



**February 2018**

*Volume 8,*

## **Chairman's Message**

I know that I am not the only one who has been afflicted by the current bug which is doing the rounds. Fortunately for me it struck after our visit to the Westgate in Canterbury. It was rather sprung on me that I needed to be our guide for that visit, but I enjoyed doing the research, and reminding myself how much I have enjoyed the work of its architect, Henry Yevele, over the years. There is a report elsewhere in this Newsletter of that visit, but I will expand my thoughts on the work of Yevele in the next issue.

April will bring another AGM. We will have the usual illustrated review of the past year, but the most important element of that meeting is the year ahead and beyond. The committee is working on some projects and more ideas, but please come along to what is a social as well as a business meeting with your own ideas, suggestions and criticisms, not necessarily in that order.

DB

## **Forthcoming Events**

Friday 16th February - Acrise Manor to Henbury Manor - a talk by Barbara Athow

Friday 16th March - A Visit to Fordwich, the Smallest Town in England and its Town Hall £2.00 per head  
11.30am (optional lunch at a local pub extra)

Friday 13th April - AGM

Friday 11th May - Elham Primary School Talk by Derek Boughton and Barbara Athow

Friday 8th June - a talk by Chris Shaw on the 95th Rifles with a chance to have a look at the gun with demonstration.

Sunday 17th June - Elham Farmers Market WWI commemoration.

July A visit to Posting Church with Derek Boughton (date to be confirmed)

Booking arrangements:

All Friday evening talks are at the Village Hall in Elham, starting at 8.00 p.m. and places can be reserved by contacting Jackie Christian on 01303 840464 or emailing [elhamhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:elhamhistorical@gmail.com)  
Members £3.00 and Non-Members £5.00.

## Visit to Westgate Tower



As we stood on the top of Westgate Tower, exclaiming over the views from up there, we were very glad it wasn't raining for once. The views are spectacular and one can appreciate the layout of the medieval city below, as well as grumble at the blot on the landscape that is the Marlowe Theatre.

The 19th January saw a good turnout for the visit to the Westgate Tower, but the icing on the cake was the introduction provided by our own Derek Boughton who brought the story of the Tower to life for us.

It's the largest surviving city gate in England and was built of Kentish ragstone around 1380. Canterbury once had seven gates, and Derek managed to convey us back through time by telling us what else was happening in the country at the time of its construction. Its years as a prison must have seen a great deal of misery, and the information boards told us that even children were held in chains in the dungeons.

What had been misery for many was a fascinating day out for us.





## Elham shops - part three

Elham's third baker from the 1890s was William Dye. He was eight at the 1871 census, when he was living with his parents, George, a carter, and Esther, and five siblings in Limekiln Street, Dover, in a household that also had three lodgers, two of them soldiers' wives. By 1891 he was still in Dover as an assistant baker to John Griffin at 59 Biggin Street, where he was living in. Sometime before the 1891 census, he had married and taken the bold step of moving to Elham to set up a bakery business from scratch at 2 Braeside Cottages. His business was never large, constrained by lack of space and probably lack of capital, and the demands of an ever growing family.



*Cullings Hill c1902, with William Dye's sign, and probably his hand cart*

The difficulty of running a small business on a shoestring was illustrated rather poignantly in 1905, when he was brought before the magistrates for cruelty, a case reported in the *Folkestone Herald* under the byline A THIRTY SHILLING HORSE. A police witness described seeing "a black pony attached to the accused's baker's cart turning out of his shop, with his son Walter, 14, in charge of it", and one wonders where the poor animal was kept. It was described as a bag of bones, and there are some rather distressing details of its poor condition. It was probably at least thirty years old. Mr Dye, who thought he had a bargain when he bought it, said that it was not worked hard, being required to travel as far as Stone Street three times a week. P.C. Kenward, for the police, said that it was not fit for work. Dye was convicted, but as "he had a wife and rather large family, they would let him off easily. He would be fined 10s. and 10s. costs."

William Dye was still living at 2 Braeside Cottages when he died in 1930, but it is not clear how long his business survived. It does not appear in trade directories after WWI.

DMB



*In this photo from before 1902, William Dye is the figure on the left*



## Looking Back at 1988

72 Gazette, August 5, 1988



The imposing parish church of St Mary the Virgin at Elham — in the less romantically-named Duck Street.

## No return to sleepy old ways

ELHAM woke from years of rustic obscurity with the building of the railway, which opened it up to Canterbury and Folkestone.

When the railway closed, the village could have returned to its old sleepy ways. But over the last decade or so the influx of new blood has brought new activists into the village.

The results of their energy can be seen all around, perhaps most visibly in the amount of sport that goes on.

It has a very healthy cricket team, and soccer matches in season are well attended.

Most recently the village has built its own all-weather tennis and multi-purpose courts by the village hall.

It is now commonplace to see the courts floodlit at 10pm on a cold winter's evening as track-suited figures sweat tennis balls back and forth in one last game before bed.

If the amount of exercise taken is anything to go by, Elham must be one of the healthiest villages in Kent.

# Will Elham's charm be its own worst enemy?

ELHAM straddles the Canterbury Folkestone road, for all intents and purposes midway between Cathedral and coast.

The most obvious route is the B2068 at times crossing the route of the old Elham Valley Railway.

And yet a vast spidersweb of minor lanes spills down into the village like streams falling off the surrounding hills.

Interconnecting one-track roads wriggle every which way through fields and woods before eventually emerging in its comparatively broad high street.

Elham is fed by back routes — and in the morning disgorges its working population in a great drain-like flush along the B2068.

Its road system reflects the village's dilemma. Its charm lies in the universal dream of living in a beautiful country village, all leafy lanes and cows in fields.

## Tragedy

Thus, through the fault of no-one at all, Elham is becoming a village available only to the very rich young and to comfortably well-off retirement couples.

The first result of such a change in the balance of the population could well be the death of the primary school.

It has had to struggle in the past to keep its doors open. Any drop in the number of young children in the village will bring the threat of closure nearer.

And once the school has gone the village has lost one of its focal points of its own life.

First the school, then the general store, the cycle of decay can be seen all over the country.

The tragedy is that Elham's attractiveness may become its own worst enemy.

The village is beautiful to live in, bustling with activity and full of friendly, helping people. Who would not want to live here?

But this is conservation area, where new building is virtually banned, driving the price

of homes ever higher and higher.

The building ban and high prices are leading many people to extend their properties with extra bedrooms when needed rather than attempt to find larger houses when families grow.

With three pubs, a restaurant, off-licence and even its own wine company, the odd glass — or more — need never endanger a soul.

Both Kent's breweries are present in the village. Shepherd Neame has the New Inn at the Canterbury end of the main street, and Whitbread Fremlins has the King's Arms in the square.

Between them lies the Rose and Crown (Ind Coope) like a vast referee parting two antagonists.

All three have their own sets of regulars, though the odd spot of pub crawling is welcomed by all three landlords who are reasonable enough to share their customers.

Starting from the Folkestone end for a change, the first is the King's Arms in the square, across from the church.

If you drop in on ladies' darts night, head for the lower bar — the noise can be deafening!

The Rose and Crown is the largest of the three pubs. Magistrates' and coroners' courts used to sit here and some of that old authority still seems to linger.

Its large bar seems built for special occasions, and the narrow space between its two main sections makes a cosy huddle for regulars.

The separate dining room has been the scene of many memorable meals. Families and friends have often taken over the entire room for celebration feasts.



The pretty village square at Elham — but is its attractiveness becoming its own worst enemy?

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## No need to risk all the drinking and the driving

THE only totally safe answer to the drinking and driving problem is never to mix the two. So welcome to Elham!

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The New Inn is the last in the village to still have two bars.

The public is loud, cheery, and usually packed. The juke box and pool table both give it a vigorous buzz absent from some of the two country pub conversations to be found in the area.

Outside barbecues during the summer are a speciality, when the garden disappears under a cloud of meat-scented charcoal smoke.

Opposite the Rose and Crown is the village's other substantial building — the Abbey's Fireside with its enormous fireplace and ancient carved surround.

A good restaurant right on your own doorstep is a priceless asset.

To be able to leave the car at home and simply stroll up the street to a fine meal with no worries over whether or not to have an extra glass of wine adds an extra dimension to the enjoyment of an evening out.

Elham knows how to enjoy itself.

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## Looking Back at 1988

### Not all bunnies or baa lambs

THE regular appearance of horse dung along the main road is proof positive of the growing popularity of riding in the Elham Valley.

This is hunting country, and as hunt saboteurs have found out, there are a number of its muscular supporters more than willing to put their side of the argument!

The Boxing Day meet is so popular the police have to cordon off the village centre.

#### Kennels

Elham also houses the hunt kennels. For newcomers the noise of the pack suddenly giving voice at night can be an unnerving experience — sounding much like a mob of drunken hooligans baying for blood.

The kennels themselves are a drab functional group of buildings over which there often hangs the rank smell from the macabre collection of fallen animals on which the hounds are fed.

Carcasses of cows, sheep and horses hang from hooks in various stages of dismemberment.

This is a far from sentimental business. As the hunting season gets under way, the kennels prepare for an increase in the number of dead horses brought in.

#### Luxury

How the riders can be easy with a pack of hounds whose last square meal was made of dear old Dobbin is one of the harder rural questions to answer.

But to those brought up around farms, squeamishness is an unaffordable luxury.

The 1988 sight of a man palming a knife into a sheep to cut up the dead lamb stuck inside may not be pretty, but if it saves the sheep it is necessary.

It's not all bunnies and baa lambs in the country.



The East Kent Hunt's Boxing Day meet is an extreme example but even a normal weekend in Elham sees enough horsey evidence to cover a good rosebud!

## Free range eggs and good gossip

ONE of the abiding joys of living in Elham is the ability to go shopping on foot.

Starting from the Canterbury end, the path takes you under the cherry trees by the War Memorial along the raised grassy bank to Caister's, a butcher obviously raised in the days before fat on your meat was a dirty word.

Here veteran butchers slice and chop, bone and wrap, weigh and choose. Superb joints hang from hooks, tempting herby chippolatas cuddle together on the cold counter. Aproned bellies lean over expertly handled knives and steels.

Outside, countless feet have worn the bank to the bare earth, treading a short cut over the road to Addingtons, the bakers.

From here comes the early morning smell of fresh baked bread. In Canterbury you must find a parking space and then walk down Palace Street to find this bakery's produce.

Here it is on your doorstep — cobblers, sandwich, cottage, wholemeal, whole and sliced. Rolls so good anything but a spread of butter would be gliding the lily.

Just by it is Bairds the hardware shop. In the aftermath of the October hurricane its dark corners gave up lamps that had seemingly hang forgotten for years.

#### Parked

Its prices cannot compare with the DIY superstores, but on a Saturday morning which is worse — paying a couple of pennies extra, or driving all the way to Folkestone for the sake of half a dozen screws, a five ann fine or a new dustpan?

Back over the road at Elham Service Garage, petrol, MOTs, repairs and servicing. Cars are parked overnight waiting to be checked first thing in the morning, with Derek slipping the keys back through your letterbox when finished.

Next to him, in the same mock Tudor building is the Post Office and gift shop, books, toys, tights, souvenirs, stamps, driving licence forms, greeting cards and stationery.

Close by, the newsagent's still has large jars of sweets weighed out by the quarter pound for children waiting for the school buses in the morning.

On Sundays Joyce wears white doorman's gloves to keep the cheap newspaper from coming off on her hands.

For some reason it often stocks Scottish Sundays, strange old fashioned papers full of moral rectitude, so dull you understand why so many Scots move South.

No naughty men's mags here — Sunday Sport is allowed, but kept discreetly at the bottom of the pile.

A crate of milk bottles provides relief for those who have run out before morning coffee.

#### Gossip

Past the Abbot's Fire-side is Hobbles, once a substantial store reaching the entire length of the building, now smaller but still well stocked.

It offers some of the best ice cream commercially available, local free range eggs, household goods, and good gossip. Dip in for a can of beans and expect to spend 20 minutes in conversation.

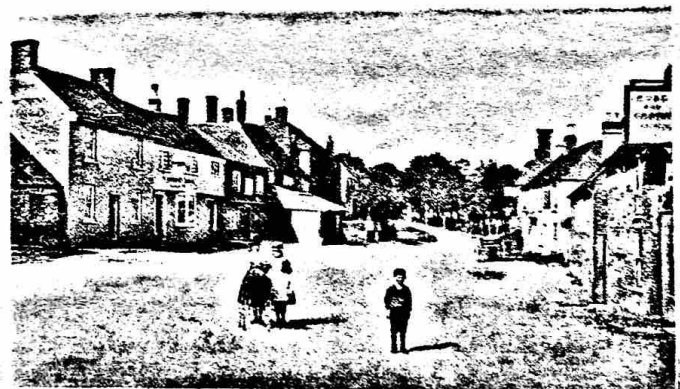
Open on Sunday mornings until 12.30, there's the opportunity to indulge last minute cravings for egg and bacon breakfasts, and to buy a bottle of wine for forgotten lunch invitations.

This is horse country; in the square Elham Saddlery caters for all horsey needs. Owner Julian is a fully trained saddler who can sometimes be persuaded to turn his skills to prolonging the life of well loved briefcases and handbags.

He is also good for watching the racing on Saturday afternoons.

Stories by George Ward  
Pictures by Mike Waterman

## Elham as it used to be



On the surface, little has changed since this photograph was taken around 1910. But the children in the dusty road would have difficulty recognising the social and economic changes that have taken place since. Today the village bursts with life, but like others, its future may be endangered by its own popularity.

# BROWNS



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Totally unmistakable, butcher Dennis Caister (left) with staff members Don Southern (centre) and Jack Finnis.



## Winston Churchill Visits The Elham Valley During WW2

Friday 20th June 1941 was a special day for residents of the Elham Valley when Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited the railway mounted guns at Elham, Bishopsbourne, Adisham and Martin Mill.

This was an important opportunity for Churchill to view his pet project, HMG (His Majesty's Gun) Boche-Buster. Originally a WWI railway mounted gun it had been used to devastating effect in France by destroying the railway station at Arras in just three rounds. After WWI it was returned to the UK and moth balled; however it's old commander, Lt. Col. Cleeve and the gun were brought out of retirement in 1940. The gun barrel was replaced with a 18" Howitzer MkI and after refitting at the LNER Darlington Railway Works it made its way down south to Bishopsbourne Station on the Elham Valley Railway. The nearby Bourne Park tunnel was chosen as a safe place to store the gun and a special firing section of track was installed near Kingston, thus giving the correct line of fire towards occupied France.



*Spectators gather on the station bridge, Bishopsbourne as Prime Minister Winston Churchill inspects HMG Boche-Buster*



*Photos courtesy of the Imperial War Museum*



*Initially it was thought that this photograph might show Winston Churchill inspecting the railway mounted 12" Howitzers at Elham Station sidings, however after detailed analysis by author Brian Hart it is thought that this is more likely to be the sidings at Adisham.*

## Winston Churchill Visits The Elham Valley During WW2 cont/.

In an attempt to lessen the possibility of damage to nearby properties villagers were warned to open all their windows when the guns were fired. Sadly this did not always work as Gordon Young and his mother found one day when the 12" guns at Elham were fired. Major Basset and his men gave warning of the firing and as Gordon and his mother lived in the nearby railway porter's cottage they both took cover well away from the guns. When they returned home they saw a grey cat coming rather sheepishly out from their house, it was their very own black cat! On closer examination of the house they found it had no ceilings! Major Bassett and his men soon got to work organising repairs.

The Rose & Crown was the favoured meeting place for Major Bassett and the top brass of Elham's Home Guard, they being Messrs. Parker, Dykes and Constant. The latter were always first to buy the Major a drink as they both lived close to the railway line at Ottinge, something the Major frequently reminded them of, as he could always bring "his guns" a mile down the line from Elham and fire them from there.



Gordon Young also recalled the time a lone low flying German aircraft decided to attack the guns at Elham Station. Gordon, his mother and his father were all in the house about to have tea when, without any warning, the aircraft attacked, shattering the silence of a warm and peaceful Sunday afternoon. The noise of the aircrafts guns and engine was incredible, the cannon rounds set light to the tarpaulin covering the ammunition wagon and shattered the telegraph pole near Lickpot bridge, leaving the top half of the pole dangling from its wires. After the plane moved off Gordon and his father ran over to the wagon loaded with ammunition and pulled off the burning tarpaulin before the fire took hold and destroyed half of Elham. They managed to do all of this before the gun crew arrived to see what damage had been caused by the attack. On his way back to the house Gordon picked up some of the empty shell cases left by the raider, these are shown in

this photo taken by Bryan Badham. The shell cases are now on display at the Kent Battle of Britain Museum in Hawkinge.

By the end of 1943 all the railway mounted guns had been withdrawn from the Elham Valley and the military units were disbanded. Although the anti-invasion guns were to spend long months waiting on the sidelines and whilst the range of the guns might not have been sufficient to reach occupied France, if the Germans had crossed the Channel during the winter of 1940-41, their fire-power would have been a most significant factor in the battle that would have followed.

## Winston Churchill Visits The Elham Valley During WW2 cont/.

The Elham Valley was no stranger to receiving other visitors during WW2, it is recorded that the Rt. Hon Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War rented Park Gate and Mary Smith recalls in her diary “ 13<sup>th</sup> July 1940 Mr. Eden came in (to King Post) to phone in the evening”. Other visitors included Clementine Churchill and Eleanor Roosevelt who alighted at Barham station when they secretly visited Barham. Possibly less welcome was a meeting organised by Robert V. Kennelly a local naturalist living in Folkestone, who wrote to the Elham Parish Council in 1937 asking for permission to hold a public meeting under the auspices of the National Socialist Union, formerly known as the British Union of Fascists. Subsequently the “Blackshirts” held an assembly in Elham Square. From this time Mr Kennelly appears to fade from view as on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1940 Churchill puts in place the internment of Communist and Fascists. Further details of these and other visitors can be found in two very well researched books:

**The Elham Valley Railway** by Brian Hart (ISBN 978 0 953877 12 6)

**Harvest of Messerschmitts**, The Chronicle of a Village at War 1940 by Dennis Knight (ISBN 0 7232 2772 1). Brian Hart's book has a limited print run, however a small number of copies are available through the EHS.



Dennis Knight's book is sadly now out of print, however Bryan Badham has a limited number of “used” first edition copies available for sale.



## **A Date for your Diary**

Our 8th AGM will be held on Friday 13th April  
at 8.00 pm in Elham Village Hall

We will be looking back at the talks and visits undertaken during the previous year  
Entrance will be free and the bar will be open.

Please bring any old photos of life in Elham that you might like us to scan into the historical  
archive and any items of interest you might like discussed.

Renewals will be taken by our Membership Secretary,  
Moirá Wiltshire.

New Members always very welcome

**Don't forget we will need to receive any nominations for the Committee**

**14 days before the AGM.**

Nominations will be for the following positions:

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer

If you have a nomination please forward it to the Secretary:-

email: [jacquie.christian@gmail.com](mailto:jacquie.christian@gmail.com) or telephone 01303 840464



## Dating old photographs of Elham - 19<sup>th</sup> century



This, which appears to be taken in the yard at the rear of 2 The Butts, probably features members of the Maycock family, but we cannot be sure. The clothes of the figures in this photo suggest a very early date.

There are a number of photos of Elham and Elham people taken in the 1850's and 60's. Most cannot be dated exactly, nor sadly can individuals be definitely identified, except the Dunn family in the garden of Wise Follies (probably earlier, but no later than 1872, when S E Dunn died).



By the early 1880's William (Pally) Smith had a camera, and there are certainly a couple of photos by him. One, of the windmill, is dated 1884 and intriguingly shows a roof under construction or being retiled. There is no evidence of work on the railway, and if William or Edward Smith took any photos of its construction, they have not survived.



These very early photos were taken by the vicar, Walker Wodehouse, or perhaps slightly later ones by Sharrock Rudd Bragg junior, who is listed as Photographer in the 1861 Census. Those featuring the east end of the church and showing the old Perpendicular east window are certainly by Wodehouse and can be no later than early 1856, the year that that window was replaced by the present lancets.



## Dating old photographs of Elham - 19<sup>th</sup> century Cont/..



By 1889 it would appear that Edward Smith had taken on the role of photographer, and the dated photo of the Hughes-D'Aeth girls taken in front of the old house formerly the Chequer, which was provided by Prof. Colin Seymour-Ure of Canterbury, is almost certainly his work.



Edward Smith's great group photo at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was probably taken on 20 June 1897, and that of the tree planting on the Pound probably in the following winter (unless it was done in advance).



## Dating old photographs of Elham - 19<sup>th</sup> century



The photo of Miss Mackinnon's Basket Stall at the 1899 Flower Show marks the end of the old order. The young curate, Herbert Smith, was about to leave and start a long career at Postling and Stanford. The old vicar, a pioneer photographer in his youth, died on Christmas Eve after almost fifty-four years in office.

## Database Researcher Wanted

The EHS online Database is one of the best achievements of the Society. It is largely the creation of Barry Webb, who still continues to update it on a regular basis. However, we could make so much more of it, and make Barry's life easier, if another person, or persons, could do some research to help expand its scope.

If you think that you could help in this way, please let a member of the committee know, and you will be most welcome.

DB

2018

## Who is Who

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## Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards are available from The Cosy Tea Rooms or Elham Valley Stores, all in the High Street at a cost of 60p each or £4.00 for a pack of eight.



*Keep informed about our latest projects and activities -  
[www.ehs.elham.co.uk](http://www.ehs.elham.co.uk) and [www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk](http://www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk)*

## Follow us on our Facebook page

We now have our own Facebook group where people (EHS members and non members) can upload pictures and make comments about Elham's history. If you are on Facebook then please take a look at:

[www.facebook.com/#!/groups/317708811602063/](https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/317708811602063/)

## It's your Newsletter!

We've got lots of good "stuff" to tell you about in these newsletters but we hope that you, our members, will also provide contributions.

Everyone will have their own special areas of interest so, to stop us banging on about our own obsessions, send us your thoughts and photos etc. Letters to the Editor are always appreciated!

**Please email me:**

[dilyswebb@btinternet.com](mailto:dilyswebb@btinternet.com)