, constantly adds to its content. He spends hours researching census records, he puts these and audio recordings plus hundreds of photos and articles. His hard work entuses and helps others with their research. It informs members of the works going on. From the closure and opening and

closure and reopening of Abbotsford Bridge with photos.
To articles by our President Gordon Barker.

Chris you should be very proud of our Web site. I do urge you
all to go and take a look.

4. The Committee recently was joined by NINA GAUBERT,
her input is much valued at Committee meetings. Her
experience running the Henham Web Site will greatly
assist us.

5. All Societies need a good Treasurer. We found ours his
name is Paul Salvidge. His wise counsel and advice have
resulted in a good balance. I understand that Paul almost
got a record for the first man to fly over Elsenham playing
Field WITHOUT an aeroplane.

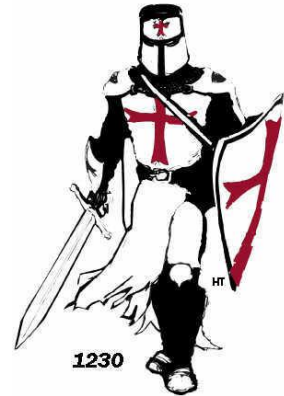
Sadly, I was not present to witness the Elsenham village
History Society gazebo incident at our Village fete.

LASTLY, I thank you all for your attendance tonight and in
the past. Your help is much appreciated and you being here
makes it all worthwhile.

THANKYOU

Elsenham Village History Society

Formed: 2010



Annual General Meeting 11 March 2020 - Review of The Year 2019

This is the tenth Review of the Year produced and marks the tenth anniversary of the formation of our Society.

The first meeting of the fledgling Society was held in February 2010 and since then we have had another forty meetings featuring a wide range of speakers presenting on everything from the Black Death to Holidays at the Seaside via Kings College Chapel and the Saffron Walden Branch Railway - to name but a few.

Over the years various bits of research by members has been translated into our publications covering such subjects as the Pantomime Society, Elsenham School, Broom Farm and of course For The Duration – Elsenham in Conflict published to commemorate the fallen of World War One.

Set up in December 2013 our website has evolved into a resource packed full of information including a number of recordings of village residents some sadly no longer with us and an accompanying transcript. There are a number of short articles such as the Canal That Never Was and a number of photo galleries with photographs old and new of the village and its goings on.

So to the year 2019...

- The past year has seen a small increase in membership and at the end of the year we had 58 paid up members.
 - Speakers -
 - March – Roger Barrett from The Stansted History Group told the story of the Fuller-Maitlands of Stansted Hall
 - June – Master Thatcher Lee Player gave a talk on the History and Practice of Thatching featuring illustrations of local buildings and a display of thatching tools
 - September – Our old friend Bill Hardy returned to talk about the Building Of Kings College Chapel and the use of Arabic Carpenters' Marks
 - November – Dr Mark Carroll came along and spoke about DNA, Surnames & Genealogy and how modern DNA techniques can help overcome roadblocks when researching family history
 - Visits
 - There were unfortunately no visits this year
- We have held four committee meetings
- A history of Park Road, written for the residents of that road has been published in redacted form on the website.
- Thanks to the generosity of Paul & Heather Salvidge, a number of printed copies of The History Of New Road were made available to members
- Our Chairman has updated his talk on the Elsenham Jam Factory based on a talk given by John Hurwitz in the early days of the Society and will be presenting it at the tenth anniversary meeting
- The Parish Council attempted to adopt a second phone box by Gilbey Cottages but was thwarted by BT who were only willing to see it used for a defibrillator. As the village already has a defibrillator the box has now been removed by BT. Meanwhile the phone box in New Road is still used from time to time to advertise our activities as well as those of other village organisations.

- We have continued to add fresh material to our website and the usage statistics show healthy usage
- In June we had our usual stall and display at the village fete
- Following last year's debut we laid a wreath at the Village Memorial Service
- Due to the ongoing works at Abbotsford Bridge there was sadly no Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's this year.
- We have renewed our membership of the Recorders of Uttlesford History
- 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
- Finally, due to lack of funds, the work to restore the Memorial Chapel in the High Street has been formally suspended until further notice

Mike Rea
Secretary EVHS

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