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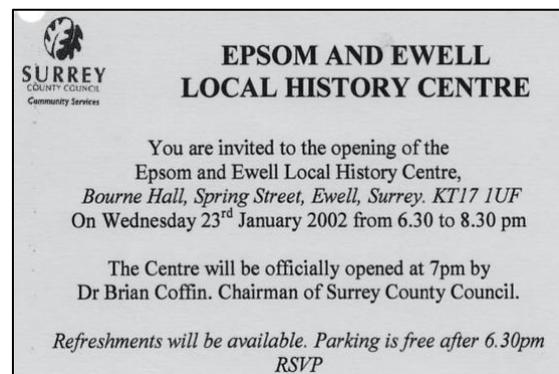
23rd January 2022, a not insignificant Anniversary

By Bert Barnhurst

A 20-years *China* Anniversary is not normally considered as significant as a 25-years *Silver* or 50-years *Gold* Anniversary. But we are pleased to celebrate anything significant in the current Covid climate.

The Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre (to give us our full title) came about due to the increasing interest in family history due to various television programmes. This led to numerous enquiries about local and family history to local libraries. Ewell librarian, Jean Walsh (now retired), became aware of the need for some assistance and in the Spring of 2001 a call was put out via the local press. On the 28th March volunteers and like-minded groups met to discuss the setting up of the Centre.

Much credit must go to Jean Walsh for organising a number of interesting, educational visits to a variety of places, including the Surrey History Centre and House of Lords Archives, usually with private behind the scenes access, as well as providing in-house training sessions to improve the volunteers' knowledge and understanding of the task ahead. A Committee was formed and throughout 2001 plans went ahead to organise the operation. The official opening by Dr Brian Coffin, Chairman of Surrey County Council, was on the 23rd January 2002.



The invitation to the 2002 official opening.

Over 20 years have now passed and we are still here, during which time our volunteers have sorted and listed a huge variety of records about Epsom & Ewell, developed a major website of some several hundred pages and several thousand images and photographs, mounted numerous displays on a variety of subjects and answered countless enquiries on local and family history from local residents and people from around the world. Despite the last two years' lockdowns and meeting constraints, due to the coronavirus pandemic, this work has continued by the use of our email – EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk and our web site – <https://eehe.org.uk> and more recently we again, began receiving visitors to our centre within Ewell Library in Bourne Hall – like the Windmill Theatre in WW2 we never closed!



So, if you need help with your local or family history research, do come and see us or send us an email. We are a local history service staffed by volunteers and part of Epsom & Ewell Surrey Libraries. Our services are free, although we do welcome donations to cover incidental administrative and stationery costs. Pity we can't have a party to celebrate, but 'Cheers' and here's to the next 5 years and our *Silver* anniversary!

The 1921 Census is here . . . but what next?

Family history aficionados will be delighted that the 1921 Census records for England and Wales have been available to view online from 6th January 2022, albeit exclusively via Findmypast.co.uk - (the census for Scotland will become available to search later in 2022). To access the records you will need to be a subscriber and there will be an additional pay-per-view fee of £2.50 per record transcript and £3.50 to view an original image. Regrettably, online records will not, at this time, be available through *Ancestry* or *TheGenealogist* websites.

However, the England census can be viewed free of charge at The National Archives, Kew, the National Library of Wales and Manchester Central Library, always assuming you want to make the journey.

The 1921 census is the most informative yet for family historians. It records information on almost 38 million individuals, including: name, age, sex, relationship, birthplace, trade, nationality, number of children, number of living rooms, where a person worked, whether divorced and, for Wales and Scotland, whether a person spoke Welsh or Gaelic.

Phew! That should give us all plenty to pour over, update our family trees and maybe find some surprises.

You also might like to know that *TheGenealogist* website has launched a 'Circa 1921 Resource' which covers 23 counties and includes over one million records based on Trade, Residential & Telephone records. These 1921 directories cover the North, South, East and the West of England, the Channel Islands and as far up the country as Aberdeen.

But what of 1931 and beyond

Regrettably, the 1931 Census returns, including schedules, enumeration books and plans, were destroyed in a fire in Hayes, Middlesex, where the census was being stored. Many precautions had been taken to protect the census, which all failed.

The 1941 Census was not taken due to World War II.

However, all is not lost. The National Registration Act, 1939 provides a viable census substitute for the 1941 census. It established a National Register "for the issue of identity cards." This population count took place on the 29th September 1939, and provided information for "all persons in the United Kingdom at the appointed time" and "all persons entering or born in the United Kingdom after that time." Forty million people were registered. As well as the usual name, age, etc. people were asked about membership of Naval, Military or Air Force Reserves or Auxiliary Forces or of Civil Defence Services or Reserves, which seems a relevant question. These records are available on *Ancestry*, *Findmypast* and *TheGenealogist*.

Meanwhile, Bert Barnhurst has alerted us to some brief facts about Epsom & Ewell that have been released from the 2011 Census and show some interesting demographics of the borough of Epsom & Ewell which might intrigue you.

If you would like more detailed information on the Epsom & Ewell Demographics for the 2011 Census click on this link: [Epsom & Ewell 2011 Census Demographics](#)

Sources: <https://www.1921census.org.uk> and <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/what-no-british-censuses-for-or/>
Borough Insight magazine and 2011 Census Demographics



Some quite interesting facts about Epsom and Ewell at the time of the 2011 Census:

- 75,102 people lived in the borough, including 4,627 students
- The top occupation was sales and retail assistant, numbering 1,459 people
- 957 were nurses
- There were 119 arts officers, producers and directors
- 2,841 people walked to work
- The top language, other than English, was Portugese, spoken by 597 people
- There were 264 different ethnicities
- 5,327 people did not state a religion
- 221 people identified as Jedi Knight and 2 believe in Heavy Metal
- There were 36 households with eight or more people

Audrey Tune, age 96, with memories of Bomber Command in WW2

By Karen Child

The first time I met Audrey was when she came in to Bourne Hall, where I work in the coffee shop. She had come in with a friend and they would go into the library, choose some talking books and then come and have a coffee. If time allowed, I would sit down with them and we would put the world to rights!

As her needs changed, Audrey moved to Ridgemount Care Home where I would visit her regularly either in her room or eventually behind a plastic screen as the dreaded lockdown struck. This proved extremely difficult as Audrey was by now a little hard of hearing. But eventually in May 2021 we were allowed to sit in the garden, Alleluia!

It was on these visits that Audrey would open up about her life as a young girl, and these fascinating tales she shared with me.



Audrey Tune, driver for Bomber Command Pathfinders

She was born in Hammersmith in March 1925, one of eight, the second in the pecking order. As she told me there was no birth control in those days! She had a very happy childhood and lived there until her whole family was evacuated to Windsor as war broke out. Consequently, she was split from her siblings but not for long as her dad bought a house in Ashford, Middlesex where they came together again.

Audrey was just 17 when she tried to join the WRAF (Women's Royal Air Force) but was told to come back in six months, which she did, joining the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force). She was stationed at RAF Wynton near Huntingdon where she learnt to drive anything and everything from cars to jeeps to lorries and more. She became part of the ground staff to the Pathfinders in the famous Bomber Command. Her job was to transport the pilots and the bombs (not in the same vehicle) to their awaiting planes, mainly Lancaster's. The pilots would fly over to Europe and light the flares for the targets to be bombed. Then bomber command would follow. Audrey tried not to get too attached to the men as often they didn't return.

She told me with great pride that she was a LACW 2131579 (leading aircraft woman) and never sought promotion as she would've had to become much more responsible and respectable driving the big wigs around; although she did know and occasionally get to drive Wing Commander Don Bennett who led the "Pathfinder Force" from 1942 to the end of WW2 in 1945. He has been described as "one of the most brilliant technical airmen of his generation: an outstanding pilot, a superb navigator who was also capable of stripping a wireless set or overhauling an engine". He rose to be the youngest Air Vice-Marshal in the RAF



The Avro Lancaster

She shared a house with lots of other girls at the base which had been let out from air force families for the WAAFs. She loved her time there and stayed until the end of the war in 1945, although obviously it was tinged with sadness at the loss of so many dear friends.

After the war Audrey trained as a nurse in Windsor and got her first job in Peterborough. It was a big hospital, and they were short staffed after the war. She loved her new career and as she said to me 'she was good at it'!

"The Pathfinders were ordinary men from a range of nations who revolutionised the efficiency of the Allies' air campaign over mainland Europe. They elevated Bomber Command . . . from an impotent force on the cusp of disintegration in 1942 to one capable of razing whole German cities to the ground in a single night with devastating accuracy."

Sources: *'The Pathfinders – The Elite Force that Turned the Tide of WWII'* by Will Iredale. Publisher: Ebury Publishing. ISBN 9780753557808.

From just 5 Squadrons in August 1942 the Pathfinder Force grew to 19 Squadrons forming No. 8 Group RAF in January 1943.

"Sir Arthur Harris, chief of RAF Bomber Command, described the Lancaster as the 'greatest single factor in winning the war. Yet of the 7,377 built during the conflict, more than half were lost to enemy action or training accidents and Bomber Command aircrew had a mere 40 per cent chance of surviving the war unscathed.'" Source: 'Lancaster: The Forging of a Very British Legend' by John Nichol. Publisher: Simon & Schuster Ltd. ISBN: 9781471180491. https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Don_Bennett

Called to the Colours

By Pat Lelliott and Bert Barnhurst

Who, coincidentally, were both in the RAF, in air traffic control, but on opposite sides of the world.

During November/December last year we mounted a display about 'National Service' outside the Local History Centre office in Ewell Library, Bourne Hall to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of national service call up. The end of national service is open to interpretation. The official end was 31st December 1960, but in reality, the last man was called up in May 1961, and was demobbed in May 1963. This is why we have based our display on commemorating the 60th anniversary.

Among other things it features some 23 photographs of people from Epsom and Ewell who were called up to do National Service.

The National Service Act, 1948 came into effect on 1st January 1949. It applied to males over the age of eighteen; women were never conscripted to National Service. It called for 18 months service with four years on the reserve list. In 1950, at the time of the Korean War, this was changed to two years' service, with three and a half years in the reserves.

Conscription was deemed necessary as there were insufficient numbers of servicemen after six years of WW2 and with the threat of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Conscripts receiving their 'call up' papers theoretically had the option to join the army, Royal Navy or Royal Air Force. 'Bevin Boys', conscripts who had been sent down the coal mines during WW2, had stopped in 1951.

There were a few exceptions to being called up: anyone medically unfit, also anyone taking a degree or apprenticeship could defer their call up year on year until the completion of their studies. They would then join up. Extenuating family issues could be argued but not often successfully.

If you didn't see the display, we thought we would bring it to you. Thank you to Bourne Hall Museum for production of the display boards.

For legibility, larger copies of the display boards are featured as an appendix, pages 17 to 20



Commemorations in Epsom Cemetery Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

By Clive Gilbert

In the last issue of 'Lives & Times' (no.50, September 2021) we announced the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's 'Guided tours of the Military Graves in Epsom Ashley Road Cemetery' which took place in September and October. The tours were led by Clive Gilbert and Martin Olney.



The CWGC cemetery in Epsom Ashley Road Cemetery

loved ones were buried and that having no organisation to take respectful take care of the dead would be very bad for the morale of the troops.

Ware ceaselessly campaigned for an organisation, independent of the army, to care for the dead. He was rewarded on 21 May 1917 when the Imperial War Graves Commission (in 1960 changed to Commonwealth) was founded by Royal Charter. Its task was to commemorate all those who died whilst in uniform between the dates 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 and, after the Second World War, this was extended to 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947.

The Commission commemorates over 1,700,000 casualties in 23,000 locations in 150 countries. Of these over 300,000 are in the UK, with 130,000 being commemorated on memorials to the missing. The other 170,000 have known graves spread over 13,000 locations in the UK.

Many people will be aware of the Commission's 2 feet 6 inches high white Portland stone headstone which commemorates all overseas casualties who were buried in the country where they fell. Less well known is that for those who died in the UK the next-of-kin could decide where their loved one would be buried, and the type of grave marker used. Thus, in the UK graves will be found that have just a Commission gravestone, others have a private memorial, and some have both.



Part of section K in Epsom Cemetery was used solely for the burial of Great War dead and was dedicated on 17 May 1925 by the Bishop of Winchester. The plot holds the remains of 148 servicemen. Only 86 of the 88 available grave spaces have been used for the 148 men. Many of the graves have multiple burials:

- 79 are from the UK, buried up to 9 deep, but 5 have individual graves.
- 59 are from Canadian forces, all in individual graves; 2 are American citizens.
- 6 are from Australia, all in individual graves.
- 2 are Ghurkhas in individual graves.
- 1 is from Burma, individual grave.
- 1 is from India, individual grave.

The deaths of those buried in the CWGC plot occurred in the following places:

Horton War Hospital	94	Dr. Copes Surgery, Ewell	1
Manor War Hospital	30	Military Hospital, Newport	1
Long Grove Asylum	19	Military Hospital, Brighton	1
Chalk Pits, Epsom	2	Total	148

Another 83 service personnel are buried in 81 graves scattered around Epsom Cemetery. Of these, 34 are Great War casualties and 48 are Second World War casualties.

The majority of the 34 Great War deaths were from illness or disease, including influenza (23) followed by death from wounds (5), accidents (3) and cause unknown (3). As for the Second World War, the majority of the 48 deaths were the result of flying accidents (14) followed by illness or disease (8), other accidents including fire and drowning (7), air raids (3), bomb disposal (1) and suicide (1).

Each group attending the tours were shown a representative sample of the 81 scattered graves with some detail of the cause of death given, for example:

V1 Flying bomb Doodlebug	Meningitis and osteomyelitis
Petrol fire	Died of wounds
Tuberculosis	Night training flying accident
Gas shell wound	Bailed out over the sea near Kent coast – never found
Road traffic accident	Drowned in Hull Docks
Flying accident, first solo flight	Injuries, thrown from lorry speeding to bomb disposal
Trying to dispose of unexploded 'butterfly bomb'	Motorcycle collision
Wounds received in the Arnhem battle	Suicide by handgun
Crash landing due to fog	Flight from Cologne, plane nosedived
Aircraft landing accident	Train accident

The tours seemed to attract considerable interest with some tours fully booked. Two points emerged: Firstly, most visitors thought that only those who 'died in action' had a Commission commemoration and were surprised to learn that anyone who died whilst in uniform between the stipulated dates received a commemoration regardless of how they died - even a Gunner who was hung in Wandsworth prison on D-Day for rape and murder, is 'Remembered with Honour' by the Commission. Secondly, everyone thought that a commemorated person would have a Commission headstone whereas in Epsom, of the 83 commemorated, 30 have private grave markers that would not show they were Commission commemorated and would be walked past without being noticed.

We wait to hear from the CWGC whether, after analysing the results of these tours, they will continue to expand on them to raise awareness of all those who fell, from whatever cause, whilst on duty serving our country.

To find out more about those who gave their lives in the WW1 and WW2, just click on the links below.

WW1: <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=28345> and WW2: <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=28348>

A good and full life cut short

By Ian Parker



Dr. J. Allen Bratton

We have received a letter from a Mrs. P. Hatfield in which she wrote: “I enclose an item for your collection. My grandfather is the Doctor James Allen Bratton, who I believe was employed as a public health officer by the council. If they would be of interest, I have a couple of diaries and a passenger list for cruises he took in 1890 and 1891 and can also supply a photo”.

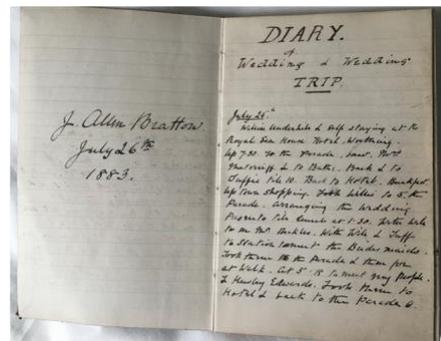
The item she sent with the letter was a playbill for a concert on October 20th, 1892, at the *Ewell Working Men’s Club and Institute* at which Dr. Bratton sang *The Spanish Boat Song* and later a *Duet with Mrs Poulter*. We replied to Mrs Hatfield that we would be interested and, at the same time began to seek more information on Dr. Bratton.

James Allen Bratton was born in Shrewsbury, Shropshire in 1860, the only son of Dr. James Bratton, a surgeon, and Mary, nee Allen. He studied medicine at King’s College, Cambridge and then began practising in Shrewsbury. He married Vera Rose Matveieff, aged 20, daughter of a Russian merchant, at Worthing on 26th July 1883.

Their honeymoon was a six-week tour of Europe. Dr. Bratton kept a detailed hand-written daily diary

of where they had been, who they had met and what they had done – in which it becomes clear that Tuff was his nickname for his wife. The wedding day itself is delightfully detailed and ends with a rather charming entry of their first night at their hotel in London:

“We arrived there about 7pm & had dinner almost at once. Gates & Mrs. Gates looking well after us. We played round till 10.30 when I went up & undressed Tuff & then came down for a smoke while she had her bath. After having seen my wife in her bath, we turned in about 12 & by half past we were man & wife”.



The opening pages of the Wedding Diary



Steam Yacht ‘Ceylon’ in the Norwegian Fjords, with a small steam-boat full of passengers

The next morning, July 27th the Brattons took the train to Folkestone and then sailed to Boulogne. A grand European tour followed including Lake Lucerne, Zurich, Baden Baden – where they saw the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and the Duchess of Hamilton together - then Heidelberg, Cologne and Liège –where they visited the Waterloo battlefield. During their tour Tuff suffered a chest infection and cough requiring visits to chemists and hospital, she was also troubled by the heat and fleas.

In January 1890 Allen Basil Bratton was born and on the 19th August of that year the Brattons sailed on a 30-day cruise of the Baltic – leaving child Allen with Vera Rose’s father, Mr. Matveieff. A second diary gives an equally detailed account of

this trip on the *Steam Yacht Ceylon*, visiting Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Christiania. There were only 25 passengers on board so the Brattons “were able to have a cabin each, next to next, which was most comfortable”.

They must have enjoyed their cruise because the following year they took another 14-day cruise on the *Ceylon*, this time to the Norwegian Fjords. The third diary records them departing on 28th July 1891; there were 51 passengers on board including “*One Lady’s Maid*” so this time they had to share a cabin. Dr. Bratton kept a menu and list of passengers on board which gives a bit of an insight on their comfortable lifestyle.

In the meantime, Dr Bratton, and his family, moved from Shrewsbury to Ewell, where he went into partnership with Dr. Barnes, but was soon to succeed to the whole practice on Dr. Barnes death. He became very involved in village life, both from a medical perspective in his role as Medical Officer, and also socially, as seen in his enjoyment of singing at village concerts.

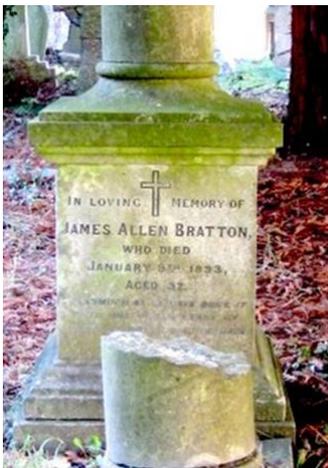
As Medical Officer for Ewell and Chessington District some of his actions are reported in the *Logbook of Ewell National Boys School* some of which portends his own fate:

- February 27, 1892, Dr. Bratton with Revd. A. Low (Manager) called at the School-house today (Saturday) & informed me that Percy Atkinson is suffering from Diphtheria. I was also instructed by them not to open School on Monday.
- March 30, 1892, re-opened School after being closed Four Weeks & Two Days. Morning. 106 present, afternoon 105.
- Nov 14, 1892, School closed today by order of Dr. Bratton owing to two cases of fever having occurred in the Girls' School. The Schools have been fumigated this week.

Obituary British Medical Journal January 21st, 1893

J. ALLEN BRATTON, M.A.Camb, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.F.
Mr. J. Allen Bratton of Ewell, Surrey, died on January 9th from typhoid fever, at the early age of 32. He formerly practised at Shrewsbury, and besides other honorary appointments was a very energetic honorary secretary for the local Branch of the British Medical Association. He took the liveliest interest in his old College – King's – and was to be seen there frequently. He will be greatly missed by his friends and patients, for he was of a most genial and liberal disposition and always prepared to help in any charitable work. About two years ago he joined Dr. Barnes of Ewell, in partnership, and only lately succeeded to the whole

Within 2 months Dr. Bratton had died on the 9th January 1893, age 32, at Dorset House, Ewell. His death certificate records cause of death as 'enteric fever and pneumonia' (typhoid). His burial is recorded in the Parish Register as the 20th January 1893, alongside which is a note "after cremation at Woking". There is also a memorial for Dr. Bratton in St Mary's Churchyard, Ewell.



Memorial in St. Mary's, Ewell

Probate was granted on the 2nd March 1893 to Basil Matveieff and Vera Rose Bratton, widow. Dr. Bratton left an estate worth £15,054-18s-5d (today worth over £2 million).

On the 1st June 1897 Vera Rose, age 34, married Cyril Wintle, age 39 at St. George's Church, Hannover Square, London. Cyril was an Underwriter and Insurance Broker at Lloyds.

We thank Mrs. Hatfield for presenting us with the diaries and the other items that shed a light on the seemingly happy life of the Dr. and Mrs. Bratton which was cut short for the doctor by the dreaded typhoid.

Sources:

Dorset House, Ewell was demolished around 1955 and is now a municipal car park - <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=29592>

Images of Dr. Bratton and Diary courtesy Mrs. P. Hatfield. Memorial: www.findagrave.com

National Schools logbook: <https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/WestStreetSchoolExtracts.pdf>

S.Y Ceylon: http://www.pandosnco.co.uk/cruising_history.htm

Who's the boy standing on the table in the dress?

From Ian Parker

In the latter part of last year Mr. Simon Theobalds and his sister, Prue Maxwell-Stewart, sent an email informing us that they are the great grandchildren of Herbert Lemprière, the little boy standing on the table in a dress pictured in John Everett Millais's drawing of the Lemprière family in a scene representing *Twelfth Night*, i.e., the evening of January 5th, when it is traditional to have festivities and merry-making (including a large cake).

Mr Theobalds has been researching his great grandfather's life and was fascinated by some of the material about the Lemprière family on our History Explorer website - <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=25610>.

He has a family scrap book and a family tree, which features all Herbert

Lemprière's siblings as well as the line back to Otho de Lemprière in the 10th century. Mr Theobalds and his sister



The Lemprière family, by John Everett Millais.

Herbert Lemprière is the child in a dress standing on the table.

offered to visit us and share this information.

Captain Lemprière and his family, originally from Jersey in the Channel Islands where they knew and encouraged Millais' talent, came to England and lived in the Manor House, Cheam Road, one of the largest houses in Ewell. Millais frequently stayed with Captain Lemprière, where he made this drawing of the Lemprière family watching Harriet, Herbert's mother, cutting the twelfth night cake.



Mr. Theobalds with the Lemprière Scrapbook

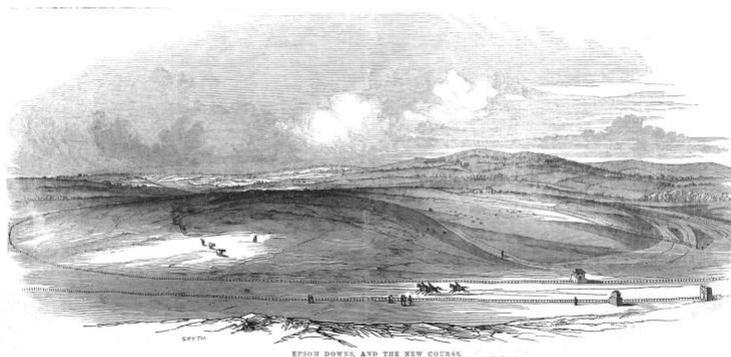
Towards the end of the year Jeremy Hart, curator of Bourne Hall Museum, and I with met with Mr Theobalds and his sister in the History Centre in Ewell Library where we were able to take photographs of the images and articles in the scrapbook and the family tree for later study. In return, we were able to direct them to the tombstones in St Mary's Churchyard of William Charles Lemprière, his daughters Mary and Elizabeth, and his eldest son William Reid. The photograph they took of these tombs mirrored exactly a painting they had shown us. In addition, we were able to supply them with a handwritten record of the marriage of William Charles Lemprière to Harriett Reid, which they had been seeking for some time. We found it in the *UK, British Army and Navy Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1730-1960* on Ancestry.co.uk

Mr Theobalds emailed later to thank us for the meeting and for the information we had supplied, a compliment we returned.

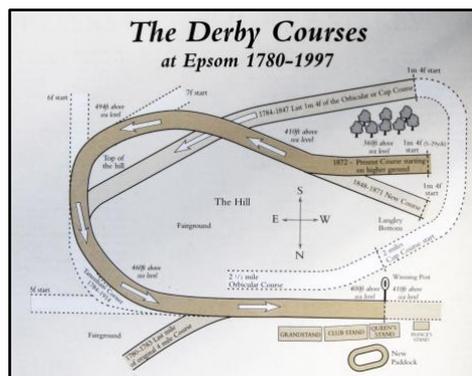
Identifying a new course for the Derby

From Meg Bower

We recently had an enquiry from DC who, many years ago, had acquired a copy of a 19th century print (*below left*) entitled 'Epsom Downs and The New Course' bearing the name Smyth as artist. It appeared to have come from a newspaper, and he wanted to know its date and where it had been published.



Smyth's 19th Century print of Epsom Downs and the new course



Map of changes in Epsom racecourse

We were able to tell him that in 1846 a new course was laid out for The Derby to bring the starting post in full view of the grandstand; it had previously been above Langley Bottom and therefore obscured by Downs House. We also referred him to a map on our History Explorer website showing changes to Epsom Racecourse between 1780 and 1997.

Armed with an approximate date, we were able to search for the publication and eventually confirmed that the print had appeared in the Illustrated London News on the 23rd May 1846 and showed the proposed new course which would be in use for The Derby in 1848.

DC was delighted with this information, and emailed us "Thank you so much, and your supporting team generally, for the most excellent information that you have researched and sent to me so promptly about Epsom racecourse. I was expecting that my enquiry might be too vague and obscure, but you have proved me very wrong indeed." He went on say his great grandmother was born in 1841 and was living at Langley Bottom where her father, his great-great-grandfather, was a shepherd. By happy coincidence, the print dates very closely to his family's time in the area and is therefore perfect for inclusion in his narrative Family History.

You can see a larger map of the 'Derby Courses at Epsom 1780 – 1997' on the History Explorer website: <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=24068>

Can you help us identify this photograph?

Towards the end of last year, Mr. Paul Lang dropped into our office in Ewell Library with this photograph (postcard) of *Epsom High Street*. He was interested in knowing what it showed and when it was. All he could add was that on the back of the postcard was printed the reference *Dainty Novels*.



Studying the photograph, we could identify the names of two shops: 'Sheath & Son, Bakers' (on the left) and 'C Stuart-Tobacconist' (on the right). We have searched both Kelly's and Andrews Directories but could find no entry for C. Stuart-Tobacconist before 1899 or after 1911; this narrowed down the date of the photograph to this 13-year period.

Further research on 'Dainty Novels' led us to Shurey's Publications, a large magazine company located in Gough Square, London. They included postcards as free inserts in their magazines to increase sales, the postcards bore the name of the relevant magazine series such as 'Smart Novels', 'Yes and No' and 'Dainty Novels'. Most of the cards were photographs and artist drawings of scenes from around Britain. Further research showed that Shurey's Publications existed from 1903 to 1927 and that the 'give-away' of their promotional photographs was pre-1906. This means our postcard is dated between 1903 and 1906.

The image looks like it is some sort of procession or celebration of some significant event. For the period 1903 to 1906 there were a number of major events in Epsom:

- in 1903 the town welcomed the return of Lord and Lady Rosebery to Epsom. Lord Rosebery had been Prime Minister from March 1894 to June 1895. The family home was The Durdans in Chalk Lane.
- On the 28th March 1903, Sybil Primrose, the 23-year-old daughter of Lord Rosebery, married 25-year-old Charles Grant of the famous Grant Whiskey family. The ceremony took place at Christ Church, Epsom Common. The ceremony was very quiet, but enormous crowds gathered to see the wedding. Looking at the photograph, the crowd is travelling in the right direction for Christ Church.
- in January/February 1906 there was a General Election, which the Liberal Party won. Was the lady in white with the dark sash campaigning? Was she perhaps a Suffragist, who were the more peaceful campaigners for women's vote compared to the more militant Suffragettes?
- It could possibly, but unlikely, be to do with the Epsom Derby, which is run every year in June, so there were four opportunities to take this photograph - 1903, 1904, 1905 and 1906. However, the crowd is going the wrong way for Epsom Downs and it's not the usual rowdy crowd for a Derby

My favourites are Sybil and Charles wedding, or the General Election; but it could be something completely different. If any of our readers can give us a better insight, please emailt EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk – Ed'

Sources: <http://sandgrownlass.co.uk/old-postcards/?s=Shurey>
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/allmycollections/49798413578>

Lady Sybil Grant (née Primrose): <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=25607>

Genealogical Miscellanea

We thought we would share these items that volunteers and readers have come across whilst researching their local and family histories

Monumental Blunders:

While conducting family history research in Northumberland archives Elaine Parker came across the following in the Berwick-upon-Tweed History Society newsletter:

From Yorkshire comes the account of a man who ordered an inscription for his wife's tombstone which read "*Lord She is Thine*".

Unfortunately, the mason began the lettering too far over, with the result that it read "*Lord She is Thin*".

When the customer complained the mason sent one of the staff to correct the error.

Sadly, the lad misunderstood and carved the letter in the biggest space available – at the beginning, so that it finally read "*E Lord She is Thin*".

Apparently, another tombstone had the inscription:

*Major James Bush, who was killed by the accidental discharge of a pistol by his orderly.
'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'.*

Interesting Census Entries:

Hazel Ballan has been looking through local Census data and came across these three entries which she thought might amuse us:

The 1871 Census for the top of Epsom Downs covering the Downs Hotel and part of Woodcote Road also contained the entry for the Epsom Racecourse Grandstand; It recorded four names: Thomas Weller, Head, age 67, Sarah, his wife, age 64, Martha, a granddaughter, age 13 and Walter Lupton, a visitor, age 13 and a painter's apprentice. Under 'Rank, Profession or Occupation the enumerator had written "*In Charge of the Place*" which Hazel thinks is as clear a description as you can get as, generally, people ask '*Who's in charge round here?*'

In the 1891 census the entry for the Dorset family in Downside Road, Epsom recorded Henry Dorset, age 43, a jeweller, his wife Amelia, age 36 and three daughters, May - 14, Ella - 12 and Florence - 11. The census required the answer to the rather intrusive, and today probably unacceptable question "*If Deaf-and-Dumb, Blind, Lunatic, Imbecile or Idiot?*". Under May's name the enumerator had entered the comment "*Headache*". Now, what is one meant to read into that?

Then comes the 1911 census, the first that householders filled in themselves. At Cliff View, Sutton Court Road lived the Westover family comprising Stephen Westover, the head, a baker, his wife Annie, an American from Nevada, two daughters: Julia Annie - 23, a needleworker, Gladys Ruth - 16, a milliner and son Stephen Fred - 4. Under the same question on 'Infirmary' as in the 1891 census, Stephen Westover had written against his name '*Thirsty*', and under his son's entry he had written '*Hot Stuff*'. One hesitates to think what he meant as under all the other family members in the household he had written '*None*'.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.
of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who		For Infants under one year	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of --	Personal Occupation. Industry or Service with which worker is connected. Whether or No One
1 Alice S. Mannoek	Head	48	Widow	None
2				None worse luck.

Also in the 1911 census (above) is a record for Alice Mannock, age 48, a widow living in Putney with her 31-year-old niece Louise Lewis. Alice has noted she has '*No Children*', '*No personal occupation*' and '*No industry or Service with which she is connected*' to which she has added the comment '*worse luck.*' One feels rather sad about this entry and wonders about Alice's circumstances.



A Memorial bench with a difference:

We have surely all seen benches around our towns and parks and in various countryside beauty spots that have memorial plaques on them saying it was the favourite spot of the deceased with dates and other comments. James Parker came across this bench memorial on Facebook, although M.R Atkinson's '*Not dead, just like plaques*' is more of a comment than a memorial.

Ed: Please keep them coming, these strange and amusing entries that make our genealogy research so interesting. Email them to EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk, with sources and, where possible, images please.

Thank You for Your Thank Yous!

It's always a pleasure when our volunteers' research on a customer enquiry is appreciated by the enquirer. Here are just a few we thank you for.

A random remark about a bakery

A reader who found Linda Jackson's article about Turner's Bakery on our History Explorer website - sent us this lovely feedback:

From: Liz Dandy

I just wanted to say what a fantastic find this article was for me after a random remark from my sister about our mum's great aunt and uncle having a bakery! Although they are not in our direct line of ancestry (Nelly was the sister of our great grandfather), it brings things to life and helps build a picture of the life and times of the family. Many thanks to your local group for making these gems available to the public.

The website article on Turner's Bakery can be found at <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=62331>

Bill Eacott's book *Racehorse Training at Epsom* brought back happy memories.

Amanda Wynne sent us this email:

"Just wanted to say a massive thank you to Bill Eacott for the information which I found through the History Explorer website. I lived in Ewell in the 1960's and 1970's and feel I grew up on (horseback) on Epsom Downs surrounded by mostly now long-gone racing trainers (frequently being chased off the gallops by them)! . . . His detailed resources took me back to names I remembered and can now link them to the current day trainers."

Bill subsequently informed us he met with Amanda at South Hatch Stables and had a long talk about mutual acquaintances from her time in Epsom and Ewell. She was very enthusiastic about the EEHE website, and she further told me it was the first time she had ever been sufficiently impressed to write a letter of congratulations. She also bought a copy of Bill's book.

Webmaster Peter Reed found this 50-year-old photograph of the Portland House Stables where Amanda went for about 20 years and, thanks to Amanda, we now know the lady holding the horse is called Marian Reilly and the beagle is her dog, Hunter.



A selection from Bill Eacott's '*Racehorse Training at Epsom*' can be seen on our website at: <https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RacehorseTrainersAtEpsomA-Z-1.pdf>

Solving the death of a WW2 Soldier

Back in September 2021 in 'Lives & Times' no. 53, we reported that Mrs. Katie James sought information of a family member, Victor William Teather, a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps, who died in suspicious circumstances at The Grandstand on Epsom Downs racecourse in June 1944, age 24. We were able to provide quite a lot of information on his history, including the location of his burial. In return we received this very kind and complimentary email:

From: Katie James

Hello. I just wanted to thank you so much for all your efforts on mine and Victor's behalf. It has so exceeded my expectations and if there is someone who should be made aware of my appreciation of what yourself, Roger Morgan, and another colleague, have done on our behalf I would appreciate it if you would pass my comments on to them. It was really touching to read Roger's memorial to Victor. He was so young and died in such tragic, and mysterious, circumstances merely attempting to do what he felt was right for his country. This will now not be forgotten.

'Lives & Times' no. 53 can be found at : <https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NewsletterSept2021.pdf>

The website article by Roger Morgan on 'Private Victor William Teather, RAMC' can be seen at: <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=40874#TeatherVW>

Beware other people's family history

From Elaine Parker

Whilst trawling around the Worldwide Web, as you do, I came across the following entry on www.findagrave.com.

"An amateur genealogical researcher discovered that his great-great-uncle, Remus Star, was hanged for horse stealing in Montana in 1889. The only known photograph of Remus shows him standing on the gallows. On the back of the photograph is the inscription: 'Remus Star, horse thief, sent to Montana Territorial prison in 1883, escaped 1887, robbed the Montana Flyer six times. Caught by the Pinkerton Detectives, convicted and hanged in 1889'.

In the family history, subsequently written by his descendant, Remus's picture was cropped so that the picture shows nothing more than Remus's head. The accompanying biographical outline reads as follows:

"Remus Star was a famous cowboy in the Montana territory. His business empire grew to include the acquisition of valuable equestrian assets and he had close intimate dealings with the Montana Railroad. Beginning in 1883, he devoted several years of his life to service at a government faculty until, in 1887, he finally took his leave from it to resume profitable dealings with the Montana Railroad. Later, in 1888 he was a key player in a vital investigation conducted by the renowned Pinkerton Detective Agency. In 1889, Remus passed away during an important civic function held in his honour, when the platform on which he was standing suddenly collapsed'.

Wanting to check this amazing rewrite of history I searched for images of Remus Star and came up with this entry (*see right*) for a Remus Reid instead.

At least our villain's first name is the same for both entries and both agree he was a villain and was hanged. But was our man a Star or a Reid. Who knows the truth?

One thing is certain, this fine example of editing totally changes one's view of a person and demonstrates to people who are researching their family tree to beware thinking other people's family histories are correct.

I think it's safe to say that this family history biography takes stretching the limits of truth to the extreme.

Sources; Find a Grave: [Findagrave Remus Star](http://Findagrave.com) __ Google images – Remus Reid: [Images Remus Reid](http://Images.com)
Also, February 2021 Family Tree magazine

Judy Wallman, a professional genealogy researcher in southern California, was doing some personal work on her own family tree. She discovered that Congressman Harry Reid's great-great uncle, Remus Reid, was hanged for horse stealing and train robbery in Montana in 1889.



On the back of the picture Judy obtained during her research is this inscription: 'Remus Reid, horse thief, sent to Montana Territorial Prison 1885, escaped 1887, robbed the Montana Flyer six times. Caught by Pinkerton detectives, convicted and hanged in 1889.'

Amazing what you can find on the World-Wide Web

From Peter Reed

Checking the Web for items referencing Epsom and/or Ewell which could possibly add relevant interest to our own History Explorer website I came across the following two items:



Strange how an Epsom & Ewell dustcart can spark memories
Recently I bought a 35mm slide from eBay of an old Epsom & Ewell Shelvoke and Drewry Dustcart (or in modern terms an RCV - Refuse Collection Vehicle) as it reminded me of the times when dustbins were made of heavy galvanised metal with clanking lids which were lifted-up on to the shoulder of the dustman in one flowing motion so that it could be that it tipped into the high sided dustcart.

See more images and information at <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72676>

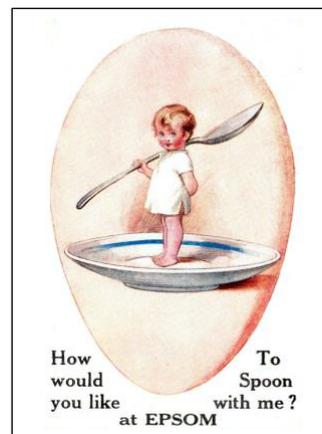
Epsom keeps the tradition of cheeky postcards

I came across this circa 1908 postcard on eBay. Nice to see Epsom can compete with the traditional seaside towns in slightly saucy postcards.

According to eBay the starting bid was £1.45 with £0.95 postage.

It is unposted and has a faint crease down the centre of the card and a large mark to the reverse. No bids were recorded and the sale has now ended.

It was part of a collection of some 260 Surrey cards. I wonder who produced it, whether it sold and was it part of a series of slightly risqué cards?



What's new on the Epsom & Ewell History Explorer website

From Peter Reed

Since the last issue of 'Lives & Times' in September there have been some thirty additional and amended items added to our website plus ten street directories, ranging from 1839 to 1940, and Dr Lehmann's Residential Copyholds of Epsom 1633 to 1925. These new entries cover a range of subjects including:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Web Address</i>	<i>Contributor</i>
Aletaster of Ewell	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72821	Brian Bouchard
A Trip to Epsom Races 1837	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71540	Ian Parker
Bessie Duller, Racing Motorist	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72245	Linda Jackson
Epsom Baths – Addendum – Gymnastics at the Baths	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=29577	Peter Reed
Epsom by Lord Rosebery	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72074	Peter Reed
Epsom Playhouse & its sculpture	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71224	Roger Morgan
Ewell Poor Rate – Introduction	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71752	Peter Reed
Family Relationships	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71438	Peter Reed
Fatal Armed Robbery at Unigate Depot	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72575	Linda Jackson
Frank Northey – postscript	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=33366	Roger Morgan
Gordon HOME and his 1901/02 <i>Epsom Guides</i> – major update	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=66857	Roger Morgan Hazel Ballan
Goymer, Hugh - Gunner, - WW1 Casualty	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=28323#GoymerH	Clive Gilbert Hazel Ballan
Highways and Byways in Surrey	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71554	Ian Parker
John Brathwaite (1722-1800) – major update	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=33229	Roger Morgan
Missionaries at the Derby – 1869 Appendix	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=64035	Peter Reed
Nonsuch in Bygone Surrey, 1895	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71612	<i>Peter Reed</i>
Pleasure Trips of Brown et al 1850	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72644	Peter Reed
Ruth Belville – She Sold Time!	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72742	Peter Reed
Shelvoke and Drewry Dustcart BPL73	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72676	Peter Reed and Brian Carpenter
St Martin's internal monuments – illustrated with appendix	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=60565	Roger Morgan
Teather, Victor William. Private – major update	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=40874#TeatherVW	Roger Morgan
The Dullers	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72443	Linda Jackson
The Embletons of Ewell	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72512	Linda Jackson
The Horse that caused a riot	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72723	Peter Reed
The Langlands Family (in 6 parts)	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72863	Roger Morgan
The Topography of Ewell	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72228	Margaret Glyn
Tragedy on the Home Front - Correction	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=25738	Bernard Marley
Umbrellas at the Derby – Fake News	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72001	Roger Morgan

Upland House School - Addendum	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=40907	Ann Griffiths
WW2 casualty Lt. Harry Wood (major update)	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=40878#WoodH	Roger Morgan

Also, the following directories etc. for Epsom and Ewell have been added to the website. Please note some of these files are quite large and might take a little bit longer to download. Also, the “Kelly’s Directory for Ewell – 1940” comes up with an Epsom cover. This is not a mistake, it covers both Ewell and Stoneleigh.

<i>Directory</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
Cuddington Directory 1913-1914	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Cuddington-1913-14.pdf
Dr Lehmann’s Residential Copyholds of Epsom – large file 99MB	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Lehmann-complete.pdf
Epsom Street Directory 1913-1914	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Epsom-Directory1913-1914.pdf
Epsom Street Directory 1922	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Epsom-Street-Directory-1922.pdf
Ewell Street Directory 1913-1914	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Ewell-Street-Directory-1913-1914.pdf
Ewell Street Directory 1922	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EWELL-STREET-DIRECTORY-1922.pdf
Kelly’s Street Directory, Epsom & Ewell 1952 – large file 105MB	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1952-53-Street-Directory.pdf
Kelly’s Street Directory, Epsom & Ewell 1956 – large file 121MB	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1956StreetDirectory-Master.pdf
Kelly’s Street Directory, Epsom 1940 – large file 53MB	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/1940-Epsom.pdf
Kelly’s Street Directory, Ewell 1940 – large file 70MB	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1940-Ewell.pdf
Pigot’s 1839 Directory Epsom and Ewell	https://eehe.org.uk/?p=71827
Worcester Park Street Directory 1922	https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Worcester-Park-Street-Directory-1922-EandEonly.pdf

A big thank you to all those who have contributed to the website. You can check them all out, and much more, on the ‘What’s New’ page on our website <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=61076>

Have You got News for Me?

We hope you’ve enjoyed reading this edition of ‘Lives & Times’. Thanks to all those who have provided information, anecdotes, stories and pictures: Hazel Ballan, Bert Barnhurst, Brian Bouchard, Meg Bower, Karen Child, Bill Eacott, Clive Gilbert, Pat Lelliott, Roger Morgan, Elaine Parker, James Parker and Peter Reed. But, to keep the momentum going we need more so I make no apologies in repeating this message again – have you got news for me, please? I’m sure many more of you have experiences, contacts with enquirers or local or family history information that would interest us all, so let’s have them - you can see from this current issue, we like gossip and comments as much as more serious subjects. So, please don’t be shy. If you have any:

- reports on visits to various sites or centres
- intriguing Information Requests
- forthcoming projects or events
- interesting facts about local history or genealogy
- new research documents the LFHC has received
- or just strange tales to tell

please let me know. Supporting photographs and pictures, if available, would be most welcome as it will make it even more interesting for us all.

The next publication date will probably be in late Spring 2022, as long as your contributions keep coming. With the current constraints on socialising, you could even have time on your hands to find something to interest and intrigue us. Just send an email to EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk telling us what it is.

Items are welcome from volunteers, friends and readers of ‘Lives & Times’ wherever you are in the world.

Ian Parker – January 2022

To the Memory of Gillian Ann Alford. 1948 - 2021

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Gillian (Jill) Alford, one of the founding volunteers of the Epsom and Ewell Local and Family History Centre. Jill was instrumental in many displays; in particular, her displays for 'The Battle of Waterloo', for which she had discovered 12 participants from Epsom and the surrounding area, and for 'The Battle of Trafalgar', for which she found that 6 local lads had been involved. She also contributed articles to the 'Epsom & Ewell History Explorer' website with her 'Memories of a 1950s Childhood in Worcester Park' and 'The Joys of ENSA (Entertainment National Service Association)' as well as items and comments to 'Lives & Times', the History Centre newsletter.



While Jill was notable for her research she could be distracted if she came across a bit of gossip or something in French, one of the languages in which she was fluent, stating that she needed the practice. Genealogy was not her only interest as she was knowledgeable of astronomy and on one occasion, she went to Nairn in Scotland in the hope of seeing the Northern Lights.

Jill was born in Epsom in 1948 and lived in the Worcester Park and then Stoneleigh areas of Surrey all of her life. She went to St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School, and later, the Ursuline Convent Grammar School in Wimbledon.

After school she attended Pitman's College for shorthand and typing and, on qualifying, joined Oxford University Press. Jill subsequently worked for Dunlop as the director's PA where she was also able to use her language skills. In later years, after having her children, she worked for W S Atkins, that well-known local firm.

Jill very much enjoyed singing and dancing and from an early age she attended Ballet and Tap-dancing lessons. Later, her love of Ballroom dancing resulted in gold, silver and bronze medals in both 'ballroom' and 'Latin American' styles. Dancing was how Jill met her husband David who she married in 1971.

Jill also had a long-standing interest in singing and was a member of the Nightingale Choir where she sang as an 'alto'. This also gave Jill the opportunity to use her other talent as a seamstress, running up costumes for various events.

Jill had a strong interest in local issues and for many years was the secretary to the Stoneleigh Residents Association. Although she never gave any indication that she wished to 'climb the greasy poll' she did become President of that Association in 1998.

Jill leaves a husband, a daughter and a son and will be much missed by all who knew her.

Our thanks go to Bert Barnhurst for preparing this all-too-short memorial of Gillian.

Researching Local History or Tracing your Ancestors?

If you are interested in the history of Epsom and Ewell or want to trace your family's history then visit us at the Epsom and Ewell Local and Family History Centre located in Ewell Library at Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell.

Opening Hours

The History Centre is open and staffed by volunteers at the following times

Tuesdays	10.00 am – 12 noon
Thursdays	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
Fridays	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Enquiries can also be made by email to EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk

Take a look at our History Explorer Website

<https://eehe.org.uk>

Epsom and Ewell History Explorer has numerous items of local interest including personalities, places, properties, and personal reminiscences of life in bygone times and notable events. There is also an extensive and searchable collection of local birth, christening, marriage, death records, cemetery burials, gravestone inscriptions, detailed Workhouse records and WWI and WW2 memorials with numerous stories of those remembered. It is a fascinating and continually growing source of information.

Receive 'Lives & Times' by email

If you would like to receive regular copies of 'Lives & Times' and information on forthcoming events by email, please just send your email address to EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk with the heading "EMAIL ME YOUR NEWSLETTER". Your email address will not be provided to any other organisation or company and will only be used to send you 'Lives & Times' and information on our future events.

Should you no longer wish to receive 'Lives & Times' and details of forthcoming events please just email "UNSUBSCRIBE ME" to EpsomandEwellLHC@yahoo.co.uk

CALLED TO THE COLOURS ON NATIONAL SERVICE



On being called up

The National Service Act of 1948 which came into effect 1 Jan 1949 allowed for 18 months service with four years on the reserve list. In 1950, at the time of the Korean War, this was changed to two years service, with three and a half years on the reserves. The Act referred to males over the age of eighteen. Women were never conscripted to National Service.

Conscription was deemed necessary as there were insufficient numbers of servicemen after six years of war and with the threat of the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

There were a number of options theoretically open to conscripts on receiving their 'call up' papers: Army, Royal Navy, or Royal Air Force. Bevin Boys, who were conscripts who had been sent down the coal mines during the War, had stopped in 1951.

There were a few exceptions to being called up:

Anyone considered medically unfit was exempt.

Anyone taking a degree or an apprenticeship, could defer their call up year on year, until the completion of their studies. They would then join up, aged some years older than others on the intake. (National Service ended on 31 December 1960. Some people who were on such courses when the Act was repealed were not called at all.)

Extenuating family issues could be argued, but not often successfully.



Were you fit enough for the Forces?

The first step towards 'joining up' was the medical, which, in my case was carried out once a week near Brighton appropriately called 'Oddfellows Hall'. This was a rather broken down, shabby old jumble sale type hall. The medical was exactly as shown in films about joining the forces i.e. dodderly seedy old doctor, asking questions, everyone in a line, dropping trousers as required, coughing when told to, and all supervised by a gnarled old Sergeant, from one of the services. I was graded A1, which means suitable for any service and any duty anywhere.

Basic training

Basic Training is almost exactly as it sounds. When you consider that the three monthly intake on a regular basis was a couple of hundred teenagers from all walks of life – then you can see that everyone had to be treated as 'one'. It had to be drummed into everyone that if anyone in authority told you to do something – no matter how daft it may have appeared to you – you did it without question. Once a week we would have a barrack room inspection by an officer and a sergeant. Part of this inspection was that all your kit was to be laid out on your bed to a specific format in squares that measured 9" x 9" (23cm x 23cm). This included underpants, vests, shirts, trousers, jumpers – these had to be washed, ironed and folded into squares the above size. This was interspersed with other kit – gaiters, belts, bullet pouches, backpacks, all cleaned and all brasses polished. This was topped off by a 'bedroll' placed at the top of the bed i.e. blanket/sheet/blanket/sheet and the final blanket rolled around the lot. All this had to be done by 9.00 a.m. the next morning with only one iron available to the whole barrack block – say twenty plus soldiers! In other words you possibly had to stay up all night to get a turn at the iron!

And all for less than thirty bob a week. (That's £1 50p to you!)

Keep fit, or getting fit?

My first day of actual 'service' was 13th July 1954. Our P.T. 'Physical Training' was done early in the morning in vest and shorts – whatever the weather. I knew what it was like to be fit then.



KEEP IN STEP, YOU 'ORRIBLE
LOOKING LOT

Weapons Training.

All conscripts, regardless of which service, were instructed in weapons training.

National Service was not something to be taken lightly. You could be 'posted' to anywhere in the world where peace keeping or combat forces were required.

There has been only one year since World War Two without a death in the armed forces due to 'enemy action'. That was in 1968.

It was not unusual to be trained on the rifle, the Bren light machine gun, and the Sten gun, which was enough to cover most eventualities. After that it rather depended on which service you were posted to as to which other weapons were involved.

New digs

On being away from home, probably for the first time, many things came as a bit of a shock, including some of the habits of the people you were billeted with.



THE ROUTE MARCH



MUM! THERE'S NO HOT WATER



ALL LAID OUT FOR INSPECTION
SO DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING

Entry into the armed forces affected people in many different ways You would find yourself mixed in with every type from 'Del Boys' to 'Mummy's Boy' and the language could come as a bit of a surprise to some. For most the life was a shock to the system and the challenge was how to cope. Some couldn't wait to get out and kept a 'demob chart' to count off the days until they were discharged. Others took the life by the scruff of the neck and did their best to get as much as possible out of it. For some it was a chance to travel and see the world.

There was an emotional side to consider, especially if you were posted overseas, being away from your family especially if married or even engaged. Many a service man was to get a 'Dear John' while he was serving overseas when his 'loved one' had found some one else.

Post-traumatic stress disorder was nothing new to some serving in combat zones like Malaya, Korea and the like; it was just that the name had not been identified at the time.

In Korea there was even the chance of being captured by the Chinese and held as a prisoner of war, as some were, for longer than the term of their National Service.

Whatever else you may think, please don't think of National Service as just a chore to be endured while drilling, painting coal white to mark out the flowerbeds and spit and polish; and be glad that you don't have to do these days.

WEAPONS TRAINING



137TH HEAVY ANTI AIRCRAFT
BATTERY IN HONG KONG



The Passing Out Parade

The end of the training period, of some eight weeks, was marked by the traditional Passing Out Parade. It was welcomed for being more than the end of training, but also because the recruits got home leave.

Eventually we were coming up to the end of our basic training, the culmination of which was the final passing out parade. It was also, of course, an assessment of the performance of the Drill Instructors and other NCOs (Non Commissioned Officers) of the permanent staff. The day before the final parade was pretty busy, with the final polishing of boots, polishing brasses, blanco-ing webbing, etc. The evening was the celebratory beer-up in the NAAFI, witnessed enviously by the new intake of recruits

We then all shook hands, said our farewells to our various DIs (Drill Instructors) and NCOs (who, from the beer-up the previous night before had become completely different, friendly human beings) and went our separate ways.



EXOTIC SIGHTS
TIGER BALM GARDENS, SINGAPORE



List of Subscribers for National Service Stories.

23211622	Gunner	Brown.
3139859	Aircraftman	Barnhurst.
2775877	Aircraftman	Bouchard
2768358	Aircraftman	Hall
4245448	Aircraftman	Lelliott

Fuller details of the above National Service Personnel's stories can be found on our website or in the History Centre.



Assigned a trade—but which one?

Sometimes one got lucky, but often it was a question of what was most needed, or at the whim of a recruiting sergeant. It was at this stage that POMs were noted. That is conscripts considered to be Potential Officer Material.

We were assigned our respective trades for the rest of our time in the Air Force. I had applied for and was told I would be in Air Traffic Control. And so it was that I became an Aircraftman second class, Operations Clerk. But where would I be posted? When my posting came through it was to RAF Watnall. My only trouble then was that I could not find an airfield of that name. How could you be in Air Traffic Control without an airfield? Where was I off to?

When my travel documents arrived it transpired that RAF Watnall was the home of the Battle of Britain Control Centre for 12 Group. It was all underground; not an aircraft in sight, not even at the Main Gate! The first thing I was 'asked' to do was sign the Official Secrets Act.

Postings

After basic training and further training in the trade to which you had been assigned, which occasionally could be 'on the job', you would then be posted to wherever the service you were in thought you were needed.

One could be posted anywhere in the world, wherever peace keeping was needed, or conflict was taking place; from Germany (which was considered a Home Posting), Korea, Suez, Kenya, India, Malaya, Hong Kong, or even somewhere in the UK.

National Service was not something to be taken lightly, it could be life threatening. Since the end of WW2 there was only one year in which there were no fatalities in the armed forces due to 'enemy action'; that was 1968.

These conscripts, who were just boys of 18 in the main, were considered old enough to be sent to war, but not considered old enough to vote on the people who were sending them. There was a lot of tension on this topic.



WE ARE SAILING, WE ARE SAILING, BUT WHERE TO?

Leave

While leave was always declared to be a privilege and not a right, there were opportunities to get home while in this country and even from Germany, if you could afford the fare. You could 'hitch hike' anywhere as people would always give a lift to a serviceman in uniform.

Overseas postings were a different case. Most places had leave centres, but the problem there was that you would see many of the same servicemen you knew back at camp. There was no question of six month tours of duty in those far off days. Going on leave to Penang, an island in the north of Malaya, necessitated drawing arms and ammunition from stores to defend the train from attack by the Communist terrorists during the journey. What a way to start a 'holiday'. Leslie Thomas's book *The Virgin Soldiers* is a very fair representation of such events.



LEAFLETS DROPPED TO ENCOURAGE TERRORISTS TO GIVE UP FIGHTING

It was possible to get further afield, but not without a lot of trouble obtaining the correct clearances to travel, managing to cadge a lift on a RAF Transport, and a guarantee of your fare back by civilian transport just in case the return went wrong. Passports were not a problem as one could travel on a services identity card, the ever present RAF 1250. A fortunate, or tenacious, few made it to places like Japan or Australia, and came back the envy of their fellow conscripts.



Return to Civvy Street

For many the return to Civvy Street was as much a shock as joining up was two years earlier. Were you going back to a job, or did you have to find a new one?

Were you going back to the same girl; or had you had a 'Dear John' letter? Were you going to miss service life, or glad to be out of it?

The pay would be better, but not even an official medal to show for your National Service! To say that National Service had made men out of boys was not an understatement. What ever else, it was quite an experience, and in retrospect most of those who served had more good memories than bad to look back on.

Many had a string of stories to tell when they got home, some of which you might like to follow up on our website or read in the folders in the History Centre

It was only several decades after National Service ended that it was made public that the Government of the time had a particular policy regarding British subjects from the ethnic community. This was that if the subject, from the details held, had a surname that was clearly not British, then his papers would become 'lost' and he would not be called up. Most photos of groups of servicemen contain very few, if any, non-white faces. If, however, their names were British sounding, then they would be called up in the normal way. When I first heard of this I went to the various photos I had, and saw a few ethnic men. I managed to remember their names or had written their names on the back and all without exception had British names, including a Mackenzie!

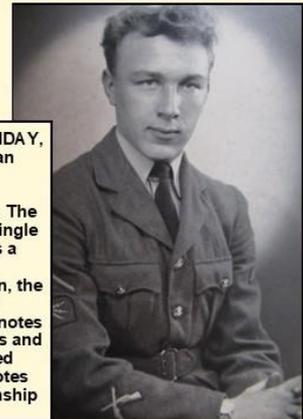
SOME LOCAL MEN WHO DID NATIONAL SERVICE AND WHAT THEY DID

DAVE LOWE, ARMY Served in Northern Ireland, then fought as a paratrooper in Korea. Regiments served only one year due to the freezing temperatures. Awarded the Korean war medal and United Nations medal



DEREK GILES, ARMY served in Germany as a skilled machine operator

ERIC MUNDA Y, RAF was an aircraft wireless mechanic. The inverted single chevron is a Junior Technician, the fist full of sparks denotes electronics and the crossed rifles denotes marksmanship



PETER REDMAN, RAF Air Wireless Mechanic



MERVYN GIBBS, ARMY Served as Medic



MARTIN TROUSE, RAF Commissioned as Education Officer



FRANK LONG, ARMY Royal Army Service Corps



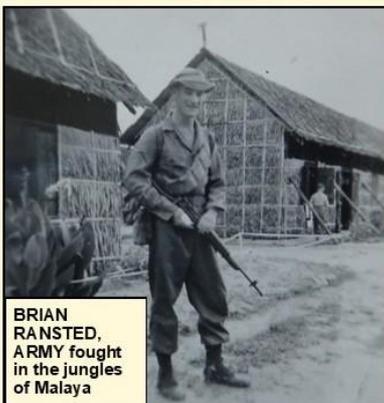
PETER VAUGHN, RAF Air Wireless Mechanic. Born in India into a British Army family. Came to UK aged 18 to get a BSc knowing that he would then have to do National Service



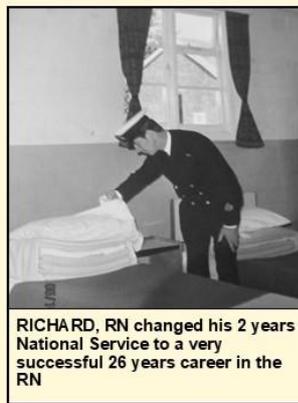
ROGER TURNER, ARMY, was a technical clerk (procurements) in Germany, part of B.A.O.R.



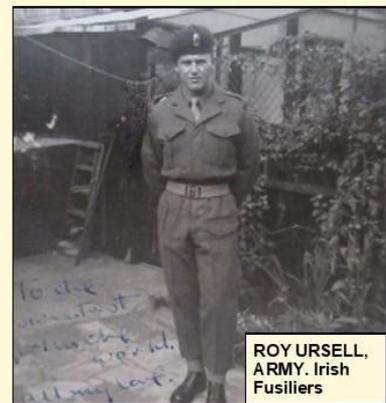
BRIAN RANSTED, ARMY fought in the jungles of Malaya



RICHARD, RN changed his 2 years National Service to a very successful 26 years career in the RN



ROY URSELL, ARMY. Irish Fusiliers



SOME LOCAL MEN WHO DID NATIONAL SERVICE AND WHAT THEY DID



JIM PARKINS, ARMY served in Egypt in the Royal Corps of Signals



End right **ROY DAWKINS, ARMY** served in Egypt in the Royal Corps of Signals



End right **PAT LELLIOTT, RAF** became NCO i/c the master briefing room, western hemisphere



Extreme left **BOB, ARMY** was a nuclear warhead guided missiles engineer



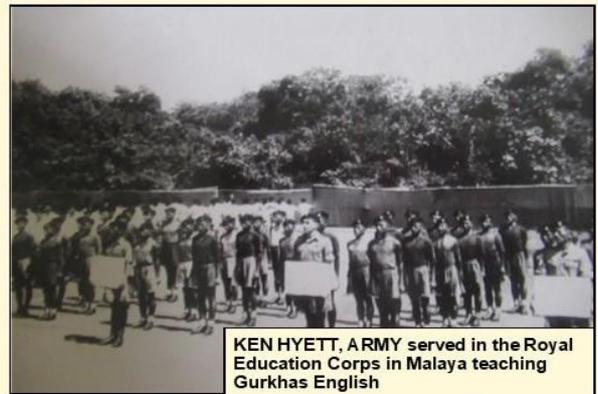
GEOFF STOCK, RAF was an accounts clerk stationed on a large V bomber station in the UK



BERT BARNHURST, RAF fires a red flare, warning a landing plane to lower its landing wheels in Changi, Malaya



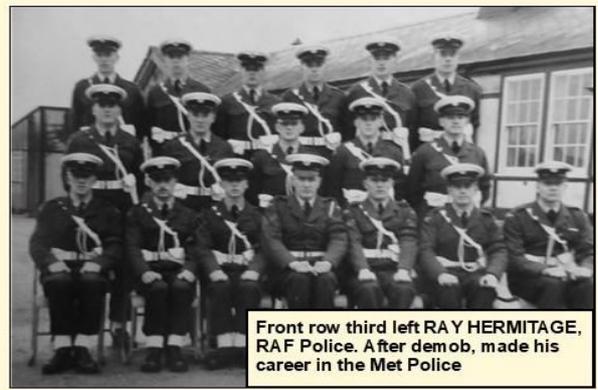
GEOFF STOCK, RAF was an accounts clerk stationed on a large V bomber station in the UK



KEN HYETT, ARMY served in the Royal Education Corps in Malaya teaching Gurkhas English



Front row end right **FRANK BOWN, RAF** Served as Medic, on Casualty Evacuation based at Bridgenorth



Front row third left **RAY HERMITAGE, RAF Police**. After demob, made his career in the Met Police