

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF MEETING 14th SEPTEMBER 2022
MEMORIAL HALL ELSENHAM

Those Present:

Ray Franklin Chairman	Dave Verlander Vice - Chairman	Paul Salvidge
Heather Salvidge	Chris Bush	Diane Bush
Mike Rea	Margaret Rea	Eileen Kay
Tony Bailey	Tim Snow	Valerie Austin
Raymond Corner	Brenda Davidson	Anne Player
Keith Hunt	Jill Hunt	Tricia Holyomes
Brian Tulley	Carol Wylde	Vic Dowsett
Helen Mudge	Jill French	Kevin Wood

Apologies:

Peter Johnson	Sue Johnson	Roger Kendrick
Ian Jackson	Moyra Jackson	Lynda Jolly
Campbell Dunn	Lynda Dunn	Therese Clear
Trevor Hackett	Do Hackett	Jean Beeston
Ian Beeston		

WE ARE DEEPLY SADDENED BY THE DEATH OF HER MAJESTY THE
QUEEN.

OUR THOUGHTS AND CONDOLENCES ARE WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY,
AS WE MOURN THE LOSS OF OUR LONGEST-SERVING MONARCH.

WE ARE INDEBTED TO HER DEDICATED SERVICE TO THIS COUNTRY

1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the meeting as well as our speaker for the evening, Ken MacDonald.

Marco Newton was welcomed as a new member.

2. Gordon Barker – A Tribute

The Chairman gave a tribute to Gordon Barker as follows:

It is with sadness that I have to report that Gordon Barker died last week. Following a fall at his home, he was admitted to Hospital where he passed away surrounded by his family.

Gordon was the President of the Elsenham Village History Association and its first Chairman. He was proud that he played a very major role in its conception. You can still hear his dulcet tones on our Web Site and read his many contributions. Indeed you may even watch his sterling efforts as a Wheelwright.

An Author of a Book on the History of our Village he also contributed articles to many august publications. He contributed to books on Sir Walter Gilbey and many others. He researched, documented, and was an avid collector of old photos and cards.

His knowledge about this Village was second to none. If you required information on people and places you asked Gordon. He will be remembered by many who had the pleasure attending his Slide Shows.

On a personal note, I first became aware of him while I walked to school in the early 1950s. At that time he was working alongside his father Bill Barker at Barkers garage & a little later with Colin Bateman. They were renowned for Practical jokes; Gordon had a wicked sense of humour.

We played Snooker with each other at the Elsenham Working Men's Club. I will also remember "Pot the Black-BUNGO."

I sat next to him when he was a Parish Councillor.

You rang Gordon and never knew what to expect. He would answer the phone and say you were talking to the Elsenham Bottling Company or some other flight of fancy.

You called on Gordon for a brief chat in the morning to emerge when it became dark.

He was a character and a gentleman. The Elsenham Village History Society extends our Sympathy to his family for their sad loss. I ask you to please stand while we remember, Gordon a great man.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting 9th March 2022

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

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Speaker, Ken MacDonald

Ken introduced himself as the secretary of the 100 Parishes Society, an area of some 450 square miles of northwest Essex, northeast Hertfordshire and southern Cambridgeshire that is largely unspoilt and richly endowed with many examples of agricultural and built heritage. It has a distinctive landscape of small and medium sized farms linked by winding lanes and ancient rights of way.

Elsenham lies roughly in the middle of this area that stretches to Linton in the north, Finchingfield to the east, Sawbridgeworth to the south and Buntingford to the west.

The society has a large number of walks available to take advantage of the countryside that can be found on it's website. Originally there were twenty or so routes starting out and finishing at railway stations, the Covid lockdown gave the opportunity to develop many more walks that now total in excess of one hundred.

There are a large number of rights of way available to explore the parishes probably only surpassed by the Lake District. These vary in nature from walks through wooded glades, round the edges of fields and through fields. Many of the walks are along rivers and across rivers using a splendid selection of bridges.

Most of these paths and bridges are well maintained but they do fall into disrepair and from time to time walkers have to contend with broken stiles, flooded riverbanks and overgrown paths to name just a few.

The walks are designed to show off the landscape so footpaths feature heavily giving views that are not visible from the road such as the "Bartlow Hills" a series of Roman burial mounds. The churches at Strethall and Chickney date from Saxon times but are not accessible by road. Nor is Thundridge "old" church, all that remains nowadays is the tower.

One of the walks passes Much Hadham and gives a fine view of the Henry Moore Museum. The cricket ground at Matching Green boasts a replica of the "Old Father Time" weathervane at the Lords Ground which teaches the lesson to always look up when walking, there is much to see including thatched finials depicting flying pigs, dogs stealing the sausages, witches' hats and many more.

There are over 7000 listed buildings within the 100 Parishes, probably the densest covering in the country, many pre-dating the 17th century and vary from grand houses to tiny cottages.

One of the grandest is Audley End House that is served by the local station at Audley End. Originally known as Wendens Ambo station, the name was changed due to the amount of passengers who alighted to visit Audley End House. Opposite the station is a row of cottages built in the mid-19th century by the then Lord Braybrooke to house the railway workers at the station.

All in all there are many interesting things to be seen within the 100 Parishes and it is the Society's aim to make them accessible to all.

The talk was followed by a short question and answer period.

6. Open Forum and Any Other Business

6.1 Development Issues

The Croake may not be a term you are familiar with but it refers to the meadow that can be found on the corner of Henham Road and Hall Road. This is some of the oldest grazing land in Elsenham and is surrounded by a fine selection of 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings.

This is the last green lung left in the village centre after all of the recent development and is now itself under threat by a planning application for 130 new dwellings. Whilst we do not generally comment on planning matters, we would ask that you consider lodging an objection to this application.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 9th November 2022 . Our speaker will be Richard Till who will be speaking about "The Cutlers of Thaxted" and the time when Thaxted was the biggest producer of cutlery in the country.

ENDS

Minutes Agreed: November 2022
Ray Franklin - Chairman