

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF MEETING 8th JUNE 2022

MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Dave Verlander Vice - Chairman	Paul Salvidge	Heather Salvidge
Mike Rea	Margaret Rea	Chris Bush
Diane Bush	Tim Snow	Valerie Austin
Raymond Corner	Brenda Davidson	Anne Player
Jean Beeston	Ian Beeston	Tricia Holyomes
Brian Tulley	Carol Wylde	Harry Southcolt

Apologies:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Therese Clear	Tony Bailey
Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson	Lynda Jolly
Jill Hunt	Keith Hunt	Phyllis Clarke
Roger Clarke	Helen Mudge	Jill French
Kevin Wood		

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the meeting and Raymond Corner was welcomed as a new member.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting 9th March 2022

Item 2 of the published minutes was incorrectly dated as November 2022, this has been corrected to 2021.

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Speaker, Prof. Anthony Tuck

The Vice-Chairman introduced our speaker this evening, Anthony Tuck from the Newport Local History Group who spoke about "Newport – A Great and Poor Town".

The phrase "Great and Poor Town" came from the will of Joyce Frankland who died in 1588. She had lost her only child, a son, to a riding accident after which she was encouraged by the then Dean of St Pauls to leave her money for education. As well as bequests to Oxford and Cambridge colleges she used her money to fund the "free Grammer Schole of Newport" which survives today as The Joyce Frankland Academy. It was an odd phrase to use. A modern observer would say that Newport was neither Great or a town, nor was it poor as Newport had an historic connection with London and London money – most people travelled to London and 93% shopped elsewhere!

Newport is not an ancient settlement, neither is it an ideal place for a settlement. It didn't exist before the tenth century when Edward the Elder, who reigned from 899 to 924, conducted a series of raids to take back Essex from the Danes. Having taken the Danish surrender at Shelford he set up Newport as the centre of his Royal Authority on the main turnpike road to the North taking over in importance from Wicken Bonhunt which until then had been a Royal settlement supplying the pantries of Royal London. It was thought that at one time Newport was also a Royal mint but no firm evidence has ever come to light to prove this one way or another.

A market was also established that continued to thrive through to the twelfth century making Newport a prosperous not-quite town. But in 1141, Geoffrey de Mandeville moved the market to Saffron Walden and Newport started to lose its predominance. Although the market did return, Newport never lived up to its promise.

Following this Newport became part of the Duchy of Cornwall and was managed remotely from the Duchy headquarters in Berkhamsted there being no evidence of Royal visits thereafter. In 1550 the Duchy sold Newport and over the next fifty years or so it was owned by six lords including an uncle to Oliver Cromwell – Lord Protector.

Newport was a thoroughfare village built along the turnpike and it benefited when the turnpike was improved in the 18th century. Until now, Newport had been a mainly agricultural village but at this time one of the residents was Joseph Smith, Secretary to William Pitt the Younger, and resident at Shortlands (House). His wife, Margaret was an Evangelical Christian associated with the Clapham Set. She set up a number of schemes to help poor Mothers feed their children and became a philanthropist to the local people.

A century later, in 1845 the railway came to Newport bringing new people and business to the area. A Maltings was established and later in the 1860's a gasworks was built supplying gas to the local area, raw material for the latter being brought in by the railway. The gasworks lasted until 1931 when the Metropolitan Gas Co. who by then owned the plant, laid a pipeline at great expense from Bishop's Stortford to keep the village supplied with gas. The maltings kept going a bit longer but finally closed in the 1970's.

Even now, London money continues to flow into Newport and has been used to restore several of the old wood-framed buildings in Newport including The Crown House.

At this point the talk concluded and there followed a question and answer period after which the Vice-Chairman thanked Professor Tuck for his talk.

5. Open Forum and Any Other Business

5.1 Village Fete

We will be having a display at the Village Fete depicting some aspects of Village History. Final details are being worked out but we look forward to seeing you there.

5.2 Platinum Jubilee Photographs

We have started to receive photographs of the Jubilee festivities in Elsenham. Debbie Grove of Unwin Close and Jackie Drake from Oziers have sent in pictures which in due course will be assembled into an album for publication on our website.

If you have any pictures of your Jubilee weekend that you would like to share, please get in touch.

5.3 History Walks in Elsenham

You will have noticed that we have today re-launched our new book "History Walks in Elsenham". If you haven't already bought your copy please think about buying one as you leave – it's only two pounds and a treasure trove of information about Elsenham.

5.4 New Album – The M11 Comes to Elsenham

Very recently Roger Taylor kindly donated a set of colour slides showing the building of the M11 through Elsenham. These have been added to photographs taken by our webmaster Chris Bush to form a new album – The M11 comes to Elsenham – that can now be viewed on our website.

5.5 Committee Vacancies

The Vice –Chairman commented that there were still two vacancies on the Committee and asked that anyone who might be interested in helping out get in touch.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 14th September 2022 . Our speaker will be Ken MacDonald from the 100 Parishes will be speaking about the 100 Parishes.

ENDS

Minutes Agreed: September 2022
Ray Franklin - Chairman