



NEWSLETTER

2017, ISSUE 2

April 2017

Chairman's Notes

Many thanks to all who attended the recent AGM, the minutes are included with this Newsletter. Yet again there was a plea for more involvement from members – not a new issue – and a reminder of the continuing slow fall in numbers. There were some ideas on this which we need to follow up. Thanks also to Martin Olney who explained his role as Heritage Champion on E&EBC, a key link for us.

We are fortunate in Epsom and Ewell to have the excellent Museum Service based in Bourne Hall which we shouldn't take for granted. I was reminded of this by recent events surrounding the future of Heritage Services in Sutton LB which seem in doubt ever since the retirement of John Phillips a while ago – they now don't respond to emails. A significant amount of archaeological archive is stored in Sutton, including the important medieval pottery from various sites in Cheam. The future there is worrying.

I expect many received or heard of the latest consultation on Stonehenge from Highways England and the debate that ensued. I think I've heard of proposals/consultations/counter proposals over the Henge for as long as I can remember! It keeps the archaeological lobby and road planners in business. No doubt we will hear more.

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Lecture Diary

May 3rd	Worms, ashes and bone: excavations at Cocks Farm, Abinger 1876-2016: Emma Corke
June 7th	The Curtis family of dairy farmers who sojourned in Ewell at the end of the 19th- 20th century en route from Balham to Effingham: Professor Richard Selley
July 5th	Members' visit to Woodcote Green House

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell KT17 2BB

Doors open 7.45 for 8pm start. Members free, visitors £4, includes refreshments.

February Meeting – Restoration of the Temperate House at Kew – Sue Rhodes

Nikki Cowlard

We were fortunate to have Sue Rhodes, a Project Manager from the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew to talk to us about the history of the Temperate House, and in particular, the current restoration project. Kew has three strategic priorities in science: to document and conduct research into global plant and fungal diversity and its uses for humanity; to curate and provide data-rich evidence from Kew's unrivalled collections as a global asset for scientific research; to disseminate our scientific knowledge of plants and fungi, maximising its impact in science, education, conservation policy and management. Kew has 863 members of staff, of which 600 are full-time, and two thirds are scientists. Sue described the collections which include internationally important botanical specimens, botanic art and historical archives. The restoration project on the Grade I listed Temperate House is due to run 2012-2018. The Temperate house was a building at risk as it was in such a poor state and massive fundraising has taken place to undertake the project.

William Hooker, followed by his son Joseph, was the director of Kew who saw the need for a temperate house. The old orangery was too small as plants matured. The Treasury agreed funding of £10,000 and the total build cost £32,000. The current project is estimated to cost £32 million. The development of the *Wardian* case enabled plants to be transported back from expeditions in the Victorian era, and these plants needed somewhere to house them. Kew Gardens evolved from the gardens of two royal residences combined, and a 1839 map shows the site of the new glass house marked. Decimus Burton, architect, designed the Temperate House with a main block flanked by octagon wings. It was due to be made of cast iron, but as it took 30 years to complete rolled steel became available, and was duly incorporated. He also designed the below ground areas – offices, boiler and six tanks set around the building to collect rainfall. Small panes of green glass were used. It was thought that green was better for plants and large sheets of glass were not yet available. The building is now on its sixth set of window glass. The guttering system was integrated into the design and the pillars acted as pipes. The building was raised on an earth plinth and the entrance was planned to be seen from the new Kew Garden station, which was unfortunately then built elsewhere.

Whilst the original plan showed the main building with octagonal wings, the money ran out. When the main building (without wings) was opened it was the place to promenade – the Winter Gardens. Botanists alone had access in the morning and the public were permitted entrance in the afternoons, but the public was not happy with this restricted access and demonstrations ensued. William Hooker retaliated by increasing the height of the boundary walls by 2ft. The wings were not built until the end of 19th century when Hooker's son, Joseph, was in post.

Plants from the temperate regions that span Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific needed a glasshouse as many are not frost-free and need temperatures of 20° or above to thrive. These include palms, ferns, citrus plants like lemon and lime, and the tea bush (*Camellia sinensis*).

The restoration project has highlighted how original designs were altered or adapted. The roof was originally designed to roll back for ventilation but this did not work for long. Urns outside the building were removed during WW2 for protection and were never seen again. The Temperate House was a building at risk with layers of rust, rotten stairways and scaffolding poles holding up features. Thirteen layers of paint have been uncovered; colours

included dark green, white, cream, dark brown and sky blue. The restoration includes a cast of thousands, both specialists from Kew and teams from outside. The aim was to save as many plants as possible for the three years they were to be out of the glasshouse. They were either moved, or seed and cuttings saved. After eighteen months of work, one hundred plants had still not been successfully propagated, but by the time plants had to be moved this was down to twenty. In order to move the large palms and trees their roots were cut and the plants stabilised before moving them. Ten trees could not be moved so were scaffolded and covered, with heaters at their base, UV lights and monitoring equipment. A propagation glasshouse was built specifically for this project and it has given the chance to completely rethink the collection.

Two sets of scaffolding have covered the building, one internal, and one external with a tent over to enable work continues in all weathers. 180km of scaffolding poles have been used; every item removed is barcoded and its position recorded so it can be returned exactly. The vertical struts of the building were of wood so eight joiners are on site to remove and replace the rotten wood. Four layers of paint will cover the frame, guaranteed for fifty years minimum – the colour is still under wraps. The Kew archives have contributed information in the form of plans, old images, postcards, correspondence, bills, invoices, etc.. However it is not known where the cast iron was sourced but it is thought that Decimus Burton had his own works somewhere locally.

The restoration will be complete in 2017 with the building fully restored and painted, with restored heating, ventilation and irrigation, statues renovated and placed in the new layout, newly paved paths – more robust and wide, and an attractive open central area. There will be new landscaping and plants. A few of the larger mature plants, together with larger plants potted up and grown on, will be reintroduced, but there will also be hundreds of new plants. Sue's enthusiasm brought the restoration project to life and members present were encouraged to visit Kew to see, and enjoy, the outcome when the Temperate House reopens in 2018.



Buses of a Bygone Age in Epsom & Ewell

Doreen Tilbury

A while ago out of the blue I received a very interesting letter. With it was a black and white photo of bus No. 419 CXX 152 (Fig.1). The writer of the letter knew that the photo was taken in 1949 and that Route 419 ran from the Bungalow Stores in West Ewell to Langley Vale via Epsom. His question was – where was the photograph taken?

I was able to answer this as I live about 300 yards from the location. The bus was in Christchurch Road, Epsom, having come down West Hill and travelling to Horton Lane and West Ewell. To the right of the people who have just alighted is Stamford Green with the pond ahead of them. What confirmed it for me was that the house on the left is still there although the walls have been decorated in a lighter colour.

My early reply prompted another request with a query about the location of the No. 93 bus FXT 177 (Fig 2). He was fairly certain it was in Epsom High Street facing east and could I confirm this? I did so saying it was at the start of its run to Putney. It is outside the old Yew Tree Cottages behind the yew trees which now house a Café Rouge restaurant. Next left of the cottages is a small building which is still there and was called Furniss, who was a coal merchant and also had various shops. Today the small building houses Ashmore Insurance.

Yet another request arrived in January this year for the location of the No. 406 OLD 768 (Fig. 3). I think I need the help of members this time – I have had one suggestion but would be pleased to receive any others. Does anybody recognise the old house wall on the right (is it even there now?), or the road layout? As you can see, the bus is headed for Kingston and the destinations list shows Tolworth, Stoneleigh, Ewell, Epsom, Tadworth, Kingswood, Reigate. It is such a long route I feel it could be anywhere along it but our correspondent may have an inkling it is somewhere local to us.

If it was 1949 I could ask “answers on a postcard please” but bearing in mind the cost of postage today a telephone call to me (my number is shown on back of newsletter) would be a better idea.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 3



March Meeting – In the land of Gods and Monsters: Shrines and sacrifice in Celtic Gaul and Britain – Jon Cotton

Steve Nelson

After the AGM our President Jon Cotton gave this talk on his views of Iron Age/Celtic religious identity, all inspired by a recent holiday. Our knowledge of Iron Age society comes principally from Roman written sources, they left no written record, but also from a wealth of excavated objects most especially from France. The Roman view was generally of a wild, bloodthirsty society, epitomised perhaps in the sculpture of the man-eating monster known as the Tarasque de Noves with paws resting on two severed heads.

While the religion had no “centre” as such, Roman writers refer to sacred groves associated with *hideous offerings* (Lucan 49 BC). One of the most important objects to have survived is the Gundestrup silver bowl found in Denmark, which includes in its design complex elements of Celtic symbolism and other elements from further afield, perhaps as far as Thrace. Underlining the view of a preoccupation with head hunting, there are in France the peculiar human skull portal at Rocquefort and a similar stone building at Entremont with niches to display skulls of defeated enemies. The high hill top site of Glanum, with its surviving remains of the 2nd BC, is typical of a number of such Celtic settlements, and which continued its development in the Roman period.

Jon then described the small healing shrine at Le Source de la Seine, from which a great number of small votive objects have been found, associated with supposedly curative powers, with an analogy to the contemporary centre at Lourdes with its rock shelter centre. At Tintignac excavations have revealed a number of votive/ritual deposits with huge numbers of metal objects, including pieces of a Carnyx or war horn, perhaps the most iconic of Celtic artefacts. These are depicted on the Gundestrup cauldron and pieces of them have been found elsewhere, including the C19 find from Deskford in Scotland, from which a replica has been made and has been played (you can hear it on YouTube). The preoccupation with the ritual collection of burials and dismemberment of bodies is demonstrated at Ribemont, where there was evidence of vast numbers of warrior bodies being collected and apparently, very bizarrely, suspended in some form of frame. There is of course nothing on this scale in England, although there are indications of dismembered bodies on some of the Iron Age hill forts, for example Danebury, and there are some “druidic” objects. The burial at Mill Hill, Deal included a shield, sword and hooped metal headband that brings to mind the priestly chain headdress from Wanborough, the Iron Age and Romano-British site off the Hogs Back so badly looted prior to its full excavation.

The concept of ritual deposits is something not fully understood in archaeological terms. Nearer to home, Jon referred to such deposits in pits at Cocks Farm Abinger and the D shaped enclosure ditch at Ashted on the hill top beside the villa. This has now proved to be an Iron Age ditched enclosure with a large group of pottery in its primary fill. A possibly similar, more rectangular, ditched enclosure has been excavated at Wescott. Jon finished with a return to heads, mentioning the prehistoric skull found on the foreshore at Putney, and illustrated the miniature carved head in chalk from Deal and the Battersea plaque, and wondered whether there was here any affinity with the later Roman face pots.

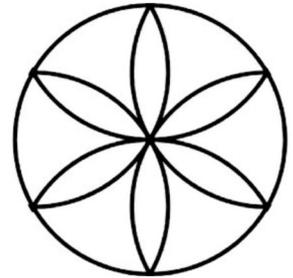


Lucky for Some

Jeremy Harte

Built in the fifteenth century, the old church tower in St. Mary's churchyard is the earliest building to survive in Ewell and you'd expect its five centuries of weathering to have taken their toll. But the north face of the tower still carries a rare survival – traces of medieval graffiti.

A block of stone near the northwest quoins is carved with a set of overlapping circles, at least one of which resembles the traditional hexafoil or daisywheel. This is a pattern made by marking out a circle and then scribing six equally spaced arcs in it, all with the same diameter as the main circle, running through its centre and joining in pairs at its circumference. That gives you a design with six petals – a simple, memorable bit of geometry that has your eye running over the lines to see how it all works out.



That's why daisywheels were carved: as a magical protection. Just like you, a passing demon would be fascinated by the geometry and couldn't help but stop and gaze round and round the looping circles. That kept him safely distracted from doing harm. You might think that the precincts of a church would be free of demons, but there were occasions – such as baptism, when the natural devil was expelled from a baby – on which ritual protection made sense. And the design may have persisted in folklore as a way of securing good luck. To mark one of these symbols with your own hand on the sacred fabric of the church was a way of ensuring that wherever you went, a bit of you was being kept safe in the stones of St. Mary's.

The Surrey Medieval Graffiti project, led by Richard Neville, has begun recording drawings and symbols from the county's churches. They are normally found inside the building, and it is possible that the carved block at Ewell was moved from an original location near the tower arch when the old church tower was made sound after the demolition of the medieval



Old St. Mary's Church, Ewell

church in 1848. That would explain how the symbol remains legible after so many years. Hopefully it will carry on exercising its protective powers for generations to come.

Forthcoming Events

Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: Individuals in Prehistory

Thursday 13th April 2017, at 8pm, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton. Landscape Archaeologist Judie English speaks on how science and studies can now give archaeologists insights into relationships and individual lives.

Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: Timber framed buildings in historic Surrey

Thursday 11th May 2017, at 8pm, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton. A talk by our member Ian West - Building surveyor specialising in recording historic buildings.

2017 Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2017 become due on 1st January. Subscriptions can be paid at the monthly meetings, or by post to the Treasurer, Jane Pedler, or the Membership Secretary, Doreen Tilbury. Subs are £15 for ordinary membership, £22 for family membership, £6 for student, or £22 for corporate and school memberships. A slip is provided below:

2017 Subscriptions

I (we) wish to renew membership for 2017 Amount enclosed.....

Name and address.....

.....

.....

E-mail address.....

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

Founded 1960 Registered Charity No.259221

Useful contact details

President: Jon Cotton MA, FSA

Chairman: Steve Nelson

Secretary: Nikki Cowlard, 1 Norman Avenue, Epsom KT17 3AB (01372) 745432

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Treasurer: Jane Pedler

Archaeology Officer: Frank Pemberton

Conservation Officer: Nikki Cowlard (see details above)

Membership Secretary: Doreen Tilbury

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Cousins

Programme Secretary: Vacant

If you are interested in this post please contact the Secretary.

If you would like to contact any of the committee please e-mail info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Newsletter Editor by 12 May 2017

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.

*** PLEASE NOTE: For new or renewing members, there is a new Gift Aid form ***

You can see a colour copy of this newsletter on the Society website from mid April

www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 8p.m. on 1st March 2017

at St. Mary's Church Hall, Ewell

Present:

President	Jon Cotton
Vice-President/Chairman	Stephen Nelson
Secretary	Nikki Cowlard
Treasurer	Jane Pedler

A total of 43 members signed the attendance book.

President Jon Cotton opened the proceedings and welcomed members.

1. Apologies for absence: Lou Hays, Richard Watson, Ian West.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 2nd March 2016

The minutes had been circulated with the April 2016 newsletter. Adoption of the minutes was agreed unanimously by members present.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise covered in the agenda

None.

4. Annual report for 2016

The report had been circulated with the February 2016 Newsletter. A number of points were highlighted including: the lack of volunteers for posts within the society, the decreasing membership, new publications – a sign of a healthy society. Mike Teasdale suggested that members should be encouraged to introduce a friend to the society. JC suggested that excavations were a good way of encouraging new members. NC discussed the ongoing post-excavation work on Church Meadow and thanked Gay and Chris Harris for their organisational skills and practical support. JC highlighted the importance of the society's conservation role and having the expertise of Steve Nelson and Ian West.

Adoption of the Annual Report was proposed by David Hartley, seconded by Mike Teasdale and accepted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's report

Jane Pedler reported that the latest accounts had been easier than 2015 as she was now much more knowledgeable. She and SN had the countersigning and sending off of cheque payments down to a fine art and she thanked SN and NC for their help, and also auditor Rod Clarke for his patience with her various eccentricities, and the speedy production of the accounts. Jane also thanked Doreen Tilbury for her incredibly detailed drops of subscriptions and meeting income, and Gay Harris for the Pot Group reckonings which are always accurate to the last penny.

Gift Aid for 2016 was claimed in January 2017 and amounted to £156.29. Obviously this did not appear in the 2016 accounts but shows it is worth signing up for gift aid. Subscriptions and donations were up on 2015, and also sales of publications and meeting receipts (mainly visitors), resulting in an overall rise. However as usual expenditure was up so there was a shortfall, albeit less than last year.

The Christmas party made a modest profit due mainly to the raffle; thanks must go to all who helped - the committee who planned it and all those who helped set the room up and clear away afterwards. If anyone has any ideas for future seasonal celebrations please make your suggestions to any member of the committee.

The publication "Roman Food and Drink" has proved popular and has just reached the point where sales exceed costs with plenty more copies in stock.

Many members now pay their subscriptions by Standing Order or Internet Transfer which is very efficient and cost effective for both parties. If anyone else wishes to adopt either of these methods for future payments JP had some slips with the necessary bank details on them. She asked that members put their surname on the payment as a reference and one could email the renewal slip to DT. The Society is also very grateful to those members who add donations on to their subscriptions. Unfortunately we cannot offer Direct Debit because of the onerous obligations and systems required by the bank.

A question was asked about the reduction in income from the Christmas party. This was due to the change in format which meant that tickets were not sold. Jean Cobbold asked where the income from the pot group came. NC said that pot group members paid £2 a week to subsidise their activities. Elizabeth Bennett suggested crossing out any line that had no figures for two years and JP said she would pass it on to Rod Clarke. NC pointed out that no further payments were allocated to the Church Meadow Project which would hopefully help the deficit in 2017.

Adoption of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Gay Harris, seconded by Martin Upward and accepted

unanimously.

6. Election of Officers

The following were proposed by Jeremy Harte, seconded by Jean Cobbold, and elected en bloc:

President	Jonathan Cotton
Vice-Presidents	Stephen Nelson
Chairman	Stephen Nelson
Secretary	Nikki Cowlard
Treasurer	Jane Pedler
Committee Members	Jeff Cousins, David Hartley, Lou Hays, Doreen Tilbury
Independent examiner	Rod Clarke

Sadly the Society had lost one of its Vice-President, with the death of Eve Myatt-Price, during 2016. Isobel Cross who had been a committee member for more than 20 years had not stood for re-election. She was thanked for her contribution and given a bouquet of flowers.

7. Open Forum

Jeremy Harte asked what activities the Society was hoping to be involved in in the coming year. The possibility of carrying out magnetometry at Nonsuch Palace, in order to identify the stable block, was being considered after discussions with Mike Teasdale. He will contact Martin Biddle, the site director, for information he may have on this before any fieldwork is undertaken. Members would be able to get involved if a survey took place. It was commented on that the banqueting house is in a derelict state and needs attention. It is hoped to lay out the outline of the Palace in the grass using tile and chalk rubble left over from the original 1959 excavation. Jean Cobbold said that she understood that the site was owned by London Borough of Sutton and EEBC, but apparently they are lease holders, with Surrey County Council the owner. Jeremy Harte said that Nathan, the metal detectorist had been plotting finds to look for areas of high activity; it would be good to ensure this work is published in due course.

David Hartley asked if there were any plans to ensure the continuation of the Monday night pottery cataloguing group, in order to utilise the skills the group had built up. Currently no archives have been identified that could be worked on but there is at least 12-18 months left on the Church Meadow pottery archive. David felt he was unable to join Surrey Archaeological Society's Artefacts and Archives Recording Group (AARG) due to work commitments but NC said they held a Wednesday evening session which might suit him.

Martin Olney, Councillor and Heritage Champion took a few minutes to outline his role – to engage with heritage in the Borough. He commented that having a Heritage Planning Officer who lives in France and only worked two days a week was a disadvantage and plans were underway to address this. EEBC now has a Compliance Officer and Grahame Dorrington, Enforcement Officer is dogged in his duty. Martin mentioned the protection offered by conservation areas and asked members to contact him if they saw any transgressions. Epsom Civic Society does a good job in the four wards comprising Epsom but do not cover Ewell and Stoneleigh. Like EEHAS he monitors planning applications for heritage issues. He has been in touch with the new owner of the Amato (now the Grumpy Mole) in Chalk Lane, who will reinstate items of local historical interest removed during renovations. Bourne Hall Museum has flagged up the 400th anniversary of Epsom spa and it is hoped to celebrate this event in the Borough.

It had been suggested that the Society returns to its original logo of a portcullis (representing a lead item found during the original excavations). Members were shown the two options. Following discussion on the problems of using the portcullis, which is already the logo of several eminent bodies, and the identity of the Henry VIII logo with EEHAS, members voted to retain the Henry VIII shilling.

Members were encouraged to visit the EEHAS website, which is regularly updated. Latest papers uploaded include Clive Orton's excavation on Ewell Churchyard 2000, and the first ten Occasional Papers, which are no longer in print. Thanks to BH Museum for scanning the OPs.

The decline in membership was discussed. Ideas put forward included having out of area/postal members, having a stall at local events such as Ewell Village Day or Herald of Spring. There is the possibility of having a member based at the museum shop during events to engage with the public on behalf of the Society. Gay Keeble mentioned that she had joined EEHAS after she came to a slideshow on the history of the area – perhaps we could leaflet the new houses being built and offer an introduction to the history and archaeology of the area. Whilst the number of ideas was encouraging it was reinforced that the current active members were already struggling to cope with the workload and other members must engage and do something to help, however small.

9. Any other business – none.

10. Close of Meeting - the Chairman closed the meeting at 9 p.m.

NC 3.3.17