Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

NEWSLETTER



2020, ISSUE 2 April 2020

Chairman's Notes

Congratulations to Nikki Cowlard for preparing the EEHAS display which won, yet again, the Margary award at this year's SyAS symposium. The display, which we will put on the Society website, draws together, finds of late Iron Age date from the Epsom and Ewell area. It coincides win Aapril. We will review the situation as it develops. Meanwhileth the forthcoming major conference on the transition from the Iron Age to early Roman period in south east Britain. This conference will be held on 9 May at Ashtead, tickets available from the SyAS website.

At the time of writing the full extent of the Coronavirus outbreak is uncertain as are the preventive measures that the government may put in place. It may be that we will have to cancel monthly meetings at short notice. Members are asked to check the EEHAS website for further announcements.

STOP PRESS

In view of the current situation, we seem to have no alternative but to cancel the Society's monthly meeting April - July. We will review the situation as it develops. Meanwhile please check the EEHAS website for things to read and do take care.

As many of the Forthcoming Events listed on page 8 may now have been cancelled please check before attending.

Inside this issue:		Lecture Diary	
November Meeting: The Vikings and my Travels to Denmark and Stockholm	2	May 6th	Conservation in Epsom and Ewell : Lance Penman - cancelled
February Meeting: Social history set in east London 1862 – 1962	3	June 3rd	Surrey Folklore : Matthew Alexander -
March AGM and talk:	6 8	July 1st	The Old Ewell Church Tower : Alice Blows cancelled
Forthcoming Events Surrey Archaeological	9	August 5th	Members' Evening.
Membership Matters	10	Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell KT17 2BB.	
Minutes of AGM for 2020		Doors open 7.45 for 8pm start. Members free, visitors £4, includes refreshments.	

November Meeting – The Vikings and my Travels to Denmark and Stockholm – Richard Watson

Steve Nelson

In November we heard from Richard Watson on his recent expedition to Scandinavia, principally Denmark. The main emphasis of Richard's talk was on the prehistoric archaeology of the area and in particular the distinctive rock art to be found at many sites, and so often found carved on stone slab surfaces. These are now quite ephemeral and from the illustrations he showed have usually been coloured in recent times to make them more apparent. Most of the art dates to the Scandinavian Bronze Age, c 1100-700 BC and what is striking is the number of images of ships that are depicted. Sea travel around the coast and islands of Denmark and Norway was clearly of importance from prehistoric times.



Rock Art

Richard also visited the sites and monuments of Viking age including the ship museum at Roskilde which has the remains of excavated ships and sea going reconstructions on which you can take a trip. There are also a number of Viking ring forts with their impressive, perfectly circular banks; the one at Frykat has been excavated. I remember myself visiting the fort at Trelleborg, where a long house has been reconstructed and talking to the reenactors who spoke excellent English!

Roskilde Viking Ships Museum



Continuing with the boat theme, Richard went to see the remains of the Vasa in Stockholm. This C17 warship was raised from the harbour in 1961 and is remarkably complete. Sadly there are signs of decay, not surprising when the techniques of preservation in the 1960s were less advanced than today. Even so it was a remarkable achievement and certainly rivals that of the Mary Rose which sank some 100 years before.



Vasa ship

This short report doesn't really do justice to Richard's excellent talk and is due to the lack of notes I took at the time! A rota of people to take notes at the meetings would be more satisfactory.

February Meeting – Social History set in east London 1862-1962 – Joyce Hampton

Steve Nelson

Joyce Hampton spoke to us in February on the more recent history of the Bethnal Green area of East London, now in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Joyce's interest stems from family connections and her researches resulted in her book "Looking Back, a Century of Life in Bethnal Green", which was on sale at a specially reduced price.

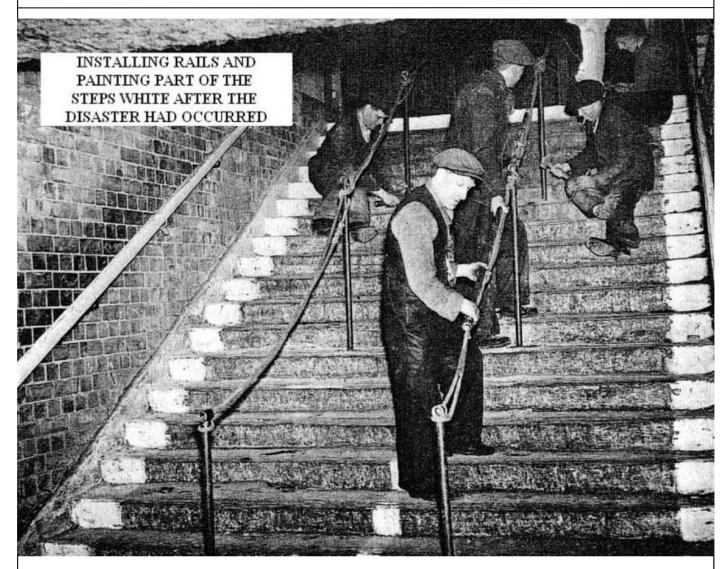
Joyce set the scene referring to the rather sketchy early history of the area. The name is said to derive from a Saxon name, Bilda, and a C13 deed refers to an area around Blithall eventually Bethnal. It is mentioned by Samuel Pepys, and after the Great Fire many of the bricks for rebuilding were made in the area and perhaps resulting in the name Brick Lane. The name is embodied in the Legend of Bethnal Green and the Blind Beggar, actually the nobleman son of Simon de Montfort, blinded at battle of Evesham and who later protected his daughter from unsuitable suiters by posing as a penniless beggar. His image is the Borough emblem.

However, Joyce's story centred on the period 1862-1962. In the mid C19 the area was one of hardship and poverty with large families living in cramped conditions; a life often cut short with high infant mortality and hard work, although this was true of other areas of London not just the East End. This was particularly true for women – there was no education for girls so they started at a disadvantage with limited potential and were therefore restricted to more menial and manual jobs and trades. Many Bethnal Green people were of Huguenot descent but by the mid C19 their traditional occupations (silk weaving, etc.) had declined. There was of course no social security in old age, other than family support if available, and the only alternative was the Workhouse, with the emphasis on work. One requirement of which might be picking oakum, unravelling old rope with a spike nail, giving rise to the slang term "the Spike" for workhouses.

In terms of local personalities, Joyce mentioned Walter Tull, still famous in the East End as the local footballer who became the first black British Army officer in WWI and sadly killed at Arras in 1918. WWI had a significant impact on the area, it experienced the first time that Britain was attacked form the air, initially by airship and later by plane. In 1917 a bomb exploded in what is now Mayflower Primary School in Poplar killing 18 children, a memorial plaque is in the school building which celebrated the centenary in 2017.

Joyce's own father was born in 1918, during the influenza epidemic, in Approach Road, Bethnal Green, which Joyce recently revisited. Although he was born prematurely and weak, he survived - many didn't! The East End was always an area of political activity born out of living conditions and Joyce referred to some of these. In 1921 Poplar Council instituted the Rates Rebellion over the funding of the Labour Council's programme of social reform and poor relief. They refused to hand over the precepts required by the overall pan London authorities. Although local councillors were imprisoned, the Council eventually won the day. 1932 also saw the rise of the British Union of Fascists – their emblem of a lightning bolt being described with East End humour as a "flash in the pan"!

The inter war years saw the beginnings of largescale slum clearance which served both to improve living conditions and through job creation schemes to provide employment, alleviating some effects of the Depression. But peace did not last long; WWII was to affect the population of the East End and Bethnal Green more so then the first war. In 1940 the Blitz on London set the East End ablaze with such ferocity that the fires were seen from as far away as Kent where Joyce's mother lived at the time and recalled watching. In 1943 the worst civilian disaster occurred when 173 people were crushed to death in Bethnal Green tube station, caused not by enemy action but to the dark and confusion as people rushed to the shelter. Despite an enquiry finding that there had been no panic and that conditions in the station entrance were the cause, the Government insisted that the Councillors take the blame! The Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust has recently funded the erection, in 2017, of a Memorial at the entrance to Bethnal Green tube station.



Scene of the Bethnal Green tube disaster

Joyce rounded off her talk by bringing her history up to date with the post war era. The rebuilding and slum clearance continued apace with the ubiquitous tower blocks of the 1950s and 60s which did much to change the close community spirit of the area. However, not all were happy with the "new" and many East Ender's dream was to move east out into Essex.

Joyce's talk was interspersed with personal recollections that she recalled from relatives in the area for which she feels such an affinity.

Editor's Note:

Joyce's book, "Looking Back, a Century of Life in Bethnal Green", begins with the birth of her gt. grandmother Susannah Harris at Ann's Place, Pritchard's Road, Bethnal Green. This is the very same spot as the 1871 census lists my gt. gt. gt. grandparents Charles and Sarah Cousins and their son, my gt. gt. grandfather, Saul William Cousins (known as Samuel). Sarah was the gt. granddaughter of Francois Bouchard, listed in Joyce's book "The Story

of the Huguenots" as one of the founding figures of Edinburgh's New Town. Silk weavers had certainly come down in the world.

"Sanitary Ramblings," by Hector Gavin in 1848, described conditions in Bethnal Green. Many books on poverty in Victorian England appear to be derived, at one or more level of remove, from this one book, all recycling the same information. He reported that Ann's Place had an unpaved footpath and sewers but no granite roadway or drains. It was very dirty with full gutters. To the east, between its south end and the canal, lied a "night-man's" yard containing a pond for collecting filth, dung, refuse, and the contents of cesspools. (Maps label it as a fish pond!) Filthy ditches brought in more offensive material. Two or three mountainous heaps of ashes and cinders gave off an odour disgusting beyond comprehension. There were enormous heaps of decaying animal and vegetable remains. A footnote added that the manure had been shipped away by barge and many of the ditches filled in, but one ditch still had a filthy privy draining in to it.

Charles Booth's late 19th century "poverty maps" show the road as a "mixed", i.e. some comfortable, others poor. His notebooks record: "At the north end shops. At the south two storied houses – "like the Old Bethnal Green Road in character". It looks fairly comfortable as far south as Caroline Place then there are broken windows & it is no better than mixed."

In 1935 most of the houses were replaced by five storey blocks of flats. The one on the site of my ancestors' home is now called Shahjalal House.

March Meeting – 'In this Heathe hath many camps bin pitched': The West London Landscape Project in context – Jon Cotton

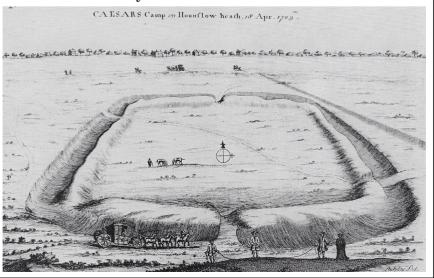
Jeff Cousins

Our President Jon Cotton gave a talk after the AGM. He and Nick Elsdon, from Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA), have been writing up ten sites from up to 40 years ago, from around and north of Heathrow Airport. The huge report has been sent to Heritage England and is awaiting review.

The area comprises mostly gravel terraces, some capped with brick earth. The latter was quarried in the 19th c, but as the land was so good for agriculture it wasn't dug for gravel until the 1980s and '90s, when London was pressured to find more local sources for building materials instead of transporting them from far away. The river Thames runs to the south

and the Colne to the west, the latter providing a major transport route between the Thames and the Chilterns.

Various prehistoric finds and sites in the area had long been known. One was 'Caesar's Camp', so named by William Stukeley who surveyed it in the 18th c, though the Old English name was 'Sceares byrig', meaning 'the robbers' fort', so the area had long been known for thieves even



before the highway men of 18th c Hounslow Heath. Grimes excavated it in the 1940s before the building of Heathrow, and found an Iron Age settlement and a small temple. It is now lost under the east end of Heathrow's north runway. (My uncle remembers Heathrow as just a field with a hut when he did his National Service for the RAF).

Most of the sites were dug due to gravel extraction, though there was also the building of Terminal 5. The Neolithic had isolated farmsteads in clearings in the woodland. The site at Horton had four rectangular houses from 3900-3800 BC, and Cranford Lane another from about 3700 BC, all 8-9m by 4-5m and divided into two squares by a wall in the middle. Finds were mostly from the ends of the houses. One is being reconstructed at Butser Hill.

All along this part of the Thames Valley there were causewayed enclosures from about 3600 BC - these were ringed by a discontinuous ditch and had a rectangular house in the middle. The ditches contained lots of pot and animal bone, even human bone showing signs of conflict.

There were also little ring ditches, that dug at Shepperton Green in 1989 contained the crouched burial of a woman (for whom a facial reconstruction has been performed), along with upturned pots and the skull of a dog/wolf hybrid. The woman's teeth contained much lead, implying that she wasn't local but had grown up in a lead mining area such as the Peak District or the Mendips.

The skeleton of an auroch - a fearsome beast with 3' horns - was found in a 2m deep pit. It had six flint arrowheads in its rump, showing that it had been hunted, probably as a trophy animal.

As if this activity wasn't enough, there was far more in the Late Bronze Age (LBA), after 1500 BC. Co-axial field systems were laid out at several sites, such as Terminal 5, though the orientation differed between sites, there was no indication of a master plan. Subsequently new Middle Iron Age



(MIA) settlements were fitted in within the pre-existing LBA field systems. The MIA houses were large, sturdy, round structures. There were also four post structures, thought to have been granaries on stilts to keep out the rats. (When I lived in The Netherlands in the early 1980s there were still many of these in the rural northern part of the province of North Holland, but most have since been lost).

The late Roman period showed another burst of activity, with rural farms off to the north of the main London to Silchester road. These had roughly square fields divided by alleyways, and were about 1km apart along the gravel terrace. No stone buildings were found, but timber that had been dumped in a quarry pit indicated flimsy shed-like constructions.

The influence of the prehistoric lingered for a long time, ancient landmarks being used to mark the late Saxon boundary of Harmondsworth parish.

Forthcoming Events

Carshalton And District History & Archaeology Society: The Restoration of Clandon Park

Saturday 4th April 2020 at 3:00pm, Milton Hall (the Darby & Joan Club), Cooper Crescent, Carshalton, SM5 2LG. A talk by Paul Dommett.

Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: The Turin Shroud

Thursday 9th April 2020, at 7:30pm for 8pm, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton, KT6 6AG. A talk by Dr. David A. Kennedy.

Leatherhead & District Local History Society: Mrs Frederica Lock

Friday 17th April 2020, at 7:30pm for 8pm, Letherhead Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8AH. A talk by Bill Whitman. Mrs Frederica Lock created a haven of peace and culture at Norbury Park in the early 1790s. £2.

Surbiton and District Historical Society: TBA

Tuesday 5th May 2020 at 7.30pm for 7.45pm, Surbiton Library Annex.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Roman Studies Group: Shining a light on the transition from Late Iron Age to Early Roman SE England

Saturday 9th May 2020 at 9:30am - 5pm, Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashtead, KT21 2BE. Tickets £15 in advance.

Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: The Changing Face of Archaeology

Thursday 14th May 2020, at 7:30pm for 8pm, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton, KT6 6AG. A talk by Dr. Angela Care Evans.

Leatherhead & District Local History Society: Corsets & Cameras

Friday 15th May 2020, at 7:30pm for 8pm, Letherhead Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8AH. A talk by Jane Lewis. How to date old photos by using changes in women's fashion from 1860-1920. £2.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Prehistoric Group: Mesolithic Study Day

Saturday 16th May 2020 at 10:30am - 4:30pm, Letherhead Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8AH. £10.

Surbiton and District Historical Society: TBA

Tuesday 2nd June 2020 at 7.30pm for 7.45pm, Surbiton Library Annex.

Surrey Archaeological Society: Roman Studies Group: Excavations at Cocks Farm, Abinger

Saturday 13th June 2020 at 9:30pm till Tuesday 14th July at 4pm, excluding Thursdays and Fridays.

Surrey Archaeological Society Annual Symposium

Jeff Cousins

This was held on Saturday February 29th at the Peace Memorial Hall in Ashtead. EEHAS again won the Margary Award for the best display, congratulations to Nikki Cowlard, pictured collecting the award.

Unfortunately the talk on "Ewell pits and quarries" was cancelled as the speaker was unwell. Nikki did give a quick run-down on the test pitting at Bourne Hall in May 2019 and Nonsuch Park in September 2019. At the former (see the September 2019 newsletter), only 57 pot sherds were found, not a lot



for somewhere with known mediaeval activity and the site of a Tudor mansion. Possibly landscaping for the Georgian mansion had removed a lot of material.



Old Stables Field molehill

With regards the Old Stables Field (see Nonsuch Park November 2019 newsletter), the wall turning a corner may just be part of a drain as only one brick thick. "My" pit, which was filled with flint, may have been on the line of a mediaeval ditch from the fields of the lost village Cuddington, filled in for a path thestablesbetween and palace.

Note: Since then, the local moles have been busy in the field. Those on the higher ground are full of bits of broken roof tile.

Nigel Bond also gave a briefing on the test pitting at Rowhurst, a beautiful old house on our side of Leatherhead. Three weeks of digging in May 2019 discovered 1551 sherds. Most were prehistoric (LBA/EIA), some Roman, but none mediaeval despite a 1346 dendro date for part of the house. A smaller dig in October 2019 found 258 sherds; this time a few were mediaeval but still not many. Most interesting was a Roman amphora in a pit.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Mrs A Shaw
Mr F Pemberton

Mr I West

Can You Help?

We need a volunteer to deliver newsletters in Ewell. It is only five times a year and if you can help us please get in touch with Doreen at a meeting.

2020 Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2020 became 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:

2020 Subscriptions

I (we) wish to renew membership for 2020	Amount enclosed					
Name and address						
	•••••					
E-mail address						

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

Useful contact details

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Archaeology Officer: Frank Pemberton

Conservation Officer: Nikki Cowlard (see details above)

Membership Secretary: Doreen Tilbury, 31 West Hill Avenue, Epsom KT19 8LE

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Newsletter Editor: Jeff Cousins info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Programme Secretary: Vacant

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

Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Newsletter Editor by 12 May 2020.

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 April www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 8p.m. on 4th March 2020 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 33 members signed the attendance book.

The President welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence: Rosemary Burleigh, Chris and Gay Harris, Barbara and Les Johnston, Tony Posner, Ian West, Derek Yeo.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 6th March 2019

The minutes had been circulated with the April 2019 newsletter. Adoption of the minutes was agreed unanimously by members present.

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

None noted.

4. Annual report for 2019

The report had been circulated with the February 2020 Newsletter. Nikki Cowlard reported that the main focus of 2019 had been the test pitting at Bourne Hall and Nonsuch Park. In liaison with Surrey Archaeological Society and its NLHF Sustainable Development Project, we held an Open Day at Bourne Hall in May. It was a good day with children and families, including the BH Museum Club participants, digging in three of the five test pits opened. The emphasis had been on finding the Tudor building complex backing on to the springs but no evidence was found; indeed the lack of abundant pottery suggest the site had been systemically cleared before the 18th c. mansion was constructed. The 9th Legion Butser reenactors entertained visitors, and metal detectorists Mairi and Dave gave children the chance to do some metal detecting. The test pits in Nonsuch Old Stables Field, in September, were located over magnetometry anomalies; from seven test pits, a corner of single brick construction (likely a sump of some kind) and a probable medieval ditch filled with flint were uncovered. The majority of the small amount of pottery that was retrieved consisted mainly of medieval – 17th c. sherds. Reenactors also entertained visitors and diggers alike.

The lack of volunteers for the tea rota was commented on and members asked to volunteer where they could, to share the load.

Frank Pemberton told members that he was working through the unpublished sites in Ewell. The Purberry Shot re-evaluation report was nearly ready for publication, SMM77 was completed and SMM78-9 was being worked on; SMC2003 is still to be written. FP also hoped to publish a booklet on the Roman brooches from Ewell. Jon Cotton and the members thanked Frank for his hard work and contribution to archaeology in Ewell. This was endorsed by Jeremy Harte on behalf of BH Museum. Thanks were expressed to Jeff Cousins for editing the newsletters, and members were asked for contributions, large or small. The President

mentioned the OP58 Wartime in a Surrey town published in 2019 and asked members to think about subjects or copy for future OPs. Thanks were expressed to: Ian West, whose building expertise the Society could not do without; Jeremy Harte for the support the museum gives; Steve Nelson for his report on Tolworth Court Farm, copies still available at a cost of £5. NC was congratulated on winning the SyAS Margary Award for her display on Late Iron Age-Roman continuity in Ewell.

Adoption of the annual report was proposed by Frank Pemberton, seconded by Jeremy Harte and accepted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's report

Jane Pedler reported that this year has been fairly straightforward and had provided a copy of the accounts which have once again been examined by Rod Clarke to whom she expressed many thanks. JP had a full copy of the accounts available for anyone to see which show the Society has a clean bill of financial health.

Doreen Tilbury had once again provided timely and detailed subscription information. Many now pay subscriptions by Standing Order or Internet Transfer which is very efficient and cost effective for both parties and means fewer trips to Epsom with bundles of cheques! If anyone else wishes to adopt either of these methods for future payments JP had some slips available with the necessary bank details on them. She reminded members to put their surname on the payment as a reference. The slip should be e-mailed or posted to the Membership Secretary so she is aware of the renewal. The Society is also very grateful to those members who add donations on to their subscriptions. Unfortunately a Direct Debit option is not available because of the onerous obligations and systems required by the bank.

(Bank Details: HSBC Epsom, Sort Code 40-20-28, Account no 54027379. Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society – EEHAS will do!)

The annual report explains how subscription income relates to membership numbers.

The Gift Aid receipt of £148.72 was for income collected in 2018. Gift Aid for 2019 was claimed in January 2020 and amounted to £153.70 – a slight rise! It is worth again flagging up the value of this to the Society if members are able to do it!

The balance sheet shows that subscription and donation income is slightly down on 2018, and also sales of publications and meeting receipts (mainly visitors), resulting in an overall income loss year in the year of around £200. Sadly expenditure was also up slightly mainly due to the publication of the occasional paper "Wartime in a Surrey Town", written by Trevor White. However we did end up with a small surplus which is good news.

The Christmas party made a modest profit once again 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.

Members will note there are no figures for the CME account this year. As it is a separate entity from the society accounts, plus there has been no movement in the account this year, it has been omitted to avoid confusion.

JP then invited questions. A question was asked about gift aid and whether it had to be renewed annually. JP said the declaration continues unless the donor no longer pays tax, in which case it is their responsibility to inform Jane about the change. Another question was asked about the CME accounts. NC replied that it was not formally an EEHAS project but that the account was added under EEHAS for practical reasons. There is more than £2000 in the account for post-excavation reports etc. and SyAS still hold a further £5000 for more reports, digitisation and publishing the report if necessary.

Adoption of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Frank Pemberton, seconded by Mike

Teasdale and accepted unanimously.

6. Election of Officers

The following were proposed by David Hartley, seconded by Martin Upward and elected en bloc:

President Jonathan Cotton

Vice-Presidents Stephen Nelson,

Secretary Nikki Cowlard

Treasurer Jane Pedler

Committee Members Rosemary Burleigh, Ian West

The appointment of the **Independent examiner** Rod Clarke was elected unanimously.

7. Open Forum

Jean Cobbold suggested a visit to Butser Iron Age Farm. NC replied that if a visit coordinator could be found this would be a good idea. Jon recommended the London Mithraeum at the Bloomberg centre if members were in London. Frank Pemberton offered to man a stall for Herald of Spring on 7th March to raise the profile of the Society. This was welcomed and NC agreed to leave the Margary Award display at BH to be used on the day. David Hartley asked whether there were any developments on Hatch Furlong. In response Jon said that he and NC were putting together a plan for pottery cataloguing. The post-excavation proposal was completed and disseminated in 2019. FP offered to look at the special finds.

8. Any other business

There was no other business

9. Close of Meeting - the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

NC 9.3.2020