



NEWSLETTER

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November 2023

Editor's Notes

For many years I have subscribed to several archaeological magazines: ARA News, British Archaeology, Current Archaeology, Current World Archaeology, London Archaeologist and various Surrey Archaeological Society publications. All of them suffer from getting east and west swapped, about one in three times where the correct orientation can be ascertained.

Take the latest British Archaeology magazine. A map of Verulamium correctly shows north to the top. Yet the bottom right is incorrectly described in the text as to the south west.

Such mistakes will no doubt cause confusion to researchers of the future when they read the reports.

Just why are archaeologists so geographically challenged??

Inside this issue:

<i>Epsom's War Graves</i>	2
<i>The Case of the Fictitious Husband</i>	3
<i>The Punic Wars</i>	4
<i>The Orkney Islands</i>	5
<i>A local history detective story</i>	7
<i>A Nice Derangement</i>	9
<i>Forthcoming Events</i>	12
<i>Membership Matters</i>	13

Lecture Diary

December 6th	From the Amazon to Kew and beyond - The advance of rubber—Hugh Ricketts Mince pies to follow!
February 7th 2024	'Industry to homes: the valley of the Wandle' Mick Taylor (Wandle Industrial Museum)
March 6th 2024	The Path of Peace- Walking the Western Front : Sir Anthony Seldon, followed by AGM.
Meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY.	
Doors open 7.45 for 8pm start. Members free, visitors £4, includes refreshments.	

Epsom Military Cemetery - Epsom's war graves : a talk by Martin Olney

Hugh Ricketts

In July 2023, Martin Olney gave an illustrated account of the military graves which are in the municipal cemetery which is located in Ashley Road, Epsom.



Commonwealth War Graves Memorial

Picture from Epsom and Ewell BC

Situated within the grounds of Epsom Cemetery just a few metres away from the Epsom Memorial, the Commonwealth War Memorial was erected in 1925. Behind the Sword of Sacrifice is a screen wall on which is inscribed the names of 148 men from various units of which 59 were Canadians, six Australians, two Gurkhas, one from Burma and one from India.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is charged with maintaining many sites of various sizes. Its function is to keep the cemeteries and memorials in its care as places of commemoration and remembrance. Details are available at www.cwgc.org

Martin traced the history of the Epsom site from when Major General Ware (1869-1949), in charge of a Red Cross unit, was concerned about the final resting place of those who had fallen at Tyne Cot and elsewhere. A new unit was formed and opened by King George V.

After many controversies and difficulties, it was established that the Commonwealth dead would be commemorated by name, the memorials permanent and the headstones uniform. The stones have a distinctive font with lettering visible from all angles and show a regimental service badge.

The screen wall, pictured above, contains burial spaces more than one deep and up to nine deep. The Commission is responsible for the WW1 and WW2 only, separate from other service deaths. The opening ceremony was conducted by Henry Cubitt (Lord Ashcombe), who had lost three sons in WW1.

Martin and his colleague Clive are able to offer tours of the site.

Further details may be found on the Epsom History Explorer site www.eehe.org.uk/?p=40886

The Case of the Fictitious Husband : Jeff Cousins

Elizabeth Titchener was born in Ewell in 1821. Sadly her mother died when she was three, and her aunt Abigale came to help raise her and her three siblings.

Elizabeth had an illegitimate daughter Mary Hannah in 1842. The next year she went to work as a domestic servant in Brighton, leaving her aunt and father to look after her daughter. There she met and began a relationship with William Drummond (1811-55), an acclaimed portrait painter. He wished to keep the relationship quiet (he had many well-to-do clients - he even painted the Queen) so Elizabeth was set up in lodgings in Worthing whilst he lived in London and Brighton. They had illegitimate children Emily in 1844, Elizabeth in 1848 and William in 1850.

For registering the births she invented a husband, William Titchener, and his absence was explained by claiming that he was commercial traveller.

Once William Drummond had made sufficient money, he bought a large enough house in Brighton to house the family and provide a studio for himself. In 1853 William and Elizabeth married in London, but their happiness together wasn't to last long as he died in 1855.

Elizabeth then lived a quiet life until 1893.

This is a summary of a longer article by Bill Sutton.



Portrait by William Drummond -
National Portrait Gallery

The Punic Wars : a talk by Charles Blencowe

Jeff Cousins

We enjoyed a return visit from Charles Blencowe, Head of History and Classics at Ewell Castle School, to talk on the subject of the Punic Wars.

These were a series of three wars during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, a titanic struggle between Rome and Carthage, a city not far from modern day Tunis.

Rome started out as a small city state, with a citizen militia that just fought during the summer. It had a standard, unsophisticated way of fighting. Consuls only held power for a year so policies were only short term. Never-the-less, Rome had gained ascendancy over most of Italy, other cities being given the choice of submitting or being massacred, and if they wisely chose the former they were allowed to keep a degree of autonomy.

Carthage was a city of wealthy traders whose strength was in its navy, which controlled a maritime empire stretching to Spain.

The First Punic War was primarily fought over Sicily. Sicily was closer to Carthage than Rome, but it was a shorter sea crossing from Roman-held land at the toe of Italy than from Carthage. Within six months Rome, which had just been a land power, had built a fleet of galleys able to take on the Carthaginian navy. The militia was transformed into a full-time standing army. Rome not only conquered Sicily but Carthage had to make payments to Rome.

The Second Punic War included the famous crossing of the Alps by Carthaginians led by Hannibal, accompanied by elephants. Hannibal enjoyed much early success, being much more innovative in his tactics than the Romans, thrashing them at the Battle of the Trebia in 218 BC, the Battle of Lake Trasimene in 217 BC and the Battle of Cannae in 216 BC. The Romans responded by appointing a 'Dictator', Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus. His strategy was to slowly wear the Carthaginians down by preventing them from obtaining supplies. This was effective, though unpopular at home as it seemed cowardly. Fabius was subsequently appreciated and became known as 'The Shield of Rome'.

The sack of Rome itself looked imminent, but the Carthaginians weren't really equipped for siege warfare. The Romans held their nerve, and each day that Rome survived a bit of the Romans' confidence was restored. Drastic measures were called for - anyone was allowed into the Roman army, and weapons donated to temples were retrieved. Rome's greater resources began to tell. Hannibal may have been a great general but his army was running out of steam and he had little support from Carthage or from his brothers in Spain.

The Romans eventually produced a good general of their own, Scipio Africanus, who took the fight to the Carthaginians' territory. Scipio defeated the Carthaginians at Ilipa in Spain in 206 BC. He then went for Carthage itself. Hannibal had to return from Italy to Carthage to help defend it, but was beaten at the Battle of Zama in 202 BC. Carthage surrendered and had to cede Spain and much of North Africa to Rome, and pay yet more money.

The Third Punic War was basically the Romans finishing off the job, though after a gap of over 50 years. Rome attacked the remaining Carthaginian territory (in modern day Tunisia) under a somewhat dubious pretext, and in 146 BC Carthage was completely destroyed and its population either killed or enslaved.

Ultima Thule: The Orkney Islands : a talk by Richard Baker

Jeff Cousins

Another return visit, this time Richard Baker talking on Neolithic sites in the Orkney Islands. Ultima Thule was the Roman (and earlier Greek) name for the north of Britain. Apparently the locals don't like the name 'The Orkneys' but prefer either 'The Orkney Islands' or simply 'Orkney'.

Today Orkney is thought of as a fairly remote place, off of the north eastern tip of Scotland, but 5000 years ago they were a major centre of activity. 'Grooved Ware', the characteristic pottery of the Neolithic, spread out from Orkney, rather than the usual model of fashions spreading northwards up the British Isles. Richard had visited during last July, a holiday intended to avoid the summer heat, a bit too successfully as it turned out cool and windy.

Orkney was first settled in about 7000 BC, during the Mesolithic period, by hunter-gatherers. It was then one big island. Neolithic people arrived in about 4000 BC, bringing farm animals with them. The climate was warmer and drier than now.

Villages of up to 80-100 people developed, these were claimed to be the first villages in Europe. Houses were originally long and ovoid; later they were squat. Chamber tombs appeared from about 3000 BC.

After 2500 BC the weather began to deteriorate and Orkney declined in importance. The arrival of Bronze in the British Isles in 2100 BC further side-lined an area without metal resources.

Richard visited five major sites. Beware that tickets may need to be booked over two months in advance.

Skara Brae. This was a settlement of ten houses that lasted from 3180 BC till 2500 BC. The houses include beds, hearths and dressers made of stone. They each had a single room, but this was divided into different zones for different purposes. The hearth was in the centre, and the beds and dresser were around the perimeter, with the dresser prominently placed opposite the entrance. Some houses had latrines, with the drains running away from the village. The inhabitants were mostly pastoralists, but some barley grains have been found. Midden deposits



Skara Brae - Picture from Wikimedia Commons

provided insulation around the houses.

Ring of Brodgar. This is a large - 104m diameter - stone circle, of which 27 out of 60 stones survive. The stones have sloping tops. It is surrounded by a ditch (therefore making it a henge), 3m deep and 10m across.



Ring Of Brodgar - Picture from Wikimedia Commons

Ness of Brodgar. This site is on an isthmus between two lochs, with the **Ring of Brodgar** at one end of the isthmus and the **Stones of Stenness** at the other. It was only discovered this century and is still being excavated. The site is surrounded by a 3-4m high and up to 2m wide stone wall. The site was in use from 3300 BC till 2200 BC. Within it were five main buildings. The central one was huge, overlaying some earlier buildings, and may have been a temple. When its use ended it seems to have been 'closed' by massive ritual feast involving hundreds of cattle, enough the feed most of the island.



Stones of Stenness - Wikimedia Commons

Stones of Stenness. This is the stone circle at the other end of the isthmus. Four out of twelve stones survive, also with sloping tops, and this site is also a henge since surrounded by a ditch, this one 2m deep and 7m wide. In the centre was a stone hearth. A large stone nearby, known as the Odin stone and still being used for rituals, was destroyed by an outsider landlord in the early 19th century. This is probably the earliest of the sites, dating from 3100 BC.

Maes Howe. This is a large chambered tomb, built by 2700 BC. Within a turf mound is a square chamber with a standing stone almost 4m high at each corner, and a corbelled roof. Each side has a side room or 'cell' off of it. A 7m long, but only 1m high, entrance passage is aligned such that the winter solstice setting sun shines on the back wall.



Maes Howe - Wikimedia Commons

A local history detective story : Nikki Cowlard

In July 2023 EEHAS received an email from Roger Mintey, Chairman LEGISE (Landscape Explorer's Group in South-East). Attached were two photos of a copper disc which he had found on a farm at Parkgate, about 2 miles S of Leigh, between Charlwood and Newdigate, Surrey, back in 1997. Neither David Williams (Finds Liaison Officer for Surrey at the time) nor the British Museum were able to identify it at the time. Unable to progress further Roger put the disc aside.

The slightly elliptical disc appears to be made of copper alloy with a vertical diameter of 30mm and a horizontal diameter of 33mm, weighing 87 grains (5.64gm). The stamped decoration on the front shows a crown above the legend 'R.BLISS EWELL' and the reverse is blank.



R. Bliss Disc - Picture from Roger Mintey

When Roger eventually revisited the disc, research on the internet brought up an article about Richard Bliss of Ewell by Peter Reed on the Epsom & Ewell Explorer (<https://eehe.org.uk/?p=25480>). When Peter was contacted, he believed that the disc referred to, and was possibly made by, Richard Bliss, a Ewell blacksmith (1762-1845). Peter then incorporated a picture of the disc and some related text into his article. Peter describes the disc as a token, but Gary Oddie of the British Token Society is not so certain. Jeremy Harte, Curator at Bourne Hall Museum, is of the opinion that the resemblance to trade tokens is only superficial. In the late eighteenth century tokens were cast not struck, and only seem to have been issued by large firms with a community of workers; also, like earlier tokens, they were two-sided. It seems more likely that such discs would have been attached to some of Richard Bliss' products as some sort of advertisement.

Who was Richard Bliss? Richard Bliss is mentioned in Vol. XLVIII of Surrey Archaeological Collections, Cloudesley S. Willis' article, 'Ironwork in Epsom and Ewell'. He was originally a Reigate man who moved to Ewell in 1786 and started up a successful and ultimately well-known business as a whitesmith/metal worker etc.. Peggy Bedwell, writing in EEHAS' Occasional Paper No. 21, 'Ewell Village Shops', suggests that Richard Bliss first used a forge in West Street, Ewell, near to what became the Hop Pole Inn. Willis records that in 1838 Richard Bliss and Henry Willis, Whitesmiths, Millwrights and Ironmongers, moved into the premises at 9 High Street, and adapted the outbuildings as their workshop; in that year their names appear in the Rate Book as occupiers. It is interesting that Cloudesley Willis (1865-1955), a notable Ewell historian, was a great grandson of Richard Bliss; his grandfather Henry Willis had been apprenticed to Bliss in about 1815 and had (very conveniently) married Bliss's daughter. Bliss had married Miss Jane Cloudesley in 1789 and their daughter Elizabeth was born the following year.

The appearance of the stamp - Shortly after Peter had uploaded the information about

the disc he was contacted by Gary Barnes, who had read Peter's article. Gary was in possession of an iron/steel stamp apparently used to stamp out the disc, and presumably other similar ones. This had been found while clearing out a hoarder's garage in Northern Ireland. Peter incorporated pictures of the stamp into his article.



Disc stamp - courtesy of Gary Barnes of
Wetown_8 © 2023



**HENRY WILLIS,
EWELL, SURREY.**
FURNISHING AND GENERAL IRONMONGER,
GAS-FITTER AND BELL HANGER.

MANUFACTURER OF STOVES, KITCHEN RANGES, &c.

Bliss's Economical Cooking Apparatus.

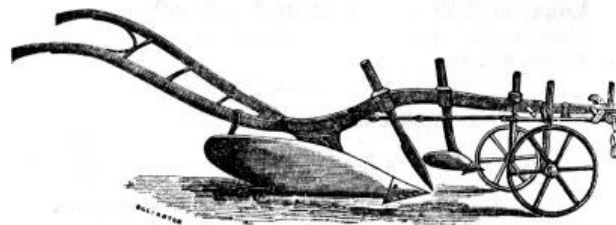
GENERAL & APPOINTED AGENT for AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS—Messrs. Ransome & Sims, J. & F. Howard, E. H. Bentall, R. Hornsby & Sons, &c.

Verandahs, Plain & Ornamental Iron Fencing, Gates, Hurdles, &c.

GALVANISED WIRE NETTING FOR POULTRY, GAME AND SHEEP.

COLZA, SPERM & OTHER OILS.

Every description of Millwork and Machinery repaired.



Henry Willis advertisement - C.J. Swete
Handbook of Epsom 1860 Page 44

Why did the disc end up in Parkgate? An advertisement recorded in C.J. Swete's 1860 book *Handbook of Epsom* shows that Henry Willis, Bliss's apprentice and son-in-law, was advertising Bliss's Economical Cooking Apparatus: perhaps one of these could have ended up in Parkgate with a maker's disc, which later became detached.

The end of the story? There may still be more to uncover about this unusual find originating in Ewell. Meanwhile Jeremy Harte is keen to acquire the disc and the stamp for Bourne Hall Museum.

With thanks to Roger Mintey, Gary Barnes, Peter Reed and Jeremy Harte for much of the information in this article. For more information on Richard Bliss visit the Epsom and Ewell History Explorer.

Editor's Note: Richard Bliss is buried SSE of the old church tower, and his grave is said to look up at a weathervane at the top of the tower that he made.

'A Nice Derangement of Epitaths'

Jeremy Harte



EWELL CHURCH AND VILLAGE.

We die, but those who die are not forgotten. From the Middle Ages, everyone buried in St. Mary's Church would have an epitaph to sum up their lives. That's convenient for family historians, but their real target was prayers from passers-by to help dead souls towards salvation. If people didn't know who you had been, then how could you be sure their intercessions were benefitting the right person? 'Pater noster say and pray' pleaded John Treglistin (1520), adding:

*Thus am I now as under fote you see,
That in tyme past was suche as now be ye,
And as I am, hereafter shall ye be;
Wherefore, take on my Soule pyte,
And pray to God for his benyngnyte*

That's a very human call for help – 'it could be you'; in fact it certainly will be, so it's in the interest of us all to pass on the chain of intercession. Except, of course, that at the Reformation the chain was broken and there were no more prayers for the dead. Nevertheless, the tradition remained that an epitaph should follow the basic genealogical information with a couple of lines that spoke directly to the reader – what we can call the tag. As soon as gravestones became affordable in the eighteenth century, this tradition stepped out of the church into the churchyard. Two and a half centuries after Treglistin,

Edward Brown (1775) was using the same rhyme:

*O Pray, think on me you who pass by,
As you are now so once was I.*

Not that it was handed down all those years in Ewell alone. The tag was common in medieval Latin (*Quod tu es ego fui*), flourished in eighteenth-century America and is attested more than 400 times in Welsh versions. 'As you are now' is pure folk poetry. It's simple, deals with a universal human situation, and has been passed down for centuries informally. But until when I began editing and recording the epitaphs from St. Mary's churchyard no. 1 (around the old church), I hadn't realised how many of these tags were traditional.

When George Risbridger died aged 8 in 1841, his parents Isaac and Eliza imagined him saying:

*Weep not for me my parents dear,
I am not dead but sleeping here,*

'I am not dead' was also the tag for Mary Beacham, chosen by her husband John in 1799, with suitable changes to the first line and the conclusion:

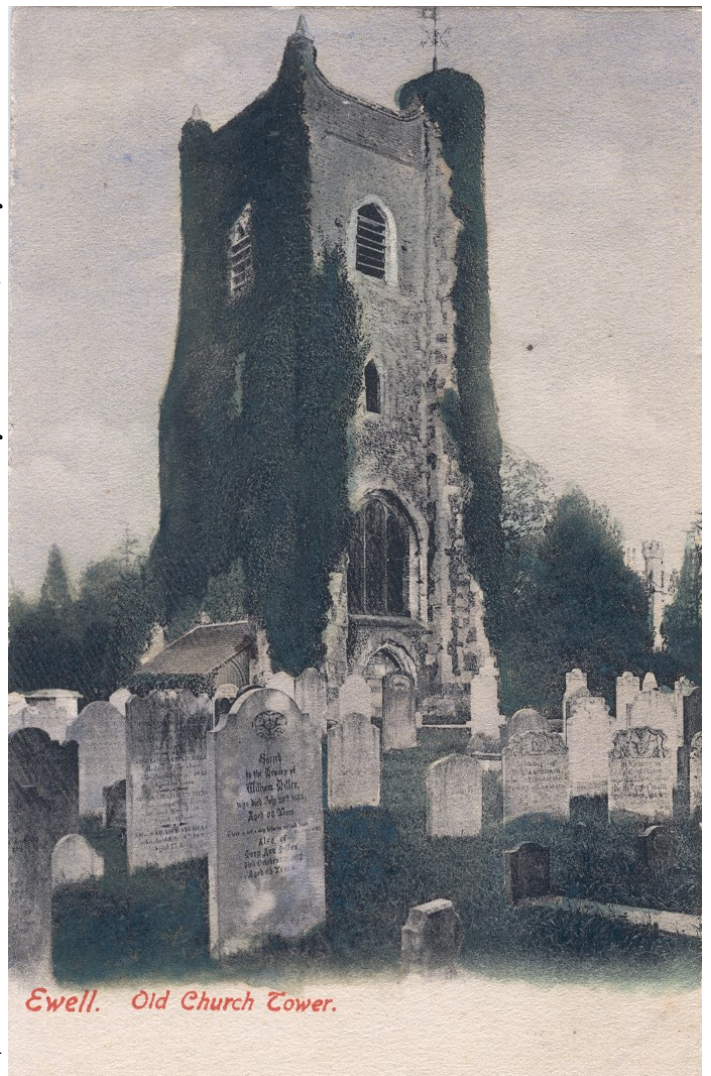
*My glass is run, my grave you see,
Wait a while, you'll come to me.*

These verses are common in both England and America, which means they must go back to when the two countries still shared a common epitaph tradition, about 1700. Like proverbs or nursery rhymes, tags are passed down with an anti-tradition of parodies. 'Grieve not for me' is matched with 'I am not grieved, my dearest life;/ Sleep on, I've got another wife'; 'You'll come to me' by 'To follow you I'm not content/ Until I know which way you went'. These rejoinders are popular in little books of gravestones, usually unattributed but occasionally given a spurious habitation and a name. Popular epitaph collections are not to be trusted.

In all these epitaphs the dead speak for themselves. Frances Jubb, wife of William Jubb the younger of the Lower Mill, was buried in 1781 with the words:

*Affliction sore long time I bore
... were in vain,
Till Death did seize & God did please
To ease me of my pain*

The grave of Edmund Whitehead (1847) has the same tag, with the second line intact –



Ewell. Old Church Tower.

'Physicians were in vain'. Not that we depend on Ewell churchyard for the wording, as it is one of the most common rhymes. As early as 1812 a spoof article was published in the *European Magazine* comparing different versions, like a *variorum* edition of an ancient text. The joke, for the magazine authors, lay in treating the poetry of common people on a level with the classics: rather heartless humour for a quatrain about the appalling condition of terminal disease in an age without pain relief.

As with so much folk poetry, as soon as these tags came to be seen as vulgar, there was a move amongst exclusive corners of the churchyard to use more socially elevated idiom. In these later verses it is the living rather than the dead who speak, like the parents of six-month-old Mary Coleman in 1775:

*Let friends forebear to mourn and weep
While sweetly in the Dust she sleeps
This toilsome world she left behind
A crown of glory for to find*

But this is just as traditional as 'afflictions sore' and had been used (with appropriate modifications) for John Brown of Ewell Court in 1770. A moment's googling finds it in other churchyards from Hampshire to Argyll. How did these rhymes get around? They seem to have been common stock amongst monumental masons, who in those days had a very limited trade. Ewell and Epsom seem to have commissioned from the same firm – as far as I can tell, the skulls and trumpets on our early tombstones are from the same hand – but the inscriptions would be added by someone local who was be in possession of the full facts.

More expensive monuments used less hackneyed poetry. William Smallpiece in 1836 lies under a quatrain which says exactly the same thing as Mary Coleman's, but in iambic pentameter not ballad metre:

*Forgive blest shade the tributary tear,
That mourns thy exit from a world like this,
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
And stayed thy progress to the seats of Bliss.*

Yet even this verse is a copy of a copy – as early as 1852, contributors to *Notes & Queries* were speculating on who had written the original. There were far more graves than there were verses to go with them, and at the end of a life there were only so many things that could be said about it, so it is understandable that instead of racking their brains to think of something new, people retreated to what Charles Lamb called 'the old mumpsimus of "Afflictions sore"'.

Note

All the monumental texts can be found at <https://eehe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/StMaryEwellChurchyard1TranscriptByAnonLady.pdf>

Editor's notes:

George Risbridger and Frances Jubb's graves are behind the back (West side) of the tower. The graves of Mary Coleman and William Smallpiece (and Richard Bliss) are on the East side of the path running South from the old tower towards Ewell Castle.

Forthcoming Events

Surrey Archaeological Society: Surrey Industrial History Group: Trouble at Mill: Life in the Victorian Factories

Thursday 2nd November 2023 at 10am. Zoom talk by Richard Mark.

Carshalton And District History & Archaeology Society: The Horton Light Railway

Saturday 4th November 2023 at 2.30pm, Milton Hall, Cooper Crescent, Nightingale Road, Carshalton, SM5 2DL. A talk by Stewart Cocker. £3 for visitors.

Surbiton and District Historical Society: The Queens Promenade

Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7pm for 7:30pm, The cornerHOUSE Arts Centre, 116 Douglas Rd, Surbiton, KT6 7SB. A talk by Tim Harrison. £4 for visitors.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Roman Studies Group : Meonstoke - temple or villa?

Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7:30pm-9pm. Zoom talk by Prof. Tony King. RSG members only, but SyAS members can join for £5.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Local History Symposium : Maps

Saturday 11th November 2023 at 9:45am-3:30pm, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsmith Road, Woking, GU21 6ND. £15 in advance, £18 on the day.

Esher District Local History Society: On the Trail of Flora Thompson - beyond Candleford Green

Saturday 11th November 2023 at 2:30pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Church Road, Claygate KT10 0JP. A talk by Jo Smith. £3 for non-members.

Surbiton and District Historical Society: Bushy Park

Tuesday 14th November 2023 afternoon, The cornerHOUSE Arts Centre, 116 Douglas Rd, Surbiton, KT6 7SB. A talk by Susan Rhodes. £4 for visitors.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Surrey Industrial History Group: Mills on the River Wandle

Thursday 16th November 2023 at 10am. Talk by Mick Taylor.

Surrey Archaeological Society: SHERF Conference - Pills, Potions and Poisons

Saturday 25th November 2023 at 10am-3pm. Zoom event. £5.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Surrey Industrial History Group: The History and Evolution of Vehicle Registration in the UK

Thursday 30th November 2023 at 10am. Talk by Nicholas Young.

Carshalton And District History & Archaeology Society: Springs and Waterways of Carshalton

Saturday 2nd December 2023 at 2.30pm, Milton Hall, Cooper Crescent, Nightingale Road, Carshalton, SM5 2DL. A talk by Peter Wakeham. £3 for visitors.

Surbiton and District Historical Society: So this is Christmas

Tuesday 5th December 2023 at 7pm for 7:30pm, The cornerHOUSE Arts Centre, 116

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society
Founded 1960 Registered Charity No. 259221

Useful contact details

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Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Newsletter Editor by 12 January 2024.

Visit our website

www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Gift Aid

Just a further reminder that if you pay tax EEHAS, as a charity, can claim Gift Aid on your subscription or donations, at no cost to yourself. In order for us to do this you need to sign a Gift Aid Declaration form which is available at meetings and can also be found on the Society website on the Membership page.

You can see a colour copy of this newsletter on the Society website from mid November
www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk