



NEWSLETTER

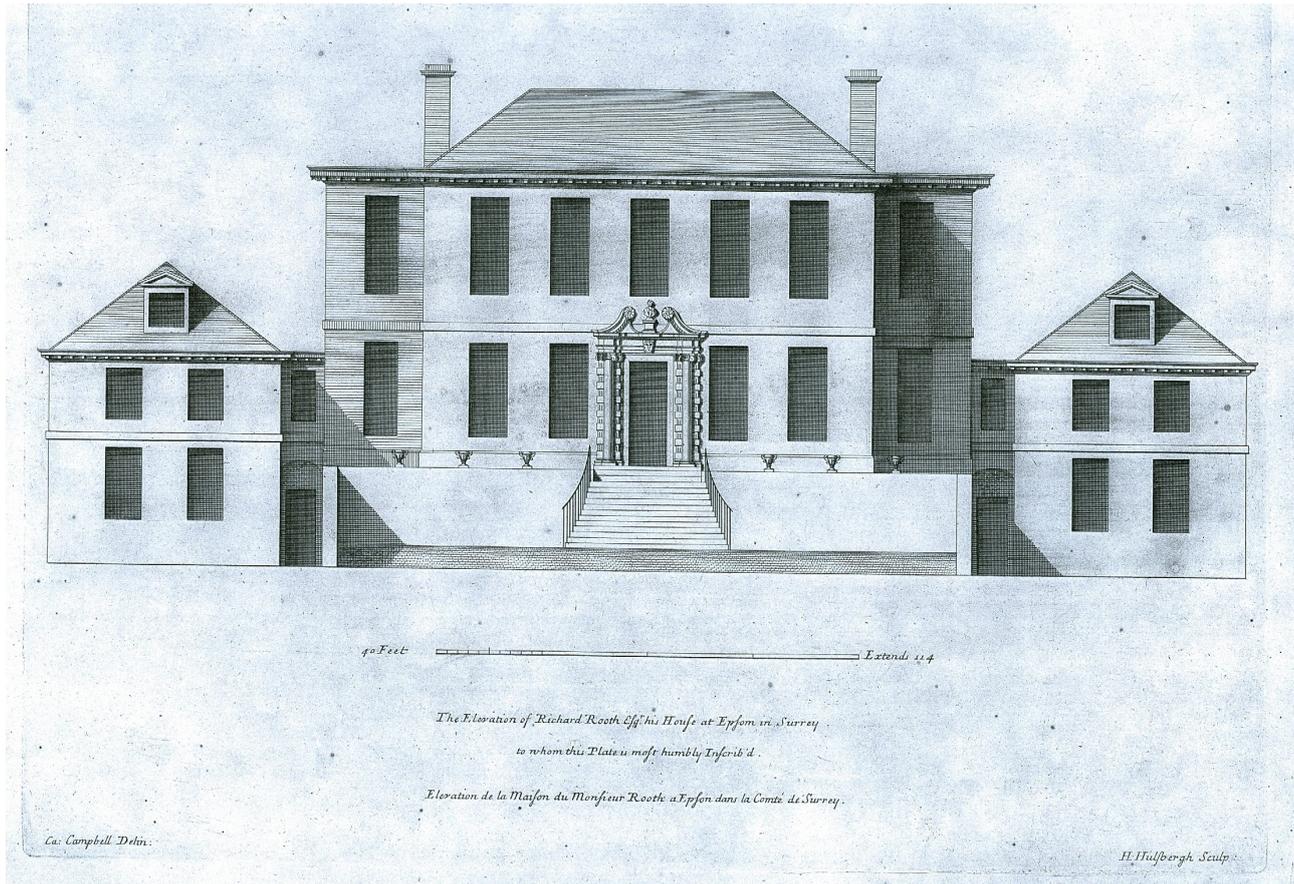
2015, Issue 3

June 2015

<p>We welcome as a new member</p> <p>Jessica Hodge</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman's Notes</p> <p>Summer is now here and this time last year we were thinking about excavation in Church Meadow. Work on site on this very successful project finished last year, to Nikki's relief, but the post excavation work continues. Following the new plans for use of the meadow by Ewell Castle School, we were expecting to have to monitor the groundworks for laying it out as a sports field. However, negotiations are still underway so it is uncertain when this will happen.</p> <p>Meanwhile even larger scale excavation is currently underway, by a professional unit, on the NESCOLT site due for development next to the Bypass between the Cheam and Reigate Roads. We have a brief note on its progress in this issue.</p> <p>We recently advised the new owners of the British Legion Club in West Hill, Epsom on their development plans for the historic building and provided a Heritage Statement. It seems a shame that the Epsom branch of the Legion has had to close, apparently due to lack of support, and leave this building which it had run since the early 1920s.</p> <p>Also, we need offers of speakers for the August Members Evening. Anyone who can give a short talk 15-20 mins, please let Nikki know.</p>
<p>Inside this issue:</p> <p><i>Mr Rooth's House in Epsom</i> by Ian West 2</p> <p><i>April Meeting, Past Crimes</i> by Julie Wileman 4</p> <p><i>May Meeting, Ancient Turkey</i> by Jeff Cousins 5</p> <p><i>NESCOLT field development</i> 6</p> <p><i>Proposed visit to Coombe Conduit House, Kingston</i> 7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture Diary</p> <p>July 1st The History of Worcester Park, Old Malden & Cheam by David Rymill</p> <p>August 6th Members evening</p> <p>September 3rd 100 years of world class aircraft designed and built in Kingston by David Hassard</p> <p>Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell KT17 2BB</p> <p>Doors open 7.45 for 8pm start. Members free, visitors £4, includes refreshments</p>

MR ROTH'S HOUSE IN EPSOM

IAN WEST



The property acquired by Richard Rooth was stated in the 1664 hearth tax returns as having 8 chimneys but unoccupied. On 29th September 1664 the heirs of James Ireland sold the “capital message” and about 100 acres of land to Samuel Starling for £450. In October 1715 the descendants of Samuel Starling sold the house and some of the land to Richard Rooth Esq who built a new house.

In Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus II*, published in 1717, plans and an elevation of *Richard Rooth Esq, his house at Epsom in Surrey* were included. Although a well proportioned house it was not large and was described as being “most conveniently laid out and well finished”. Whilst similar eaves cornices can be seen on buildings in Epsom (eg The Assembly Rooms and 18 Church Street) it had become fashionable following the London Building Acts of the early 18 century, for parapets to enclose the roof by this date. The house was entered from a raised terrace reached by 7 steps up from the front drive. On each side of the main building were linked pavilions, one with a stable for 7 horses and the other having domestic offices. This arrangement was often adopted in fashionable houses of the 18 century. At Woodcote Hall (by the BP garage at the junction of Dorking Road and South Street) the stables and domestic offices were linked to the main house by curved walls forming a courtyard similar to Woodcote Park. Both these examples date from the middle of the century.

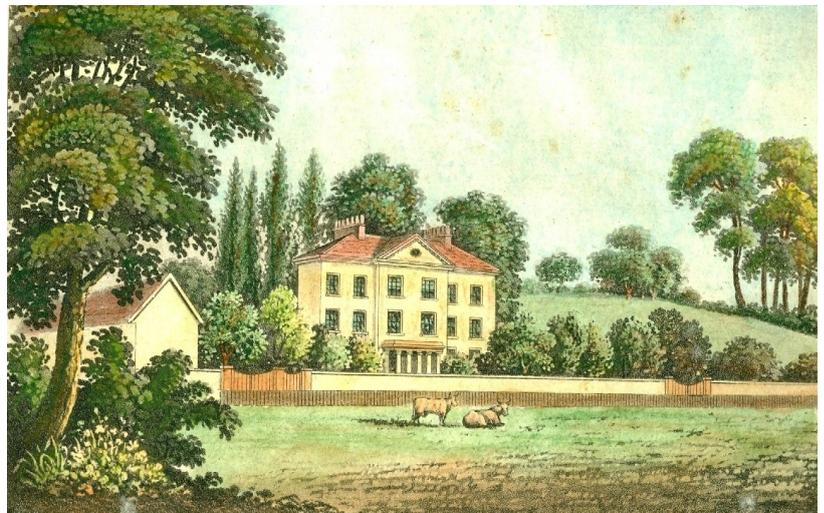
On the main floor of the central block were two reception rooms (the Dining Room at the rear with steps into the garden), one bedroom and a Hall with two stairways that occupied over one quarter of the floor plan. The floor above had 3 bedrooms. Each of the main rooms

had a closet leading off. The house and grounds are described in detail by Celia Fiennes. Although it is often stated that her travels ceased about 1712 she must have visited Epsom after c1716 in order to have seen Mr Rooth's house. In the later edition of John Toland's *Letter to Eudoxa*, reference is made to some of the larger properties in Epsom including "Sir John Wood's house on Clay-hill, Sir Edward Northey's on Woodcote Green and Mr Rooth's in New-inn-lane, whose canal on top of a hill with soft walks on both sides and green mounts at each end are very delightful". Celia Fiennes states that there were ice houses under both of the "green mounts" but there is only evidence for one ice house at the east end, (see NAS Newsletter 1995 No 5 for the note on this one by Richard Watson).

On Richard Rooth's death in 1726 the property was inherited by his daughter Elizabeth, wife of Henry Cliffe, who let the house to Joseph Thompson Esq (see below) and was later sold, in 1736, to Baron Anthonio Lopes Suasso, a Jewish merchant with connections in The Hague and who had since 1726 been living at the Cedars in Church Street. The sale price was £2,100 and the property described as "All that new built brick messuage with the stables, coach houses, outhouses and buildings, courtyard and garden and appurtenances thereunto belonging..." In 1757 the property was sold for £3000 to Samuel Sharp, citizen & surgeon of London. By 1819 the property was owned by Sir James Alexander who had occupied the house since at least 1816 and he probably built the property now known as "Clock House" shortly after acquiring the site. Following Sir James Alexander's death in 1830 the property became occupied by Thomas Whitmore and in 1832 is called "The Elms.

In 1731 Joseph Thompson Esq purchased the Little Park of Nonsuch from Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of Grafton the grandson of Barbara Villiers. Joseph Thompson then built himself a new house where the "Mansion House" now stands. He must have occupied his new house before 1736 when Mr Rooth's house was sold to Baron Suasso.

A future article is in preparation concerning Joseph Thompson's new house and the Mansion House in Nonsuch Park.



The Seat of Sir James Alexander

References are from

Residential Copyholds of Epsom by Hans Lehmann 1987

The Miscellaneous Works of Mr John Toland 1747

The Journeys of Celia Fiennes Ed Christopher Morris 1988

April Meeting – Past Crimes – Archaeological and Historical Evidence for Crime and Punishment – Julie Wileman Isobel Cross

Julie Wileman has written a book about past crimes and in this talk selected examples related specifically to Surrey.

Executed bodies are often found by archaeologists. In the 1920s for example several hundred men, hands tied behind their backs were found near Guildford. They are thought to be the soldiers of Alfred Aetheling, brother of Edward the Confessor, who was betrayed by Earl Godwin of Essex, and who killed – ‘decimated’ – one in ten of this army.

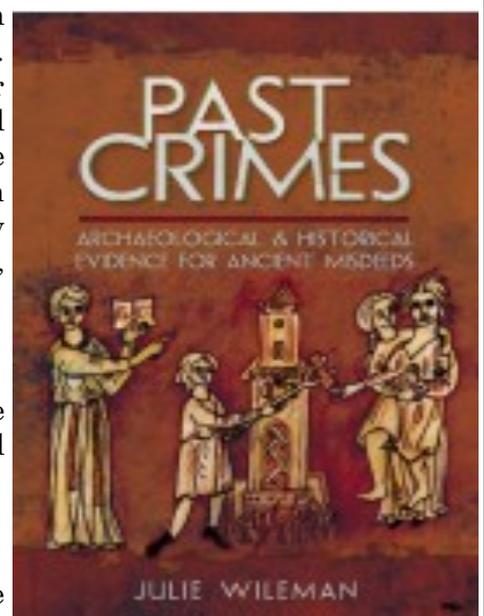
Dorking was a haven for smugglers from the 14th – 19th centuries. There was a route from the coast to London through Dorking, and, of course, then it was a rural area – plenty of remote farms and cottages to hide illegal goods. The earliest recorded medieval murder in Surrey took place in Dorking, and there were smaller crimes too, like the 1444 case of Matilda Symonds , prosecuted for cheating her customers.

Reverend gentlemen were not immune from breaking the law, such as Robert Cole who, with his wife, was accused of barratry, the case coming up in Epsom. In legal terms this can mean several things, but here it meant stirring up trouble amongst the neighbours. However, from medieval times, many such were given ‘benefit of clergy’ which meant they could not lose their property, and basically they got away with it. Lay people found they could do this if they could read – once a skill reserved for the ordained. In the early 17th century Robert Hardinge committed crimes all over Surrey, but got off because he could read out Psalm 51. There was witchcraft in Surrey, but only five people were executed between 1560 and 1700, and there were petty crimes. In 1586 Robert Clenche stole a sheet from Thomas Blundell of Ewell and was whipped for it.

In the 17th century George Chennell, shoemaker, was murdered by his son and his accomplice William Chalcroft, in Godalming, for which the pair were hanged. It was notorious in its time, and in the 19th century interest in such cases grew. The newspapers were keen to report these things. The Morning Chronicle reported the murder of John Richardson in 1839, while he was en route from Epsom to Bletchngly. There was no proper forensic evidence in those days, only bloodstains, witness statements and so on, but in 1842 the Metropolitan Police, which then covered Surrey, set up its detective branch. There was a famous case in 1879 when Catherine Webster murdered her employer Julia Thomas, dismembered the body and masqueraded as Mrs Thomas until the neighbours became suspicious. She was hanged and her effigy exhibited in Madam Tussaud’s. In 1952 Sir David Attenborough bought property nearby and when it was being re-developed a skull was found, identified as that of Mrs Thomas.

In the 20th century there was gang warfare associated with the Derby, which went on into the 1930s, but the advent of war, and good police work ended this.

Julie’s new book is published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd at price £19.99. ISBN-10: 1473823196



May Meeting Ancient Turkey

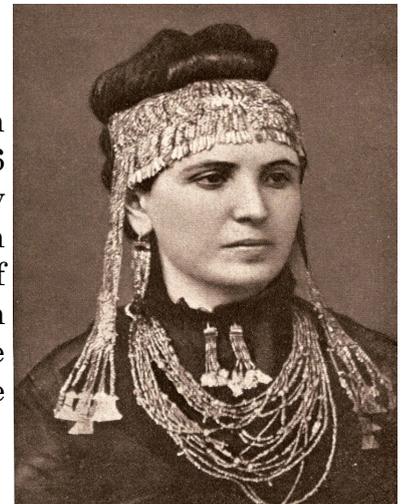
Isobel Cross

The sites and cultures described in this talk ranged in date from the Neolithic to the Late Roman and geographically from the Syrian border to Istanbul.

Catalhuyuk, said to be the world's oldest town, was settled in the Neolithic but the inhabitants were still hunter-gatherers. Their houses had no doors – they were accessed from above by ladders – and the interior walls were decorated with bulls' horns at waist height. They were also keen on leopards. An effigy of a mother goddess shows her giving birth accompanied by two of them. In the 3rd millennium BC finds from Alacahoyuk in the Ankara museum illustrate the high quality work of the early Bronze Age, such as a fine statuette of a stag.

In the Middle Bronze Age writing appeared as cuneiform, brought by Assyrian merchants before they established colonies. 12,000 tablets were found at Kultepe (ancient Kanesh). The Hittites were mentioned in sources, but they had not yet created their empire which flourished between the 18th and 13th centuries BC. The Hittites, who called themselves Hatti, formed an empire of city states. Their capital was Hattusas, now Bogazkoy. It had high quality paved streets and impressive gateways. Their rulers were ruthless and autocratic, and executed their dissidents.

We now come to Troy. The siege and fall of Troy was sometime in the 13th century BC, in archaeological terms during either Troy 6 or Troy 7. (Troy 1 is dated to the early 3rd millennium BC). Troy was excavated by the famous German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann. He found gold jewellery – there is a photograph of his wife wearing it – which he called 'Priam's Treasure' though in fact it was actually made 1000 years before the siege. For the tourists there is now a wooden horse (used in the film) in the nearby town of Canakale, and another at Troy itself.



The Hittite empire slowly declined – possibly due to political disintegration and/or the activities of the Sea Peoples. There were various neo-Hittite people and cultures such as the Luwians who came from South-west Turkey, and who followed Hittite customs and religion including having a similar interest in weather gods. By 700 BC the Assyrians were in the ascendant.

Legendary names from ancient times include the Phrygian King Midas, whose capital was Gordian, where Alexander cut the Gordian knot in the 4th century BC. Afterwards the Romans came and the Byzantines. Later Constantine changed the name Byzantium to Constantinople, which lasted into the 20th century. Now it is Istanbul, where you can see Justinian's Hagia Sophia, once the largest cathedral in the world, then a mosque, now a museum. There were enormous underground cisterns in the city, the biggest having 236 ecclesiastical style columns. In 1453 the Turks conquered Constantinople and established themselves in the country named after them.

NESCOT FIELDS EWELL - ARCHAEOLOGY

Steve Nelson

Following the evaluation trenches excavated by Oxford Archaeology last year on this 5.5 hectare site, Pre-Construct Archaeology have been carrying out large scale area excavation. Since the beginning of March they have opened three huge areas.

As was seen in the initial work, the geology of the site is basically upper chalk with a variable capping of Reading Beds/Thanet Sands drift, over an area of shallow coombe running E/W between the higher ground of the Cheam Road & Reigate Road. The subsoil is complicated by depressions and solution hollows in the chalk filled with the later deposits to confuse archaeological features.

So far PCA have identified a number of features including shallow ditches and deep pits of, as yet, unknown purpose. One such pit in the SW of the site is over 10m wide at the top narrowing to a shaft of c 3m width extending vertically down. Some 4m of this feature have been excavated and auguring has indicated that it has an overall depth of at least 9m. Pottery and coins indicate the fill is of Roman date and there were parts of horse skeleton in the upper fills. The dilemma is over whether this is a natural solution hole modified and reused in Roman times.



The NE of the site (Area 2) is the largest open area and contains many ditches, pits (one being a possible grain storage pit (similar to some excavated on the King William IV site) and a series of oval, quarry like features on a curving line. The fills of these so far excavated have contained sparse amounts of LIA/ear Roman pottery and animal bone and significantly a number of human infant burials.

This work has shown that only large scale open area excavation stands any chance of identifying and interpreting these disparate features over an extensive prehistoric and Roman landscape. Even then, sorting the geological from the archaeological is not easy! It also begs the question of the nature of the environment in this area of Ewell in late IA and Roman times. Was it still wooded or open cultivated downland? If the deep features were utilising essentially geological deposits (ie produced by late glacial solution action) how did the early inhabitants know they were there?



Visit to Coombe Conduit House, Kingston

In June last year David Kennedy told us about Coombe Conduit House, the waterworks built to take water to Hampton Court Palace, and this was described in the September 2014 newsletter. A group visit has been arranged for us to see it this year at 2pm on Sunday, 19 July, when a volunteer will be available to guide us round.

The site is in Coombe Lane West and parking in side streets is possible, but the best option is to go by public transport. I am going to Kingston on the 406 bus and then on bus number 57 from the Fairfield bus station. Alternatively, you can go to Norbiton station by changing at Raynes Park and taking the 57 bus from the Galsworthy Road stop. You get off at the Coombe Hill School stop, and walk back a little way. The site is almost opposite the school. It is quite a long walk up hill from Norbiton station.

No money in advance is needed but a donation after the tour would be appreciated by the volunteers. We need to know the numbers, so if you are coming please let me know by 19 June.

Isobel Cross 01372-722074 isobelcross@statacom.net

Excavations in St Mary's Churchyard Ewell 1974-75

We are pleased to announce the publication, as a Special Paper on Archaeology, of Frank Pemberton's report on the 1974-75 excavation at the east end of Church Meadow. This work was just to the NW of the site Frank excavated in 1971 (published in SyAC LXIX, 1973) and complements the findings there at this furthest end of the churchyard now covered with graves. Copies of this A4 booklet, price £3, will be available at Society meetings.

Any offers

Elizabeth Bennett our longstanding member and regular attendee of the monthly meetings is finding the journey home to Cheam increasingly difficult. The 293 bus to Ewell is all right but not so easy later at night. She wonders if there is anyone else going to North Cheam or south east Worcester Park and could give a lift? Her phone number is 020 87153564 (mob 07580314431).

LECTURE PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

Finally, we make yet a further plea for someone to volunteer their services to help out with this crucial role. The monthly meetings are the mainstay of the Society and appreciated by a core of members but need someone with the time to ensure speakers are booked in advance. With the AGM, Members Evening and the Christmas social we need 9 slots to be filled. Suggestions come from many sources so it is just following these up and keeping tabs on the programme.

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

Founded 1960 Registered Charity No.259221

Useful contact details

To contact any of the committee please e-mail info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk

President: Jon Cotton MA, FSA

Chairman: Steve Nelson

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

e-mail info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Treasurer: Jane Pedler

Archaeology Officer: Frank Pemberton

Conservation Officer: Nikki Cowlard (see details above)

Membership Secretary: Doreen Tilbury

Programme Secretary: Vacant

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

Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Secretary by 20 August 2015

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 June
www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk