

November 2013

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Chairman's Message

Much of my time and energy in recent weeks has gone into preparing the talk More Old Elham, which I gave in support of Elham's Christmas lights. The first half of that talk was largely about the EHS project to research the records at Merton College, Oxford. That is very much work in progress, and I will prepare an update for our AGM in April. We will also include details in future Newsletters.

On Monday 28th October I led a historical walk round Elham for the Friends of Canterbury Archaeological Trust, as part of the Canterbury Festival. People had booked from far-flung parts of the county, but it was the morning after The Storm, and only about half turned up. But they had paid upfront, so the Friends benefitted and I was able to plug the work of the EHS to those who did make it. They were very impressed with our recording of the MIs in the churchyard.

Visit to the Beaney

"Can you all manage to get in there?" Craig Brown, a Curator of the Beaney House of Art and Knowledge asked, as four enthusiasts from the "Why is Elham Here? project were shown into a small, over stuffed cupboard! We were at the Beaney storerooms in Gas Street, where everything they haven't room for in their fully restored High Street premises seems to have been "dumped".

We'd come to look at some of the items of archaeological interest that have been found in the Elham area, which fall into the "not enough room category." So we breathed in and squashed ourselves into the smallest space, allowing room for one laptop and a camera, and one box of finds on what passed for the table top!

Craig had kindly sent us a list of all the items they had, so we knew that we were going to be seeing a large number of flints, probably mostly found by Ken Beeching in the Dreals Farm/Standard Hill area, but we were disappointed to note that the boxes that now began to appear for us to look through also contained some items from other areas.....very confusing!

Anyway, undaunted we ploughed on, making notes and taking photos. It has to be said that after a while, one Mesolithic flint flake looks a lot like another Neolithic scraper! However, not pretending to be experts, one or two things did catch our eye. A fossilized sponge from Standard Hill, and a baby mammoth tooth (huge!) found in a "ballast pit" in Elham, caught our imagination,

but we were disturbed to see listed that a number of flints and Acheulean hand axes were noted as stolen! who on earth would want to steal a flint?

Then things started to get exciting when Craig brought us out an "a bowl of Upchurch ware – Romano-British grey ware feeding bottle, broken at the neck." And it was beautiful! Smooth and grey and the perfect mammary shape for feeding a baby! KCC's Portable Antiquity database is not working at present so we can't be sure where it was found, although Derek Boughton had a feeling it was found during the building of Hog Green. It's lovely to think a little Romano-British baby had been fed in Hog Green! There were some pottery shards of a cinerary urn found at Wick Farm, and some other shards which they couldn't find! More interesting was a Saxon-type square headed brooch, a silver gilt globular headed pin with dark stones, and a copper alloy pendant found by a metal detector with what looks like a carved Pascal Lamb, all found at Henbury.

Well, we'd whiled away a sunny afternoon in our "dungeon" and came to the conclusion that a visit to the Beaney for the Historical Society, might be a good idea and, as Craig told us they have a late night on a Thursday, not closing until 8.00 p.m., and that he could put out some of these finds in a case for us all to look at, we decided on 5th December and to combine the visit with a festive drink at "The Parrot." This is Canterbury's oldest pub and one of the oldest buildings in the city – so we can drink in history whilst drinking our festive noggin!

Forthcoming Diary Dates

Thursday 5th December – Late night visit to The Beaney Institute in Canterbury. Thursday is their late night and they close at 7.30 p.m. so we will follow this visit with a festive drink at *The Parrot*, Canterbury's oldest pub and one of the oldest buildings in the city. We will have a chance to look at some of the finds that have been found in Elham that are normally kept in the Beaney Store, and to wander round the quiet museum. We'll meet in The Square at 4.30 p.m. and team up for lifts into town (or of course, those that wish, may take the bus). Please let Andree have your name if you wish to join in (there is no charge for entry to The Beaney). Book your place with Andree on 840336.

N.B. The Cosy Fireside Chat with Derek Boughton, scheduled for 6th December has been cancelled.

Friday 17th January – Real Socialising visit to Parliament and the Chelsea Hospital. Book direct before the end of November. There are several people going on this trip so we should be eligible for an Elham "pick-up".

Friday 24th January – "The History and Wildlife of Lyminge Forest" – an illustrated talk by Kirk Alexander.

Friday 21st February – "Being Mrs. Richard III" – a talk by the historic author Amy License. Amy has recently appeared on the television. programme *The She-Wolves* discussing the early Queens of England.

Friday 21st March – "Kent in the Great War" – An illustrated talk by John Buss.

Friday 25th April – A.G.M. Last year we had a "bring in your local finds" section....please feel free to do the same this year! Plus, an update on our on-going projects and the opportunity to renew your membership.

August – 1914 Centenary Weekend Exhibition. Venue 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 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.

"N.B. Real Socialising are planning a trip to Parliament on Friday 17th January....with an additional visit to either The Bank of England Museum or Chelsea Pensioners....make a date in your diaries for next year! Full details and prices to follow. If there are enough of us we'll be able to have an Elham Valley pick up."

Did you know: that the ethologist Richard Dawkins' full name is Clinton Richard Dawkins. And that he is the great (x19) grandson of John de Clinton, brother of William de Clinton and owner of Elham Manor (1310-1368). The connection was the marriage in 1788 of Augusta Clinton to Henry Dawkins M.P. (1765-1852 Sandgate, Kent).

Tour of The Leas Lift by EHS Members

Following on from the very interesting illustrated talk given by Terry Begent of The Leas Lift Community Interest Company, EHS members were invited to have a behind the scenes tour on the 19th October, this tour also included two rides on the lift.



The view from the top October 2013

The lift operates using water and gravity and is controlled from a small cabin at the top of the cliffs. To start the lift the brakeman moves a lever that allows water to flow into a tank under the carriage at the top. As soon as this carriage exceeds the weight of the lower one and starts to move, he shuts off the flow of water to it. The speed of descent is then moderated by the application of a brake on the balance wheel. The carriages are attached by two cables that pass round the balance wheel, with the heavier descending carriage pulling up the lower one. As the ascending carriage moves into place the operator applies the brake. If the bottom one has no passengers, then the weight of those in the top one means that no water is required to move the lift.



The Leas Lift is visible on the right of this postcard



Built during the 1880's the lift opened on 21st September 1885 using two cars, each capable of carrying 15 passengers from Folkestone town to the sea front.



Thompson's Patent Gravity Switchback constructed this railway near the lift in 1888 (#1)

When the Victoria pier opened in 1888 increased visitor numbers meant that a second pair of carriages were needed, although this time entry to these carriages was through a door at the front/rear of the carriage. Access to the first pair of carriages was unusually through a sliding side door.

Such was Folkestone's attraction to Victorian and Edwardian visitors that a third and eventually fourth set of lifts were added further along the Leas, one being the long gone Metropole Lift which opened in 1904.



The Metropole Lift – Opened in 1904 (#1)



Mr. Collins the Metropole liftman poses for the camera (#1)

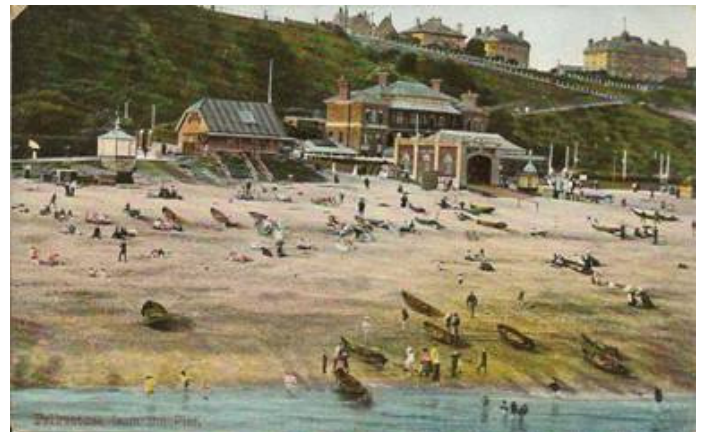


The pump room October 2013. Note the chevron cog wheels, the construction of which was patented by Andre-Gustave Citroen and the chevrons used as the company logo.

For the first five years of operation of the Leas Lift the water from the descending carriage would be drained away into the sea. However in 1890 cost dictated a change and the water was drained in to a storage tank at the bottom of the lift. Two gas powered pumps then pumped the water back to storage tanks at the top. The original pumps are used today however they are now powered by electric motors. These motors were in operation well before the second world war, when the lifts were taken out of use due to the threat of invasion.



An aerial view of the sea front showing the Leas Lift , The Marina and the open air swimming pool. (#1)



How the seafront has changed.

The Marina was closed in 1958 and demolished in 1966. The open air pool was originally opened in 1936, nothing exists of these buildings today. Plans have now been passed to build houses and recreational facilities on this site and it is hoped that with the regeneration of the area the Leas lift and possibly even the Harbour Railway will again play an important part moving people from the town to the sea front.



Folkestone Leas during WWI under attack in a German Gotha air raid

ELHAM WEATHER, SOME RECENT RECORDS - by Peter Gay

The climate of east Kent can best be described as maritime with a continental influence but the weather is notoriously difficult to predict. South-westerly winds off the Atlantic generally bring mild air, north and north-easterlies with a long run down the North Sea may roll in low cloud, southerlies often bring warm thundery weather but south-easterlies and easterlies with a shorter sea crossing from the continent are usually dry and, in winter, bitterly cold.

There are marked variations within this relatively small area. Whereas the annual rainfall in Canterbury is usually around 24 inches (600mm) and in Whitstable may be as low as 18 inches (450mm), Elham, Lyminge and Acrise are among the wettest villages in the south-east with annual rainfall averaging 36 inches (900mm) to 40 inches (1000mm) and occasionally over 50 inches (1250mm) giving rise to floods and winter snow storms.

Altitude has an effect on temperature at this hilly end of the Elham Valley. On August 10, 2003, when the temperature soared to 38.5°C (101.3°F) at Brogdale near Faversham and 36.8°C (98°F) at Herne Bay, I recorded 36°C (96.8°F) in Elham, almost 400ft above sea level.

The lowest winter temperatures are likely to be recorded lower down the valleys, particularly near Petham. The lowest I have recorded in Elham since 2000 was minus 12.6°C (9.3°F) in February last year. However, temperatures as low as -23°C (-5°F) are not unknown in Kent.

Elham probably experiences some of the most extreme weather in east Kent. One of the most memorable events in recent years was the exceptionally violent thunderstorm on July 16 2007 which produced hailstones up to a diameter of 3cm (1.5 in), wrecking polytunnels and breaking greenhouse windows between here, Upper Hardres and Stone Street. There was even some debate amongst meteorologists as to whether this thunderstorm qualified as a 'supercell thunderstorm' – the type that gives rise to the severe tornadoes in the USA.

Some of the winter weather has also been harsh recently. December 2010 was the coldest nationally since the current series of records began in 1910. The Elham mean temperature was only 0.5°C (33°F) almost 5°C (8.6°F) below average. March this year was the coldest since 1981 with a mean temperature of 3°C (37.5°F) which was 3.3°C (5.9°F) below average.

The snowstorm on the night of March 11/12 was particularly memorable with giant snowdrifts towering meters high and burying vehicles on some of the minor roads in the parish. Many of the snowdrifts lasted for weeks – I noticed several near Paddlesworth on April 10. And just in case anyone was beginning to forget the great tempest of 1987, twice in the past 22 months storm force winds gusting to 64mph have sent trees crashing to the ground, most recently on October 28.

Elham Weather Records Since 2000

Warmest Year: 2006, mean temperature 10.9°C (51.6°F)

Coollest year: 2010, mean temperature 9°C (48.2°F)

Highest Temperature: 2003, 36°C (96.8°F)

Lowest temperature: 2012, -12.6°C (9.3°F)

Wettest year: 2012, 1374.7mm (54.12in),

Wettest month: November, 2009: 266.6mm (10.50in)

Driest year: 2003, 613.4mm (24.15in)

Driest month: April 2007, 2.6mm (0.10in)

Highest winds: January 3, 2012 and October 28, 2013: 64mph



Photographs of the Snow in Elham last Winter - by Alfred Gay



Lane up to Mill Down Farm (car under snow drifts) 13.12pm
12/03/2013



Snow drifts on the lane up to Mill Down Farm 13.41pm
12/03/2013



Snow drifts on Shuttlesfield Lane 14.02pm 12/03/2013



Snow drifts at the crossroads between Elham and Ottinge 3.11pm
12/03/2013

An Elhamer Remembers Christmas - by Anne Laker

I was born and brought up at Mill Hill, between Elham and Ottinge. My Grandparents owned the farm which they ran with the help of their son. My parents lived in the bungalow just down the lane below the farm. I spent a lot of time with my grandparents around the farm as I shared their love of the farm and all the animals.

Our Christmases during and just after the War were pretty much always the same. We had dinner in the farmhouse with Gran, Grandad and Uncle Ed. We always had a goose which had been reared on the farm and plucked and prepared for the oven by Gran and was cooked in her old black kitchener. Nothing that came out of an electric oven could compare with the flavour of the goose cooked in the kitchener. Mum helped with the vegetables etc and we always had a Mrs Peak's Christmas pudding, surprisingly not a home made one. The afternoon was spent feeding the animals and milking. The farmwork had to be done even at Christmas! I helped with the milking as soon as I was old enough. After milking and clearing up was done, Gran, Grandad and Uncle Ed came down to our house for tea. We always lit a fire in the sitting room and had celery for tea (the only time in the year that you could get it then). Dad always washed up, the only time that he did so!

One particular year things were different as a landmine had been dropped at Lower Court, a large house in Ottinge. We all went down to see the crater on Christmas morning. As a five year old, I could not understand why we had to look at a hole in the ground when I would rather have stayed at home and unwrapped my presents. When my brother Keith was born after the war, the only difference to previous Christmases seemed to be that we woke up earlier!!

As I grew up, the Christmas period became busier. During the 1950's, I was a member of the Methodist church choir and during the week before Christmas, we would go carol singing and collecting for National Children's Home (now Action for Children). We would cover a different part of the village each night.

On Christmas Eve we were usually invited to sing at Lower Court and Boyke Manor in Ottinge as they always had guests for the holiday. We were treated to mince pies and other goodies and then walked home.

The Methodist Carol service was always held in the evening of the Sunday before Christmas when the choir would take part. Then there was the Sunday School and Wesley Guild parties to look forward to in the New Year. The Guild was a weekly social meeting for all ages, with speakers, plays, singsongs etc

Anne's Christmas memories are fairly universal for local farming families, especially during and just after the last war.

Teena Palmer, who lived at North Elham, remembers Christmas Eve shopping with her pocket money at Bobby's in Folkestone when the shop assistants were full of good cheer...induced by a glass or two of sherry! Paper chains were home-made and stockings contained an orange, nuts and a bag of crisps, while a treasured gift would be a book, and gloves and a scarf, close runners up. The preparations included everyone having a stir and a wish while making the Christmas pudding but a "white" Christmas brought on atrocious language, as all the men workers would have been given the day off!

Do You Want to Buy a Castle?

I spotted an item in the weekend press headed "Yours for £2.6m: a castle owned by Henry VIII" and intrigued I read on.

Those of our members who joined us for the tour of Westenhanger Castle and who were so impressed with the restoration of the enormous barn with the amazing hammer beam roof, built by Queen Elizabeth I's Collector of Customs, Thomas Smythe, might be interested to know that the whole property is now up for sale. Your £2.6 million will, however, only buy the castle – the 16th-century Grade I listed barns are up for sale separately.

The castle dates from 1045AD when it was occupied by King Canute, and it remained a royal palace until 1581, when Queen Elizabeth gave it to Thomas Smythe. The current owners have, with the help of English Heritage, spent the last 16 years restoring the castle and the barns, but there is still more to be done; the replica medieval kitchen is still under construction.

The castle has, of recent times, become a romantic wedding venue, and the bridal suite boasts a fine stone mullioned leaded window reputedly dating from 1500, with ancient "graffiti" said to depict James II. Some income is generated by the weddings but the running costs are estimated at around £100,000 a year!

Should you be interested Jackson-Stops & Staff are handling the sale!



2013

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www.ehs.elham.co.uk and www.ehsdatabase.elham.co.uk*

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/