



CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.charinghistory.co.uk

 @CharingHistory 

CDLHS newsletter: April 2022

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We're almost at the end of our 2021-2022 season. We've had 6 well attended 'live' talks, and 1 via Zoom this season. We now have 97 members, and 6 honourable members.



Before our 'summer break' we hope you'll join us on May 19th for a pleasant evening with tasty nibbles, a 'just for fun' 1952-53 quiz and chance for a chat, after the AGM .



Please note it will be in the Church Barn at 7.30p.m.

Society / Committee Updates

- To avoid Covid complications causing too many arrangement changes, Celia has been booking 3 talks at a time, and will continue in this way for now. She has recently arranged 3 speakers for our new season of talks, which start in September. We are not therefore, printing an annual talks programme on card this year. Details of talks will be on the website soon, and info will be e-mailed to members and friends.

Society Updates *contd.*

- Sylvia has continued to receive a range of enquiries asking for information about places and people in Charing's past, and we have done our best to answer them.
 - Kate has been kept busy keeping our accounts up to date and they have been audited.
 - We are using Twitter and Facebook to keep members and non-members updated quickly. Pete Burton continues to put CDLHS posters up in the village advertising our talks.
- * We are looking for some more people to join the committee, to help the society continue to thrive –Interested? Find out more at the AGM

Society Groups Updates

- Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, Steve was able to transfer many documents to digital storage, and the Archive group (Gill, Liz and Alex) were able to continue to catalogue our documents and files.
- The Family History Group, led by Kirsten Moon, were able to meet a few times on Zoom, and are looking forward to meeting again properly soon.
- The Oral History group attempted to record outdoors, but the wind interfered. They look forward to continuing soon.



CDLHS



AGM + Social

May 19th

7.30pm

Church Barn

*nibbles, 1952-53 Fun Quiz
and chance to chat*

Remembering Jennie

In Memorial
Celebration tea for Jennifer Burgess
Saturday 14th May 3.00p.m.
Charing Church Barn

*Jennie, known and respected by many in Charing,
died on 3rd April 2020, at the beginning of lockdown.*

*Jennie's family have warmly invited us to join them for tea and
cake in the Barn to celebrate and remember her.*

Sir Edward Dering - 1st Baronet of Surrenden



The Black Horse In Pluckley photo: KentOnline

In 'The Black Horse' in Pluckley, over one of the large fireplaces in the restaurant area, are the following words which are written in prominent lettering:

***'Probably the most prominent family in Pluckley has got to be the Derings
who lived on the estate at Surrenden for over 500 years.***

During the reign of Charles 1st, the local squire was Sir Edward Dering.

***It is said that a member of the Derings escaped Cromwell's men
through an inverted U-shaped window,***

***which is why all the windows on the Dering estate were altered to this shape in the 19th century
by Sir Edward Cholmsley Dering.'***

So, who was Sir Edward? and latterly, Sir Edward Cholmsley-Dering?

Sir Edward was the 1st Baronet of Surrenden, Pluckley, born on January 28 1598 in The Tower of London, & died in 1644. His parents were Anthony Dering & Frances Bell.



Surrenden-Dering Manor

Photo: Lost Heritage

Note the distinctive arched 'Dering windows' fitted during C19

His descendent, **Sir Edward Cholmsley Dering** became the 8th Baronet of Surrenden. He was born on 19 November 1807 & died in April 1896. He was the only son of Edward Dering of Barham & Henrietta, & was an MP at various times for Wexford, New Romney & East Kent.

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An article on the 1st Baronet appeared in a recent issue of The Community Ad Magazine (Issue 16 Winter 2022), entitled 'The Dering Manuscript', which has given us a fascinating insight to him.

It tells how Sir Edward was a scholar & how he combined & adapted Parts 1 & 2 of William Shakespeare's play Henry VI, to produce his own version of the play

The article gives us the following insight:

'William Shakespeare's stories are classics, archetypal & timeless, & lend themselves with very little difficulty to various theatrical & historical settings. One of the earliest of these adaptations can be found in the Dering Manuscript, which was discovered in Ashford in 1844.

Although the manuscript was discovered in the 19th century, it was completed two centuries previously, & was a project undertaken by Sir Edward Dering. Educated at Magdalen College, Cambridge, Sir Edward was very interested in antiquities & had had a personal collection of historical manuscripts. He served under the Royalist banner in the English Civil War, but did not enjoy a soldier's life & when given the chance to buy a pardon from Parliament, he quickly took them up on their offer.



Sir Edward Dering, 1st Baronet, by William Dobson

Pic: Wiki commons

Clearly Sir Edward was more of an academic than an officer, & the Dering Manuscript is testament to his passion for the subject. The manuscript combines Part 1 & 2 of Shakespeare's play Henry VI into one abridged version, & it contains many obvious deviations & differences from other published copies of the play that we know about. It's thought that Sir Edward worked on the text to better suit it for an amateur theatrical production of the play that he put on at his home at Surrenden Manor in Pluckley.

As well as cutting a substantial amount of dialogue, Sir Edward also added lines of his own invention, changing characters to better suit his own interpretation of the story. In this way, the manuscript is closer to fanfiction than a faithful reinterpretation. The manuscript also had a cast list attached from another of Sir Edward's amateur performances, which allowed scholars to narrow down the date of the manuscript to between the autumn of 1622 & summer of 1624.

The manuscript was discovered in 1844 by the Reverend B. Larkin, who was researching a project on the history of Kent & was subsequently looking through the collection of historical papers & documents belonging to the 8th Baronet of Dering (also named Sir Edward after his famous ancestor). Larkin gave the manuscript over to the Shakespeare Society in London, who published a transcription of the manuscript in 1845. The original document changed hands a few times before Henry Clay Folger purchased the manuscript in 1897. It is currently part of the Folger Shakespeare Collection in Washington DC.'

CDLHS are very grateful to the Editor of the Community Ad Magazine, for allowing the reproduction of their article, all of which is in *italics* above.

K.A. Oram

Looking back at our 2021-2022 Talks;



photo from the cover of Emma Hanna's book:

It was so lovely to see real people join us for the first talk of our new programme 2021-2022 '**Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War**' by Emma Hanna. It was agreed to have been a resounding success.

A few memorable pieces of information from the talk;

- The importance of rousing music for maintaining morale had long been recognised by the military. In WW1 military bands gave a tremendous uplift to their colleagues at home and abroad, and also to the public, with the Salvation Army prominent in giving their support.
- The power of music for propaganda became a vital part of the necessary recruitment rallies to greatly expanded the armed forces.
- The Military School of Music was based at 'Kneller Hall' near Twickenham, where they oversaw the development of the military bands by promoting 'band leaders' that then worked with the bands and troops. (Later 'Kneller Hall' gave its name to a Great Western Railway (GWR) steam locomotive.)
- During the early 20th century, the music industry involved a huge number of people – not just the bands & orchestras etc, but also in the supply chain of producing the instruments, along with those organising, promoting & staging performances and gramophone recordings.
- The ability to uplift and cheer, and also calm and comfort proved to be therapeutic to those affected mentally and physically, both on the home front as well as soldiers at war.



24/10/21 Last talk facts remembered

Our last talk **Finding Captain Quilliam** by Andrew Bond
Andrew gave us a lot more information from his huge amount of research on his ancestor .

Though little known outside the Isle of Man, there John Quilliam is quite famous . There is a Quilliam Society, a memorial bronze bust at Castletown Bay, and a commemorative book of stamps issued this year to mark his birth 250 years ago.



Andrew dispelled some Trafalgar myths along the way;

- Nelson's famous inspiring words before the battle; "England expects every man to do his duty" had actually been "England confides every man to do his duty." But, to enable speed he agreed that "confides" be changed to "expect." (The word "expects" was in the signals book and so would need only 3 flags for the signal, instead of 8 flags, if spelt out letter by letter.)
- After Trafalgar HMS Victory was towed, as shown in the famous painting, but only for a while, she then managed to sail and anchor herself in Rosia Bay, Gibraltar.
- No proof has been found that Quilliam steered the ship when the ship's wheel was damaged.

Talk by Dr Michael Carter of English Heritage on 11 November 2021

Michael talked at first about four medieval monasteries he has worked on: two Benedictine abbeys - Whitby in Yorkshire and Battle in Sussex, and two Cistercian abbeys - Rievaulx in Yorkshire and Hailes in Gloucestershire. He focused on the relics for which abbeys such as these were famous, drawing in pilgrims from far and wide to touch the relics to be saved or healed, or imbued with some of the saint's sanctity. A piece of cloth from a saint's garment might be venerated as it had actually touched the saint's body. Michael pointed out that similar things happen today: for example a stained, cigarette-burned cardigan, unwashed for some 30 years and worn by Kurt Cobain, sold at auction in 2019 for \$334,000.

Relics brought considerable wealth to the monasteries, leading to a certain amount of swapping and replacing by what seems to us today unorthodox methods. Monks felt an urgency to acquire important, high-status relics to attract pilgrims and donors to their monasteries. As well as clothes already mentioned, bones, teeth, fingernails and fragments of Christ's cross and the Virgin's bed were much sought after, and important finds were housed in precious caskets of gold and silver inlaid with jewels; others were placed in small, engraved metal casings, inside wooden statues or other religious artefacts. Michael showed us one such tooth in an engraved metal case.



Wikicommons (in public domain in US, country of origin)

He went on to talk about the murder of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral whose blood was collected in phials from the cathedral floor and tiny drops diluted with water were sold to pilgrims who flocked to buy it in specially made ampullae. The blood was miracle-working, people drank it and were cured of their ailments; equally miraculously, the blood in the Cathedral never ran out. Miracles were more prestigious and profitable than mere relics, so Becket's blood was bought by other churches and abbeys, making Canterbury one of the most popular sites of pilgrimage in the Christian world. A fragment of Becket's skull was 'taken' to Battle Abbey in 1175 when Odo, prior of Canterbury at the time of the murder, was elected as abbot of Battle. Relics from Becket were placed in an elaborate casket, decorated with scenes of his murder; other, similarly ornate caskets were made in the Middle Ages commemorating Becket's death and some of these still survive, notably at Hereford Cathedral and the Ashmolean; most, however, were lost at the Dissolution in the 1530s and 40s, melted down to be used to fund Henry VIII's appetite for high living, ostentatious display and foreign wars.

N.B. The block on which John the Baptist was beheaded was brought back from the Middle East by Richard I and donated to the church in Charing - apparently.

(A 13th-century manuscript illumination, the earliest known depiction of Thomas Becket's assassination in Canterbury Cathedral)

Extract from letter cancelling December Social

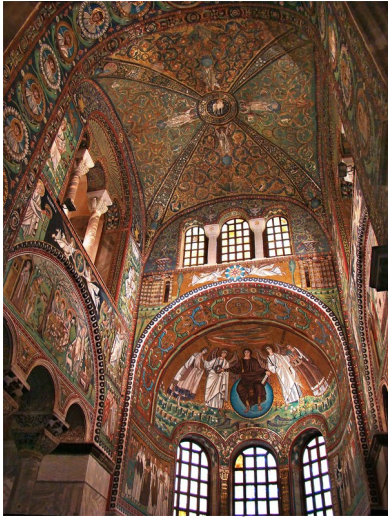
Dear Members,

In the light of the concerns associated with the latest version of the Covid virus, the Committee feel it prudent to cancel the Christmas Social that was planned for 9th December 2021 in the Church Barn.

Whist restaurants and pubs are able to organise social distancing in their premises, we would not be able to achieve the same level of safeguarding to the health of all of us. We had planned a communal quiz, which would have meant all of us being in close proximity when looking at the quiz pictures.

'Ravenna Seen Through Her Mosaics'

by Imogen Corrigan



The apse, Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna wikicommons Tango7174

The rapid onset of the Omicron wave caused us to review our original plan for the January talk. We decided a Zoom talk was the safest, and the society is very grateful to Imogen for agreeing to give this Zoom talk at short notice.

Ravenna's mosaics date from the 5th and 6th centuries, initiated by King Theodoric. His ambition was to make Ravenna equal in status to Constantinople and Rome. Theodoric is known for his religious tolerance; he ensured new churches were built in harmony alongside the old, rather than replacing them.

Imogen's inimitable style of giving a wealth of information and explanation infused with her subtle humour, made the talk very enjoyable. The talk was beautifully illustrated by her own colourful, detailed close ups of the mosaics.

Remembering the February 2022 talk

'Researching the History of a Country House: a case study of Trimworth Manor'

by Richard Goodenough



Crop pic from David Anstiss original

About 50 people attended Richard's talk, and we were pleased to also welcome some visitors and new members. Richard outlined the sources he used to research the history of his own house, and three families who lived there in the past. The talk was informative and enjoyable, and particularly useful for the amateur house detective. He said that the archives at the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone, and the maps and documents at Canterbury Cathedral Archives were crucial to his investigation.

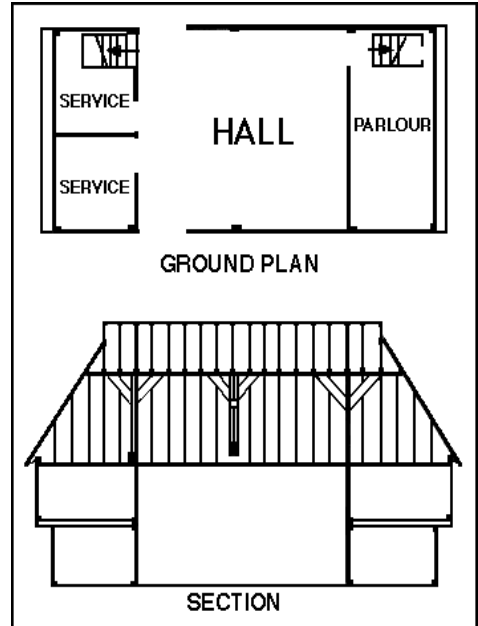


Image: David and Barbara Martin who are associated with the Institute of Archaeology, University of London.

A medieval timber-framed open-hall house was found to be the basis of the present structure of Trimworth.

Remembering our March talk on 'Becket's Shrine?' by David Chance



*A pilgrim's token of St Thomas Becket, (a souvenir from the C14, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York)
One of the sources for David's research.*

Using examples of contemporary accounts, paintings, drawings and pilgrim tokens, David described why the shrine was such a popular destination for so many pilgrims, evidenced by the visible groove all along the lengths of marble floor which had been worn away by the shuffling of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims' knees.

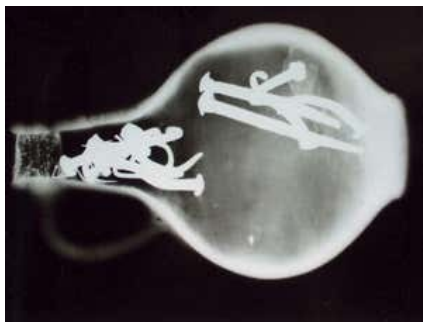
He described the shrine as consisting of an impressively large, sculpted, gold casket containing Becket's remains. It was totally encrusted with jewels and rested on a high stone base with pink marble pillars; a series of arched niches in the base meant pilgrims could get as close as possible to the saint. Above the casket was a decoratively painted, wooden, protective canopy, which could be raised and lowered by a pulley, with chains of tinkling silver bells. Lit candles surrounded the tomb, and there was an altar at one end.

In 1549 the tomb was destroyed by order of Henry VIII and an eye witness described that at least two cartloads of gold and jewels were removed. The gold and jewels were offerings that had been added to the original shrine by wealthy visitors. (One of the of the many remarkable jewels was a stupendous ruby, described as half the size of a hen's egg, it had been given by King Louis VII of France in 1179, and was later seen worn by Henry VIII.)

Remembering CDLHS April talk

Which Bottles are 'Witch Bottles?'

by Nigel Jeffries



X ray of Bellarmine jug found in 2004 in Greenwich.

Photo: Alan Massey /R.J.Bostock

About 40 people attended our talk, from Nigel Jeffries, with a number of apologies as there was a clash with some people's Easter commitments.

Nigel said that distinctive shaped stoneware jugs, known as 'Bellarmine jugs' have been recorded as found buried with human and metal contents. (3 in Charing.)

Without today's medical and scientific knowledge, people believed that being ill was a result of having a witch's spell placed on them.

They therefore sought help from healers, known as 'cunning folk' (thought to do good, even though it was illegal). 'Bewitchment' was frequently diagnosed. As a cure, the 'victim' would be instructed to put a concoction, often including the 'victim's' urine and some iron, in a jug and to heat or bury it.



Photo: Dr Alan Massey

Contents of Greenwich witch bottle; bent nails and human hair. It also contained bent pins, urine, nail parings, also a nail-pierced leather "heart" shape.

Worth a Look

- **BBC Radio 4's programme, 'The Long View'**, is an interesting, long-running series that aims to explore the past behind the present. Current events are juxtaposed with stories from the past to see if there are historical parallels. 125 episodes are currently available, with a variety of topical themes: money / law and order / controversial public figures, with programmes including: 'The Anti-Vac movement', 'The Harms of Social Media', 'Statues in Churches' and 'Legal Backlog'. A full list can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s7d6/episodes/player> from where it's easy to pick and choose a topic of interest.
- kentphotoarchive.org.uk is an extensive photo-archive which currently contains 24015 historic images, with many dating back to the late 1800s.
The site has 2 search boxes: 'TOWN/VILLAGE' and 'FEATURE'. The 'TOWN/VILLAGE' search is efficient.
- **A new article on the website** I had been disappointed to unavoidably miss our last talk on 'Witch Bottles', as knowing that 3 were found in The High Street, I had been curious to know more. Had Charing been a 'hotspot' for witchcraft or superstition? Starting with the information I'd been given from Nigel Jeffries' talk, I found out more. '[Witchcraft and Witch Bottles](https://www.charinghistory.co.uk/historical-allsorts)' was the resulting write-up. <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/arch-cant/vol/115/witchcraft-counter-spells-charing>
It is possible that the 3 in Charing were recorded, when others might not have been, through a providential coincidence of timing. The bottles were found when some of the old houses in the High Street were renovated. Pat Winzar, a long standing member of Charing History Society since it had been resuscitated in the 1970s, and who was widely recognised as a knowledgeable researcher of local history, investigated them. She documented the finds carefully at the time. I've since found [her article](https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/arch-cant/vol/115/witchcraft-counter-spells-charing) at <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/arch-cant/vol/115/witchcraft-counter-spells-charing>

We particularly welcome ideas and suggestions for future newsletters and for the website. Please send them to

communications@charinghistory.co.uk

Many thanks, Keith for this edition's article!



We hold contact information of members, and interested people, to send them society news and information on local history. We do not share the information with third parties.

If you would rather not receive emails from us in future, please email

Hon.Secretary@charinghistory.co.uk