



**September 2022**

*Volume 12 Issue 2*

## **Chairman's Message**

We have what we hope is an interesting Newsletter this time, but most of it has been written by Bryan Badham and me. One of Bryan's contributions reflects on changes in the village since he and Wendy made it their home.

So here's a thought. How about other members contributing something similar to our February issue. Or something quite different for that matter. There must be interesting stories about how and why you came to live in Elham, or the jobs that brought you here. Or have you done research on any aspect of local history, or your family, that you would like to share with us? Come on members, let's be having your stories.

D.M.B.

## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Friday 23rd September - A Celebration of 100 Years of The Wireless**

A special event looking at the history of broadcasting both nationally and from Elham.

Hosted by Jenny Gasson, it has contributions from Derek Boughton, Trevor Gasson, and Nigel Thomas, and from Pam Ferris, whose insights into the world of radio drama are fascinating and amusing. With many audio clips skillfully set into the programme by Bryan Badham and Richard Motley. An evening not to be missed!

### **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October - Churchill's Secret Army** A talk by Jim Gascoyne

Jim is a member of the Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team (website [www.staybehinds.com](http://www.staybehinds.com)), who are researching the British underground movement, which would have fought from their secret bunkers had Hitler invaded. We hope to hear more about the Elham Patrol, which included George Austin, Frank 'Sandy' Baker, Bill Benefield and Fred Boughton, but may be able to add to his knowledge.

November – to be confirmed - **Further History of the East Kent Hunt** A talk by Nick Onslow

December - We are trying hard to organize a social event, and will keep you posted.

**Unless otherwise stated all events are at 7.00 pm for a 7.30pm start in Elham Village Hall**

**Admission costs: EHS Members £3 Non Members £5**  
**(There is also a Non EHS Member charge for external visits)**

**Space at Elham Village Hall may be restricted so please arrive early.**

## An American Elam visits Elham



On 29th May 2021, Andrée Sladden, as Secretary of the EHS, received the following email:

*Hello. My name is Eric Elam. I am a US citizen, but currently working and living in the Netherlands. I am researching my genealogy and believe my family (sir) name may originate from Elham. With COVID restrictions now abating, I am looking into a visit to the area. I would appreciate a discussion with someone in the Elham historical society if possible to help make the most of a visit. Many thanks, Eric*

With input from me, Andrée replied:

*It is almost certain that the surnames Elham, Ealham and Elam have their origin in our Elham, a place name that*

*does not occur elsewhere. Tracing the family back here is another matter, because place-names as surnames would have been adopted when the original holder moved away from the community, whether to the next parish or farther afield. There are numerous examples of monks at Canterbury and other monasteries adopting the name Elham – John de Elham was a canon of St Paul's, London in 1324, and Robert Elham became Abbot of Faversham in 1409. In theory of course none of them have descendants. The earliest lay reference I have found was in 1319, when Peter de Elham, a merchant of Lenne (King's Lynn in Norfolk, a long way from Elham) was about to sail for Norway with a cargo of corn and other victuals, and had to pledge that he would not take them to the Scots (then our enemies).*

Eric thanked us for our reply, but was unable to implement his plan of visiting Elham while lockdown persisted. Early this June he got in touch again, and was sorry to hear of Andrée's death. He was planning to visit Elham later in the month, and after an exchange of emails and a phone call, we arranged that he and I would meet up for a beer on the evening of Friday 23rd in the Rose and Crown, which is where I assumed he was staying. We enjoyed a very convivial couple of hours talking about Elham history and his family's history, and life in general, and he had a chat too with Mike Donnelly and John Worrall. It was the day of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Roe vs. Wade, and I was sorry that it fell to me to tell him that news. Eric had been living and working in the Netherlands for ten years, all that time wondering about the Elham connection, but was now about to relocate back to the States.

## An American Elam visits Elham /cont

His son and daughter, nineteen-year-old twins, are enrolled in different U.S. universities, so he and his wife have decided to go back to northern California, where his company's headquarters are located. With wife and kids already back in the States, Eric was taking this last minute opportunity to visit Elham.



Throughout his spell in the Netherlands he had, like most of his colleagues, cycled to work, so he put his bike on a train to Ghent and cycled to the ferry at Dunkerque. He confessed that the hills of East Kent were a bit of a culture shock, but he is a very fit fifty-two year old.

Eric was actually staying at the Abbot's Fireside, and we met up again on Saturday morning for a coffee and further talk before he caught the bus to Canterbury to explore the city and cathedral. On Sunday morning he cycled back to Dover and by Tuesday he was winging his way back to America. I described his visit to Elham as a pilgrimage and he agreed that was a very apt term.

A sad coda: Eric had a very comfortable stay at the Abbot's and a good breakfast, and I can confirm that the coffee was excellent. On the following Wednesday a full restaurant service was started. Friends of mine had such a good meal that they made two further bookings, but on Friday received a phone call to say that the whole enterprise had shut down, We await developments.

D.M.B.



In the November 2011 Volume 2, Issue 3 of the EHS Bryan Badham wrote the following article to recall 25 years of life in Elham. Now, 11 years on further changes have taken place in and around the village which we hope to cover in our next newsletter. In the meantime you can read of life and events back then.

## 25 Years in Elham

“Time flies when you are having fun” - that well used saying certainly applies when you come to live in Elham! Having spent a great deal of time in Browns Estate Agents and subsequently in the Rose & Crown pouring over the latest property offerings, Wendy and I finally decided on Eden House and we moved in on the 28th August 1986. Summer was just about coming to an end and harvesting activities were going on all around. We quickly started to go on walks, exploring the numerous footpaths that criss-cross the valley and it has to be said that this exploring has gone on for years and I am sure we have not found all the walks yet. I was fascinated by the old abandoned Elham Valley Railway and enjoyed rummaging around the old station platform and coal wharf sidings, as well as walking along various parts of the old line, including the tunnel at Bishopsbourne where you could walk through from end to end – very spooky! Our first real taste for “country living” came in the winter of that year when we were cut off entirely due to heavy snow falls.



***The B2065 main road out of Elham by The Gore – B. Badham***

The roads that were usually kept open for the milk tankers to get through were completely blocked and electricity supplies were interrupted for days. This was not the end of the world though as we had our



## 25 Years in Elham /Cont

local shops, a camping stove complete with kettle and there was always a welcome at any of our three pubs. Eventually money supplies ran out in the village and IOU's were exchanged to keep everyone fed and watered. October 1987 proved very interesting indeed. We woke early on the morning of the 16th to the sound of roof tiles peeling off their usual resting place and smashing on the ground. The hurricane force winds were whistling down the valley from the direction of Lyminge. Our roof was creaking so loudly that we got up and went down stairs just in case it came down or took off. I opened the front door only to close it quickly as debris was flying along the High Street towards Barham. There was a particularly large crash when the chimney on the side of Coopers came tumbling down, I imagine that Robert and Morag remember that vividly. When day finally broke and the winds had eased slightly I ventured outside and found the lead sheets (some 3'x 5' in size) had peeled from the ridge of the Methodist Church and were now either pointing towards Canterbury or on the ground.



***Vicarage Lane after the tree had been removed from the road and roof of Willow Cottage. Note the gap in the Old Vicarage wall. – B. Badham***

I found our friends Jim and Conrad who were walking along the road in a daze as a tree from the grounds of the vicarage had crashed through the roof of their home Willow Cottage, narrowly missing Jim who was still in bed. Once again we were cut off, this time by fallen trees and other debris. Once again the electricity was gone, this time, in our case, for a week, however the community spirit ensured that we all survived and apart from the lack of a hot bath we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

## 25 Years in Elham /Cont

When thinking about what to write I did not want to list numerous businesses and people that have come and gone. However some are really worthy of note and were an important part of our early days here in Elham:



Dennis Caister's Butchers Shop – this was a thriving business and attracted many people from Elham and along the valley. Dennis was an Elham boy, although when running the shop during our time here he lived in Shepherdsweil. He would drive in to Elham for 6am every day to get the shop ready for business and did not leave until well after 6 in the evening. He and Don were always very friendly to us, they kept an eye on the house whilst we were at work and signed for parcels in our absence. At the weekend Dennis was always there and if



the weather was good and meat for a BBQ was wanted, he would always come round with a wonderful selection of meats, even if the shop was closed. Christmas was an exceptionally busy time and the shop ceiling was covered with hanging birds and other meats for the festive period. Despite a wonderful SOS – Save Our Shops campaign he sadly had to call it a day and the shop door was closed for the last time.

Mrs Baird's Ironmongers - well what can I say? Stepping through the door was like stepping back in time. You could buy anything from a single nail, bolt, nut or screw, through to a garden spade, sink plug, paint, crockery, dustbins and tools whose purpose in life I knew not! Sometimes you had to wait a while for Mrs Baird to come through from the sitting room or for her to finish taking a special order from the customer in front of you. There was no need to get in the car to go to Lyminge or further afield, thereby saving you both time and money.

Addington's Bakery – another business that supplied the village, parts of Canterbury and pulled in people from in and around the valley. My fondest memory of the bakery was when driving home at the end of a night shift, the closer you came to the village the smell of freshly baked bread wafted through the car window. Magnificent!

The Police Station and Houses – here lived our village PC, who was often seen walking around the village and surrounding areas or tinkering with his tractor on the drive. Having a PC in the village certainly seemed to reassure people, occasionally you could even find him carrying out investigations in the pub!

Other shops and businesses that were here during those 25 years were: Joyce's Post Office & Gift Shop (now The Cosy Tea Rooms), Julian's Tack Shop (now The Old Bookshop), Elham Service Garage ideally located for servicing, repairs and yes – even petrol, Joyce's Newspaper & Sweet Shop (now Trelawney Cottage), Acrise Pottery (now The Old Bakery), The New Inn, Tim Roberts Wine Importers (adjoining Trelawney Cottage) and the NFU Office (now a physiotherapist). Other businesses have come and gone, most notably for us The Blue Vinny where Tom (our son) enjoyed working in the kitchen from the day it opened to the day it sadly closed.





## 25 Years in Elham /Cont

If you look at old photographs of the High Street and other parts of the village and compare it with today, outwardly very little appears to have changed. Elham is still a hidden gem, set within the beautiful Elham Valley. The thriving clubs, societies, churches, and organisations are a credit to the many community minded volunteers that run them and most importantly the people of Elham that willingly support them. The village hall and sports facilities are a fantastic asset for the whole village. Play For Elham have done wonders with the George V Playing Field, a far cry from the old swings and see-saw that Tom used to play on. We are certainly very fortunate to live in a beautiful village, set in a wonderful valley and to be part of a thriving, vibrant community.



## Spirit of the Few

At 2:30 on the 29th July 1940, during the Battle of Britain, this iconic photo was taken at RAF Hawkinge showing some of the men of 32 Squadron.



These amazing sculptures of the pilots have recently been unveiled to recreate that photo at the same location on the airfield.





## Spirit of the Few /Cont



Four Hurricanes marked the occasion of the unveiling on 29th July 2022. This photo by Richard Paver shows two of them flying over the Kent countryside on their way for the ceremonial display over the Kent Battle of Britain Museum, Hawkinge.

David Brocklehurst MBE and the amazing volunteers at the museum have worked tirelessly to raise funds for this incredible project. Assisted also by members of the EHS who contributed to the retirement collection at our Amy Johnson talk and those who have given personal donations.

The museum is still fund raising as they need a further £36,935 to cover the £150,000 required to manufacture and install the statues.

If you would like to make a donation they have a “Spirit of the Few Hawkinge” campaign on the Just Giving website [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com).

## Forward planning!!

Joyce Crow's son, Graham, has recently retired from his professorship at Edinburgh. He still lives in Southampton, where he held his first chair in sociology, but is now able to visit his mum more frequently. When he called on me the other day, he urged me to start the EHS planning for the bicentenary of the Swing Riots, which will happen in 2030. He feels so strongly that Elham should commemorate this event, that he has pledged to help fund it if necessary. Like me, as an Elham boy and protégé of Mary Smith, Graham took an early interest in the Swing story. Quite coincidentally, while he was at Southampton one of his colleagues in the history faculty was Carl Griffin who was studying Swing and has since written 'The Rural War', which is now the standard work on the subject replacing 'Captain Swing' by Hobsbawm and Rudé, written in the 1960s.

Elham's importance in the story is that it was here that the machine-breaking element of the riots started. The first incident was at Wingmore Court on Tuesday 24th August.



*Wingmore Court*

The next night a machine was destroyed at Grimsacre, then as now a remote and little visited part of the parish.

### *The track to Grimsacre*

The following Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> August saw the first of many expeditions outside the parish to Palmstead, just a couple of hundred yards over the parish boundary in Upper Hardres, when the Elham men were joined by some from Stelling and Lyminge.





## Forward planning!! /Cont

This incident used to be cited as the first by many writers, including Hobsbawm and Rudé, and wrongly ascribed to Lower Hardres, which is actually one of the few local parishes where no machine breaking was recorded. Carl Griffin corrects that error, and gets the Elham details almost right. He is taking part in a seminar on civil unrest in Kent at Canterbury Christchurch University on 24<sup>th</sup> September. I will take the opportunity to discuss the subject further with him (I don't agree with some of his conclusions), but will also suggest that he makes a diary note for a visit to Elham in 2030. The actual anniversary, 24<sup>th</sup> August, falls on a Saturday, so maybe we should book the Village Hall soon, with the aim of making a day of it. I am sure that Graham Crow will want to get involved.

That's just my thoughts, but I mustn't get too far ahead of myself without your committee's involvement.

D.M.B.

## A Missed Encounter

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August, the hottest day of the second extreme spell, I received a phone call from Mike and Joyce Skinner, visiting from Spain, who were at the Cosy Tea Rooms, researching her grandfather, John Edward Constable, who they thought was working as a blacksmith in Elham in the early twentieth century. I said that they were, fortuitously, on the site of Elham's forge, told them what I could over the phone, and gave them my email address for further contact. As they were taking a walk round the village I thought I would try to meet them and printed a copy of this photo of the Elham forge from 1900.



## A Missed Encounter /Cont

Just a few yards from my front door I realised that this was not a wise thing to be doing, and I returned to the (relative) cool of my house. The subsequent email exchange showed that John Constable had not worked in Elham, but first as a journeyman blacksmith at the Lyminge forge, then on his own account at Rhodes Minnis. The Rhodes Minnis forge was near the Prince of Wales in Lyminge parish, but with the postal address "Elham, Canterbury", which had confused the Skinners. It was totally destroyed by a doodlebug one night in 1944, and I was able to send the Skinners this photo of the aftermath.



The forge stood to the right of the row of cottages, which were demolished, so the only evidence today is some bumps in the pasture. The J.J.Clayson workers, sitting having their lunch, are in Lyminge parish; the W.V.S. van is in Elham. The building on the left is the barn of Home Farm, which still stands.

As a youngster John Constable had lived with his parents at Danton Farm in Cheriton, where his father, Thomas, was farm bailiff. That too has totally disappeared, having been covered by the infrastructure of the Channel Tunnel, though a barn was reconstructed as part of the Elham Valley Line museum at Peene.

At the 1891 census Thomas Constable was farm bailiff at Hempsted in Lyminge parish, living in the farmhouse, and the newly married John Edward was also living there, so I was at least able to send Joyce Skinner a photo of one house associated with her grandfather.

None of this was really Elham, but it is always satisfying to be able to help.

D.M.B.





## Acrise Church, 25<sup>th</sup> June



It was a pleasant sunny afternoon when we visited Acrise Church, when about twenty of our members were joined by some local residents to hear my rather personal take on the church and the connections between Elham and Acrise. This is part of what I said:

I usually start these visits to local churches by quoting from what has been written by the likes of Edward Hasted, the eighteenth century county historian, Sir Stephen Glynne, the nineteenth century churchaholic, and John Newman, who in the twentieth century did the Kent volumes of Pevsner's *Buildings of England*. But I want to start today on a more personal note. Being born in 1940, I grew up in the war years, and then in a rural economy that hadn't really changed much from the past. I remember lots of farm horses parading in Elham on VE Day, and, yes, they were rapidly being replaced by tractors, but Field Marshalls, Fordson Majors and then the sturdy little Fergies were nothing like today's behemoths, and they often pulled the same implements as the horses and ploughs of no more than two furrows. Farming was still very labour intensive and most rural cottages were occupied by farm workers. That was the Acrise that I got to know fairly intimately in 1956, and I'll explain how.

As well as employing a large numbers of men, farming and its service industries provided jobs for many women on a full or part time basis, and most rural kids too. So it was for me. I had said I would like to go on the school trip to Switzerland in 1953, and my mother had promised to find the £16 needed, on condition that I raised the £3 which was the maximum spending money we were allowed to take.

## Acrise Church, 25<sup>th</sup> June /Cont

So seventy years ago I was riding or pushing my bike up Vicarage Lane to pick strawberries at the Higgs' farm at Milldown, and probably working in Acrise; though the farmhouse is in Elham, most of the land is in Acrise. The young Margaret Beeching was in charge of the pickers.

All my subsequent summer holidays were spent fruit picking, or working on the harvest, at Jacques Court with a reaper binder and horse drawn cart, at Water Farm on a tractor drawn Allis Chalmers combine, and finally at Bere Forstall working the night shift on the new corn drier, a real vision of the world to come. And the Saturday job, throughout the year but particularly in the winter, working for Horace Cook, the Elham baker, who had five vans on the road in the fifties. Sometimes I was on the Stowting/Brabourne round when we would start along Brady Road in Lyminge, stealing a few customers from Mr Apps, the Lyminge baker.

In January 1956 I was on the Acrise/Swingfield/Denton round. All East Kent winters were hard in those days, and 1956 probably had the most snow of any. On three consecutive Saturdays we were unable to get up any of the hills out of Elham (Running Hill was blocked for four months), and had to go down to Folkestone and up by the A260. Some customers missed out completely, including Barbara Athow's family at South Lodge. It wasn't only the baker who couldn't get through; Barbara's father George Freeman, famously carried a hundredweight of coal all the way up Lickpot Hill to keep the home fire burning. But we got to everyone we could. I was dropped off at the Woodyard to trudge through the drifts with a sack containing six large tin loaves for Mrs Elvery at Mounts Court, who had a large brood of sons (George was the youngest) all taking sandwiches to work five or six days a week. Meanwhile my driver would make other Acrise deliveries, including Mrs Papillon's small white at Acrise Place.

At one house along Ridge Row I would go in the unlocked door, and there on the living room table, with a dark red tablecloth with tassels, would be three piles of money, one for us, one for Jim Law, the man from the Pru, who did his Acrise round on Saturday, and the other probably for one of the rival Hawkinge butchers, Sargents or Welches, and everyone was trusted.

After Densole we did St Johns and Swingfield, then back to Selsted and down to Tappington Hall. On one of those Saturdays we were stuck at Tappington Hall at about ten at night and Mrs Gibson gave us tea and cake in the warm kitchen while one of her sons got out the tractor to pull us up to the road. An adventure for a fifteen year old, but not much fun for the driver. No matter how late you got back to The Square, Ruby Cook would be sitting at the kitchen table waiting to count the takings.

Today the vans we encounter on rural roads are from Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Waitrose or Ocado, and I wouldn't have got through the past three years without my regular Waitrose deliveries. Sixty five years ago it was the vans of local tradesmen which provided a similar but much more personal service.



## Acrise Church, 25<sup>th</sup> June /Cont



But what of the church? Sir Stephen Glynne, who visited in 1868, had some difficulty finding the church, and says the walls were covered in ivy. A hundred years earlier Edward Hasted described the church much as it is today, including many of the monuments. The one difference was that the bell cote then had a flat top. He said “The church is kept very neat”, which we might say today, or perhaps more accurately “lovingly cared for”.

Acrise church stands very close to the ‘big house’, and its close association with the families who lived there is shown by the many monuments which adorn the walls and floor of the church. The earliest of these are the Hamons, who were also for a while Lords of the Manor of Elham. When a memorial window was installed in Elham church in 1953 by Samuel Caldwell, the Canterbury glazier, it incorporated armorial glass from St Alban’s Court at Nonington, home of the Hammond family. It is very good glass of its kind, but the Hammonds and the Hamons were distinct families, so has no connection with former Elham landowners.

Robert Lewknor, who had married a Hamon, sold the estate to Thomas Papillon in 1666. Papillon was a successful London businessman (the family home in London was in Fenchurch Street), and also acted as a diplomat for the East India Company. In the summer of 1667 he was detained in London on business, and the following year he was in the Netherlands attending the Peace of Breda, which ended the Anglo-Dutch War. On both occasions his wife Jane came to Acrise to supervise work on the house, the neglected garden and the home farm. Her letters to Thomas, which I studied for my Certificate in Local History at

## Acrise Church, 25<sup>th</sup> June Cont

UKC show her to have been a knowledgeable and very competent organiser, in spite of many frustrations. 'This week has been the faire at Elam and debauched all the workmen' she wrote in May 1668. Jane was a good judge of the quality of a crop, and keen to try out new things. She was growing sainfoin, then a relatively new forage crop in England but becoming popular (and likely to be so again because of its resistance to drought). The Papillons had had eight children; the first four all died in infancy, but the surviving four, they aged from two to nine, are all doing well and she reports on their progress. In fact all survived to have families of their own. The Papillons left Acrise in 1855, but Arthur Papillon bought back the house and a small part of the land from the War Department after the Second World War, and it was to his widow Barbara that we delivered bread in the 1950s.

The Mackinnonns, whose marble tombstones can be seen as you approach the church porch, bought the estate in 1855, and acquired more land in Elham parish, thus increasing their influence in our community. When Colonel Mackinnon returned from the Boer War in which he commanded the City Imperial Volunteers, the village was decorated to greet him, and this flag survives from that day.



F. A. (Francis Alexander) Mackinnon played cricket for Kent, and for England in the very early days of Test Cricket. He gave Les Ames his first proper bat. The Mackinnon (he had become head of the clan) was ninety-eight when he attended his last Canterbury Cricket Week in 1947, and his protégé was nearing his one hundredth first class century.

The Mackinnons had sold the estate in 1908, and much of the land was bought a little later by Gwilym Thomas Treharne, a Welsh solicitor who had invested in the Kent coalfield. In 1913 he built a new house at Dreals Farm, which he confusingly called 'Acryse Manor', since it was neither in Acrise nor a manor. The Parkers, who bought it in 1923, renamed it 'Henbury', and that name survives for the small estate of houses on the site today.

D.M.B.



**2022**

## Who is Who

**Chairman**

Derek Boughton

**Vice Chairman**

Charles Kirchner

**Secretary**

Debbie Capon

**Treasurer**

Bryan Badham

**Membership Secretary**

Ian Sladden

**Any of the above can be contacted via:**  
**[elhamhistorical@outlook.com](mailto:elhamhistorical@outlook.com)**  
**[elhamhistorical.org](http://elhamhistorical.org)**

## Postcards

Don't forget our wonderful collection of vintage postcards at a cost of 60p each or £4.00 for a pack of eight. These are always available at our meetings in the Village Hall.



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

**For more information about local events please visit [www.elham.co.uk](http://www.elham.co.uk)**

## Follow us on our Facebook page

We have our own Facebook Page where people (EHS members and non members) can view information and our historical pictures, as well as make comments about Elham's rich history. If you are on Facebook then please take a look.

## 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:**

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