



May 2013

Volume 2, Issue 9

Chairman's Message

I write this just before a small group made a visit to Merton College, Oxford, to look at the Elham records available there.

At Kibworth in Leicestershire, Walter of Merton bought the Manor in 1266, and it was those manorial records which enabled Michael Wood to paint such a vivid picture in his TV series and book *The Story of England*. Merton had acquired Parsonage Farm at North Elham and the right of presentation to the living in 1264, and there is a long series of records going back to 1279, but we cannot expect the intimate detail of medieval life that the Kibworth records provided. But there will be pearls to be found; for instance, the 1328/9 record has a list of horses sold at Elham market, so look out for some interesting extracts in the coming months.

Meanwhile, Kevin & Jane Lamb's extension at Parsonage Farm (restoring the house to nearer its original size) has revealed some interesting details of this, possibly the longest inhabited site in the parish.

I have been at Parsonage Farm and am taking a piece of a rider's spur found near the house to Blanche Ellis. It's a reasonably substantial piece, and should be very dateable. Blanche is Dick Ellis's widow, and, as a former employee of the Royal Armouries, is the world's leading expert on the history of spurs. See page 6 for a follow up and also article below



What is a "Loriner"?

Have you ever walked past the house in the High Street called "Loriners" and wondered what a Loriner is, or was?

Richard Newington kindly came up with the answer for us:

"The Loriner makes and sells bits, bridles, spurs, stirrups and the minor metal items of a horse's harness, together with the saddle tree. The word Loriner is derived from the Latin *Lorum*, a thong, bridle or reins, and seems to have entered the English language, from the French, as *Lorimer*. Apparently, these days, war-horse equipment is a relatively inexpensive area of antique collecting, so check out eBay!

"Loriners" was for many years the home of a harness maker, until the last, Edwin Gatehouse, died in 1931.

Parsonage Farm

The latest, exciting discovery at the farm is the *huge* bread oven that has been exposed when the outside wall was breached as part of the extension that is currently being built. This is large enough to have offered cooking room to the whole North Elham community.....a beautiful beehive construction that cuts into the earlier chimney stack. We need to get some expert advice on what we are able to see, but meanwhile here is a picture to give you an idea of what has been found.



Part of a large Bread Oven, recently exposed, still in place at Parsonage Farm.

Another feature of the site which has prompted speculation is the double row of daffodils stretching down the meadow between the house and the main road. It has been suggested that they mark a driveway from the road but there is no ground evidence to substantiate this theory.

Interestingly the current owner has been approached by a "daffodil historian" who maintains that these daffodils are a very ancient variety, would have been interspersed with apple trees, and are at least 400 years old!



DIARY DATES FOR 2013

- 31ST MAY** "WAR IN ELHAM – MEMORIES OF A REME ENGINEER"
A FRIDAY TALK BY WALTER "WALLY" HARRIS WHO WAS STATIONED IN ELHAM IN 1940.
- 8TH/9TH JUNE** A WEEKEND VISIT TO ARUNDEL CASTLE AND WEALD AND DOWNLAND MUSEUM –
- 7TH JULY** A SUNDAY VISIT TO GREENWICH, ELTHAM PALACE & THE CUTTY SARK ARRANGED BY REALSOCIALISING.
- 12TH JULY** A FRIDAY AFTERNOON FIELD WALK LEAD BY ALFRED GAY.
MEET AT 3.00PM AT PARK GATE – ELHAM PARK WOOD/PARK GATE DOWN – LOTS OF HISTORICAL (BOUNDARY BANKS, OLD TRACKS, FLINT PILES, POLLARDS, TUMULI) & ECOLOGICAL INTEREST (ORCHIDS, BUTTERFLIES ETC) & EASILY ACCESSIBLE.
- 2ND AUGUST** THE ELHAM VALLEY RAILWAY–THEN AND NOW– A TALK BY JOHN BUSS.
- 26TH AUGUST** A MONDAY VISIT TO SEE "LIFE AND DEATH IN POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM" AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM ARRANGED BY REAL SOCIALISING – BOOKINGS CLOSE 17TH MAY.
- 20TH SEPT.** A FRIDAY TALK UPDATING US ON THIS YEAR'S EXCAVATIONS AND FINDS AT THE LYMINGE DIG BY DR. ALEXANDER KNOX.
- 4TH OCTOBER** A FRIDAY TALK BY PROF. CLARE UNGERSON ON THE KITCHENER CAMP AT RICHBOROUGH.
- 14TH OCTOBER** (THIS DATE IS PROVISIONAL) BARHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAVE A THURSDAY EVENING TALK BY PROF. CONNERLLY ON "THE BUFFS".
- 26TH OCTOBER** A SATURDAY VISIT TO THE REFURBISHED IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM – ONLY £16.00 TO INCLUDE COACH AND ENTRANCE FEE – ARRANGED BY REAL SOCIALISING.
- 1ST NOVEMBER** A FRIDAY EVENING ILLUSTRATED TALK ON MEDIEVAL FOLKESTONE BY DR. DENIS PEPPER.
- END OF NOV.** A VISIT TO BE ARRANGED TO SEE BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE BEANEY MUSEUM IN CANTERBURY.
- 6TH DECEMBER** **CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!** A COSY FRIDAY EVENING WITH DEREK BOUGHTON TELLING TALES AT THE ABBOT'S FIRESIDE.

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 THE SECRETARY ON 01303 840336 OR EMAILING asladden@btinternet.com.

MEMBERS £3.00 AND NON-MEMBERS £5.00.

VISITS THAT ARE ARRANGED BY REAL SOCIALISING CAN BE BOOKED BY TELEPHONING VIV KENNY ON 0777 3946828 (LET HER KNOW YOU ARE AN EHS MEMBER) OR EMAILING info@realsocialising.co.uk.

WE TRY HARD TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A VARIED PROGRAMME OF TALKS AND VISITS BUT IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS OF THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE OR HEAR ABOUT PLEASE LET US KNOW.



A continuation of the Dover Express article of 6th December 1901 printed in the last edition of our newsletter

Elham Church.

The Church at Elham is a conspicuous object, consisting of a Nave, north and south aisles, a Chancel, and a north Chapel, north and south porches, although the latter is only of wood, and there is a western Tower, above which rises a metal sheathed steeple. According to Domesday Book there was a Church at Elham in Saxon times, but whether the present one has been built since on the same foundation, has not been satisfactorily determined, but even though some of the rubble of the ancient walls may be left, it seems to be accepted as a fact that the fabric of the existing Church dates from about the year 1200, the only changes supposed to have been made after that date being the insertion of the Perpendicular and Decorated windows, and the extension of the north Aisle to form the north Chapel (now the organ chamber), which has an arch of a later period, that opens into the Chancel. On each side of the Nave the Aisles are separated therefrom by uniform arcades of four arches, resting on piers of Normandy stone, having square abaci with the corners cut off, and the arches, with the exception of a simple moulding, are quite plain. The flat surface between the arches has the remains of coloured decorated geometrical work, and on the west side of the last pier of the north arcade are the remains of a double canopy, with tabernacle work carved in chalk illuminated with colour, probably the special ornamentations of one of the shrines or lights, for which this Church was specially remarkable in the Fifteenth Century when there must have been a large staff of priests engaged in saying prayers at the different alters and keeping the many lights burning. In many parts of the Nave are still left the projecting stones on which the images and lights were fixed. There are records of numerous bequests to maintain these lights. For three centuries the Lord of Leybourne's light burned in Elham Church. There was one called "The light of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist," which burnt at the shrine under the double canopy, above mentioned. Juliana Cooper in her will dated 1468, left two-pence to each of the other lights in the Church, but to the lights of the other two St. John's she left sixpence. One light in particular was very remarkable, probably peculiar to Elham. In the will of Thomas Gednor, of

Elham, in the year 1465, he bequeathed sixpence to the light which commonly at Elham is called "Trylle upon my harpe," and again in 1471, John Goldfinch left two-pence to the light "Trille upon my harpe." In 1473 Thomas Taylor left half a bushel of barley to the light of "Tryll on myne harp." In 1474 William Sompner left two-pence to the light "Trylle on myne harpe." No explanation of this peculiarly named light has been left. Another light called "Heyre light" received bequests in the years 1473 and 1474. The "Light of Nicholas" received several bequests. The "Light of the Holy Trinity" had six bequests between 1466 and 1476. The "Light of St. Michael" had threepence from Thomas Gendon in 1465, and the "Light before the Holy Cross" had a curious notice in the will of William Taylor in 1475, when he bequeathed three quarters of barley to find one Lamp to burn in Elham Church before the High Cross in accordance with the compact made between Thomas Wright, of Elham, and myself." There were ten lights maintained at the end of the 15th century, and with each probably altars and chantries, necessitating a larger staff of priests and clerks than are usually kept in a rural parish church. Wills still extant show that there were two parish clerks – chief and sub clerk – and two clergymen or chaplains in addition to the vicar. Ten marks per annum (£6 13s. 4d.) was the general fee for masses for the departed. In medieval times merrymakings for church and for other charitable purposes were held here, and were called "Ales."

There was the "Church Ale," the "Whitsun Ale," the "Clerk Ale," and the "Bid Ale," as well as others. These merrymakings were held in the Church and the churchyard, but in the beginning of the sixteenth century these social gatherings were apparently prohibited by authority, there being this entry, "Thomas Rigdon letteth the parishioners from their offerings because drinking in the church is put down."

In addition to the various shrines and lights there seems to have been a sub-altar at the top of the south aisle, there being still left there intact a piscena. Perhaps the most unique part of this Church is the ancient wood work of the roof. The three western bays of the lean-to roof of the north aisle are said to be the identical timbers put there in the fourteenth

The Dover Express dated Friday 6th December 1901 cont ...

century, and the carved stone corbels on which the supports of the roof rest are very grotesque and curious. Respecting the body of this interesting church, much more may be written. Its bold proportions, its grand Norman arches at the east and west ends have a noble effect, and the clerestory windows throw a clear light on the scene, which light rather shows up the fact that the interior of the old edifice would be all the better for a few thousand pounds being spent in restoration. The boarded floor from long use is growing thin and in places dilapidated. Many of the windows have a good many years ago been enriched with stained glass, and they still look well – better, in fact, than their surroundings. The seats are rather old-fashioned, and it is stated that some of them in the north aisle are in substance if not in form the original fourteenth century furniture. The chancel, which is large and fair, has a cold appearance, owing to its floor of red tiles. The eastern window of three lancets is filled with good stained glass depicting Scriptural subjects. There is on the south of the church a stained glass window with a brass under it having this inscription: “This window was inserted by the parishioners in memorial of the fifty years of the incumbency of the Rev. Walker Wodehouse, M.A., March, 1896.” A mural tablet on the opposite side of the church shows that the aged vicar did not long survive his jubilee. The tablet has this inscription: “I.H.S. In memory of the Rev. Walker Wodehouse, M.A., 53 years vicar of this parish, died Christmas Eve, 1899, aged 80 years. Erected by parishioners and friends.” The Rev Scott Robinson mentioned to the Kent Archaeological Society, a curious circumstance, that the second lancet window on the south side of the chancel is continued lower than the other, and that the lower portion formerly contained a casement which probably was enclosed with a shutter to get to which from the inside a step had been formed in the wall by cutting away the masonry of the window sill. The step is there still, but the casement was probably removed when the stained glass was inserted. It has been conjectured that this step was to enable a man to stand to ring the Sanctus bell or to communicate

with persons in the churchyard, or it might have been an opening to hand out the Sacrament to lepers in the churchyard according to ancient custom. Of the memorials in this church there are but few to be mentioned. Hasted mentions ancient brasses now gone, including one for Michael Pix, Mayor of Folkestone, and Nicholas Moore, of Wyngmer, 1577. There is now in front of the altar in the floor a slab of Purbeck marble, to the memory of John Somner, son of the learned William Somner, of Canterbury, dated 1695. There is a great array of ancient monuments in the large churchyard, many of which testify to the great age to which the inhabitants have lived.

Elham Notes.

The large basin-like font at Elham Church is the original one put in when the Early English Church was built. It is large enough to baptise infants by immersion. The parish chest was formed by hollowing out the trunk of a tree. There is at the Record Office a curious certificate to the effect that one Thomas Nevett, of Elham, who had been granted arms was a carpenter earning his living by his trade. This record, dated 1625, is supposed to refer to a scion of the Knyvett family. The Elham register dates from 1566. Amongst the names often given to children in the first years of the register are Aphra and Victorie. “Repentance” was the name given to a natural child. In 1640 the number of communicants was 600. In 1809 Mr. Lee Warley made a bequest of books to Elham on condition that they be kept in the church for the use of the parish. A library was in consequence formed by partitioning off the last bay of the south aisle, and the books are kept there still, numbering 400, and they include Durant’s Repertorium Dureum (which is a reference book on Canon Law printed about 1740), the Latin Vulgate, with curious woodcuts, 1521; Spencer’s Fairie Queen, 1609; Albert Durer’s De Arcibus Condendis, &c. These books being rare are kept under lock and key, but may be seen on application to the vicar.

The next issue of the newsletter will contain an extract on “The Vicars of Elham”

Snippets from Gordon Young's Scrapbook extracted from the Elham Parish magazine of December 1950/January 1951

SOME REFLECTIONS ON ELHAM PLACE-NAMES

(We are grateful to Miss M. K. Smith for two articles, the second of which will appear in the January Parish Magazine.—Ed.)

In considering the place-names of the Village and its immediate vicinity, one naturally starts with The Square—the real Square near the Church—not the wide part of the Street between the Rose and Crown and the Abbot's Fireside which is now, without any foundation, called "The Square" by some journalists.

Until comparatively recent times the Market Square was the centre of all the life and activity of the village. A charter granting permission to hold markets and fairs there was given to the Town by Prince Edward, later King Edward I, and some can still remember the Elham Fairs of the last century, when children were able to buy at the stalls sweets which the vendors rolled into the required shape in their moistened hands. Ancient deeds tell us that an Upper Market existed roughly where the Hunter's Moon now stands.

From one corner of The Square leads Cock Lane. Here the house at present occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Fagg is said to mark the site of the Cock-pit, where the so-called "sport" of cock-fighting took place. How long this was allowed to continue in Elham one does not know, but in an old *Kentish Gazette* in the possession of the writer there occurs an advertisement of a Cock-fighting Match, with eleven cocks on each side, to be held at the White Horse, Bridge, in January, 1768.

Following the lane and path to the bed of the Nailbourne, we come to Deep Spot, now containing no water at all, but once a place of real peril for the child of Mr. Floyd, who was a baker at Elham in 1840, was actually drowned at this very point.

It may not be known to some newcomers to the Village that the Brickfield on the further side of the river was actually in use for the making of bricks at the end of the nineteenth century, and that the large, rectangular pits, now a splendid playground both for children and dogs, were once filled with water. The clay needed for the bricks was conveyed from the Wash Mill at Exted.

Near the stream, to the South-East side of the Church, lies the Hog Green, a relic of the Saxon system of common pasture—still in use on Stelling Minnis. Another name of Anglo-Saxon origin is Bawsbury, or Balsbury, the hill above North Elham, where, as at Canterbury, some ancient stronghold must have existed. An emplacement of a different character was the Pound, now marked by a sycamore tree opposite the Infants' School, where in former times animals found straying were temporarily "impounded". The Stocks which formerly stood here may still be seen in the roof of the South Porch of the Church.

Another important point in the life of the Elham of mediaeval days must have been the Butts, now represented by the premises of Messrs. Ames, the Builders. Is it too fantastic to imagine that some of the local boys who practised there in the years immediately prior to 1415 may have rained their accurate arrows on the flower of French chivalry at Agincourt?

SOME FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON ELHAM

Village activities of more recent years are illustrated by the Rope Walk: Mr. and Mrs. Bain still have in their cellar a large piece of apparatus connected with the former industry. Elham Mill, too, has left one curious survival—the large round mill-stone which forms the door-

step of Mr. and Mrs. T. Webb's house. The top part of Vicarage Lane was originally called Mill Down for it led to the former House Mill.

From historical names we may now pass on to some which indicate previous ownership. Culling's Hill, White's Close, Pollard's Lye, Collard's Wood and Horn's Down are some of these, and to many the meadow now known as Forty Steps will always be Sammy's Leas, since it formed part of the farm-lands of the late Mr. Samuel Bowes whom some still remember. Who, one may ask, was the Fool who owned Fool's Folly?

Other field names, too, are interesting: the Gore, where cricket is played, is exactly the shape of the gore used in tailoring, and nearby North Elham possesses its Stone Acre and comically named Brown Breads. Vicarage Lane leads us to Lickpot, and not far from where the New Road was cut to join the Old, we find ourselves in America! Silverdown, so often lovely with the golden wheat, embodies an intrinsic beauty in its very name.

Duck Street, formerly Duke Street, ultimately reaches the Running Hill, and at the top of the diagonal path across the bank is a spot still called "Rest and Be Thankful", for here formerly stood a wooden seat inscribed with the above words, and generously given and maintained by the Mackinnon family of Acrise Place. If we turn from here along the crest of the downs, and cross the road leading to Standard Hill, (did Caesar's signifer implant his standard there?) we meet with the shades of Adam and Eve, shades, because the two sentinel trees which once gave their names to this path now, unfortunately, exist only in memory.

In closing, a note on the word "Elham" itself may be of interest to some. On certain old maps, and in Ireland's *History of Kent*, published in 1829, it is spelt "Eleham", and a still earlier writer, Phillipot, refers to it as "Helham". The Anglo-Saxon "ham", of course, refers to a "home" or "settlement", and Phillipot's name for the village denotes, he says, its situation amidst the hills. The spelling "Eleham" lends colour to Ireland's theory that the place was so called because of the quantity of eels in the river, as was certainly the case until comparatively recent years, when boys sailed out in a tub on North Elham pond on eel-catching expeditions. If anyone can offer any further information on this or any other point mentioned in this brief survey, the writer will be most grateful.

M. K. SMITH.

EHS Team Visit Merton College Archives

The production of Michael Wood's "History of England" TV program led Bryan Badham to contact Julian Reid, the archivist at Merton College, Oxford to discuss what records they have and to arrange a visit to view them.

That was several months ago and for a while it seemed that due to ill health the trip was destined not to happen. However, the 15th May dawned very early and the team set off on their first trip to examine this valuable collection. In short a treasure trove of interesting and important documents dating back to 1279.

During the three hour research period the team managed to photograph many documents for later examination back in Elham. This is expected to take some time as there is a lot of information and the early documents being written in Latin are difficult to read.

There will now be a number of visits to Oxford and we will report back to members on progress at our meetings and through this newsletter.

Just to whet your appetite here are just some of the topics found so far; details of the transportation of paupers of the parish to America, accounts detailing transactions that took place in Elham around the time of the Black Death, records detailing Parsonage Farm and land associated with the farm, and an 1815 Survey which details the residents of Elham.



Here you see Julian Reid, Nigel Thomas and Derek Boughton examining just a small selection.

Battle of Britain Tour Group Visit Elham

Elham is now well and truly part of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trusts Tour Schedule. Following on from previous years the tours have been so successful there are now two a year, in May and September. Here you see Wing Commander Andrew Simpson (standing) introducing Wing Commander Bob Foster (seated 2nd from the right) who spoke about his experiences as a Battle of Britain pilot. This year the tour stopped for a lovely lunch at The Kings Arms, which was followed by a walking tour of Elham given by Derek Boughton and Bryan Badham.

For more information on the tours please go to <http://www.battleofbritainmemorial.org/events/2012-guided-tours/>



Help Float the Boat

Canterbury Archaeological Trust has launched a Kickstarter project (see <http://www.kickstarter.com>) to raise funds to take the replica of the Dover Bronze Age boat to sea.

The replica boat was built a year ago using only Bronze Age tools but there was not time to make it seaworthy. The boat went off on tour in France and Belgium but it is coming back here in early June.

If this appeal is successful, the boat will be coming from Dover to Folkestone by sea (you could even be rowing on board depending on your contribution to the project!) They need to achieve a minimum of £20,000 within 30 days! Kickstarter allows you to pledge money towards this total, in return for which you will receive a reward, depending on the level of your pledge. It only takes a few moments to create a Kickstarter account and once that is done, and the project is launched, you will be able to back the project at your chosen level. Funds can actually only be drawn down if the pledges actually reach £20,000 (or more). You can view a preview of this project here: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1989781916/779482557?token=2241ff03>

Pass on the word and help float the boat! Incidentally, if you haven't yet seen the original it is beautifully displayed at Dover Museum, together with the story of how it was found and lots of interactive games for children to get involved.

More Memories from John Palmer ... His Uncle Fred Palmer (1886-1975)

I used to ride my bicycle to school at Mrs. Hubble's during the early years of WW2 and would often see this weather-beaten old codger sweeping the lanes and brushing the hedges and verges. I did not know until some years later that this old fellow was in fact my father's eldest brother and therefore, my uncle. I wondered why he always said 'hello' but we never engaged in conversation.

No one really spoke about Uncle Fred and it came as a surprise to me that he was in fact a relative. He had married Bertha Law soon after WWI and they had two children, Peter and Dorothy. Fred was born 1886 (?) and after finishing his schooling, worked on the farm until he was called up into the army in 1914.

He was by all accounts a bit of a tearaway and at some stage must have fallen out badly with the Old Man because he was banished from the farm. There are stories of shots being fired up Elham High Street after too much to drink and of a gun being thrown down the farmhouse well out of harms way. George Hogben alleged that if you heard Fred and his friends approaching on a Saturday night after a day's shooting, it was well to get out of the way as they would shoot at anything that moved.

However, Herbie, his youngest brother, recalled two such escapades that reflect Fred's maverick character. The first concerns a spirited evening at the Cat and Custard Pot at Paddlesworth, with his shooting pals.

The fire had been smoking badly whereupon the landlord remarked that the chimney needed sweeping. 'Oh, we can do that for you' said Fred and proceeded to poke his shotgun up the flue and release both barrels. Bricks, bird's nests, soot and filth came crashing down into the room making a terrible mess and everyone had to leave. Fred, for his trouble, was banished from the pub for a long time.

The second episode concerned Brum (George) Banks. Fred noticed Brum creeping off back to Grimsacre, one afternoon where he lived with his wife Violet (Sproggs) and her sister Daisy. Violet was busy back at North Elham and Brum, who had been pleasuring Daisy,

obviously felt like a bit of nooky in mid-afternoon. Fred espied what was going on so, keeping a safe distance he followed. Giving Brum enough time to settle in, as it were, he threw open the door to Grimsacre Cottage and shouted 'instructions' to Brum upstairs. There was a tremendous row that evening with the Old Man, and Brum threatened to leave. Fred's surmise was obviously not far wide of the mark.

Soon after the outbreak of World War I, Fred joined the Leicestershire Fusiliers and took part in the landings at Gallipoli which he survived. After this debacle he was posted to the Camel Corps in Palestine as a farrier. In his diary is a reference to Mr. Lawrence's camel. This reference to Mr Lawrence was probably T. E. Lawrence or Lawrence of Arabia.

Fred returned from the war physically unscathed but mentally crushed. He saw out his days as a humble roadman working for the Council. He never owned a car but I remember his bicycle being adapted to carry all his road tools – a shovel, broom, sickle, bill-hook, sharpening stone as well as his waterproofs, overcoat, wellington boots, lunch tin and bottle of cold tea. During the war he even had a tin helmet strapped on as well. He went blind in his latter years but he knew his way around the Kings Arms and occupied his corner seat at the public bar when the pub was run by his daughter Dorothy and her husband Stan. He died in 1975 at the age of 89.

I now wonder whether Fred's persona was not very adversely affected by the terrible experience of Gallipoli. To-day, with the deeper knowledge and appreciation of shell shock and battle trauma, he, like so many other returning survivors of that terrible conflict, would have received counseling and very careful rehabilitation back into a normal life. To have ended his days as a humble road sweeper seems somehow incompatible with his upbringing as the eldest son of a local farmer. How many other WW I veterans received the same treatment, or lack of treatment, and ended their days as broken souls?

John Palmer. May 2013.

“Why is Elham Here?” Update on some exciting developments!

In order to answer our intriguing question the team have been following a number of leads and received advice and encouragement from a number of academic sources.

In order to go back to a time well before Elham itself existed we have resourced maps created using Shuttle Radar Terrain technology. The advantage of these is that we can view the landscape without the distraction of roads and buildings and study the clues they provide to our history.



Kent with Romney Marsh just forming

By doing this we can see our valley as it dried out, and compare it with other areas at the same time i.e. The Roman port of Lemanis at Lympne and the Wantsum Channel around the Isle of Thanet.



“Palaeolithic Axe, 200,000BC found by Ken Beeching, North Elham.”

Another tack has had us scouring fields and uplands for flints and other signs of man’s early occupation. We now know that “hunter-gatherers” frequented our hills and the early tools, sites of barrows and burials, flint piles and deneholes are testament to their presence.

This has led us to look closely at the very old settlement at Parsonage Farm, North Elham, encouraged by the vast array

of finds in the locality. Items found range from early tools, Roman and bronze age pottery, medieval metal items, and a vast array of coins from all centuries, overlooked by a ploughed-out burial site. There is no doubt that there is an interesting story to be told here and, in the hope of uncovering it, a “geophysics” survey was recently undertaken by a team from Canterbury University.....the results are awaited with bated breath!

Our next step was to visit Merton College, Oxford, and view the documents they hold which relate to the endowment of Parsonage Farm by Edward I in 1267 to the College. At the same time we will be checking all the other medieval

documentation which we know they retain, which relate to their other local holdings such as Clavertye and the Church. We know that in 1267 the advowson of the church was awarded to the newly founded College of Walter de Merton at Morden in Surrey (later to become Merton College, Oxford). The college, as the lay rector of Elham church, was responsible for the upkeep of the chancel.

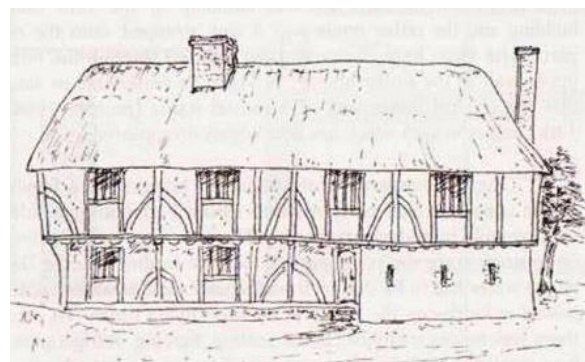
This might be a good point to relate the facts that are known about Parsonage Farm with some extracts taken from a booklet that was available for sale during the time that it became a heritage museum during the 1980’s.

“There has been a settlement here for at least a thousand years and probably much longer. Although its name and originally its Tithe Barn linked it with the Church, it is situated a good half a mile to the north of Elham Church. The Valley is a typical chalk valley in the North Downs with its ‘occasional,’ the Nailbourne. The valley was formed through water action of this river, which itself bears the mark of human interference where its course has been diverted, either to provide water for grazing animals or for water meadows.

Many legends surround the appearance of this little river, but it actually only flows when the water table in the underlying chalk rises above ground level, which occurs regularly after long wet spells. Folklore, however, associated this ‘woe water’ with impending disaster and this superstition dates back to early Christian times, if not further.

During renovation work on the farmhouse, which is a Grade II listed building, many interesting, and some puzzling, features have come to light. We have known for some time that part of the house is probably of medieval construction. The remains of a barrel-vaulted undercroft, such as often lay under early 14th century solar wings, is built of chalk and flint which may be seen in several exposed sections. At some stage before the 16th century, the upper storey and vaulting was demolished, or collapsed, and the present upper rooms were perched on the old remaining walls. Viewed from the front one can see that the house is built in two contrasting styles and that the half nearer the road to the south is of much younger age.

This is another puzzle about the building because the main chimney is a double stack with one fireplace facing the outside and is older than the surrounding part of the house. This suggests that, at an earlier period, the house extended further towards the road by at least one room which must have burnt down, or collapsed.”



An artist’s impression how Parsonage Farm may have looked in the 16th century from John’s History of Parsonage Farm. We now think that it was considerably larger.

2013

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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 £4.50 for a pack of nine.



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

Don't Forget EHS now has a Facebook Group

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/