

**EPSOM & EWELL HISTORY  
& ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY**



**THE FIRST 50 YEARS  
1960-2010**



**50 YEARS OF**  
**EPSOM & EWELL**  
**HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY**  
**1960 – 2010**

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**FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT  
JONATHAN COTTON, M.A., F.S.A.**

It has been a busy ten years since the Society's fortieth anniversary in 2000. The Society's name change (from the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, hereafter NAS, to Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society, hereafter EEHAS), while not universally popular, nevertheless now better defines both the area and breadth of our activities. The History side is well catered for, through our ever-popular lectures, through our Occasional Papers, and through our close links with the Local Studies enquiry desk in Bourne Hall Library. Equally important is the casework and conservation lobbying that goes on behind the scenes. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has been persuaded over a number of matters of local concern as a result, though the debacle surrounding the sudden demolition of the former granary building adjacent to 24 High Street shows that nothing can be taken for granted.

The Society's commitment to Archaeology has been re-doubled of late too, with at least three major programmes of work in hand. The first of these comprises the publication of backlog sites excavated in the 1960s and 1970s. Reports on the Ewell Grove and Grove Cottage sites have been submitted to the Hon.Editors of the Surrey Archaeological Society's *Collections*, and considerable progress has been made on the reports of the excavations conducted in the area of St.Mary's Churchyard and the adjacent Church Meadow. The second comprises the Ewell Hinterland Project: here EEHAS is working in conjunction with the Surrey Roman Studies Group to explore the late Iron Age and Romano-British landscape around the Ewell settlement.

This concept of collaboration has come to even fuller fruition through the third major programme: a four-year archaeological evaluation of National Trust land on the south eastern outskirts of the village at Hatch Furlong. Not only did EEHAS financially 'pump-prime' the first season's work at the site, it has played an integral role in sustaining the impetus to an archaeologically satisfying conclusion. Furthermore the project has drawn in a number of influential partners, not least among them being the National Trust, Birkbeck College, University of London and the Surrey County Archaeological Unit, as well as strengthening existing ties with the Bourne Hall Museum and Surrey Archaeological Society. Further collaborative ventures of this type are surely the way forward.

Ten years ago, on the occasion of the then NAS's fortieth anniversary I drew attention to the sheer diversity of endeavour represented. As budgets are cut and belts tightened it is important that a society such as ours continues to focus on its

core values. A strong and sure commitment to History and to Archaeology is a given, and we must also strive to extend this commitment right across our locality and right across our community. EEHAS continues to be well served by its membership here and can marshal a formidable array of local knowledge across a broad spectrum of subjects: archaeology, standing buildings and local history. There can be no resting on laurels, however, We need to continue to expand our membership, and to continue to stand up for the built and buried heritage of our area. We need also to ensure that cuts in public services do not wreak irreparable damage on the ultimate repository of much of this collective local knowledge, the museum at Bourne Hall.

## **1. Introduction**

For much of the time before 2004 the Society now known as Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society was named Nonsuch Antiquarian Society. To mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that Society a booklet *40 years of Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, 1960-2000* was published. This set out the circumstances of the founding of the Society and gave information on its activities. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was also marked by a 2000 Millennium Symposium at Bourne Hall at which eminent speakers gave talks on various aspects of the history of Epsom and Ewell. It is now time to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society and as the information given to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> is still relevant, we have opted to reprint some of it and add material to cover the past ten years.

The excavation of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace in 1959 is said to have been the biggest archaeological operation in a single year carried out in this country: the whole of the foundations of the building were laid bare. The organisation of the project owed much to John Dent, Epsom & Ewell Borough Librarian, and the archaeology was directed by a young Ministry of Works archaeological consultant, Martin Biddle. Although a team of professional archaeologists was in charge of the digging, the work relied heavily on volunteers with differing degrees of experience of archaeology; some 500 must have worked on the site for varying periods, the daily attendances averaging 80. Public interest was such that there were over 60,000 visitors over a twelve week period.

The venture was highly successful: not only were the foundations of the palace discovered, but also the remains of Cuddington Church and a great quantity of artefacts such as remnants of the elaborate decorations of the palace and a wide range of table-ware, enabling a convincing picture of the life of Nonsuch to be built up. It was an enterprise remarkable for the excitement and enthusiasm that it generated and it is not surprising that many of the friendly team of local volunteers who had acted as diggers, guides, museum attendants and receptionists

should wish to keep in contact with one another when the work was completed and the trenches refilled. Proposals were made for forming an 'Association of Nonsuch Diggers', and this came into being following a public meeting on 8th February 1960, although the name was changed to 'The Nonsuch and Ewell Antiquarian Society' (NEAS) and again, in 1972, to 'Nonsuch Antiquarian Society.' The initial aims were 'to take an active part in matters of an historical and archaeological nature mainly connected with the Ewell area but extending further afield as the opportunity occurs.' The change of name in 1972 reflected the widening of the area covered to include Epsom and other adjacent places. Martin Biddle, now Professor Biddle, who had directed the excavation so successfully, became the first president of the Society.



Excavations at Nonsuch Palace, 1959  
(Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)

The further change of name in 2004 was made because it was found desirable to make clear the area covered by the Society, and because of changes in the perceived meaning of 'antiquarian', evidenced by advertisements for Zimmer frames being sent to us.

The early years of the Society were chronicled by Norman Nail in *The First Twenty-one years, 1959-80* and a record of the next fourteen years was provided by Eve Myatt-Price in *The Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, 1981-94*. The booklet, *40 Years of Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, 1960-2000*, celebrated 40 years of co-operative effort in the pursuit of archaeology and local history by presenting an overview of the achievements of the Society and, in doing so, give recognition to some of the many members, past and present, who had contributed to the work. The present booklet brings that overview up-to-date.

Charles Abdy

## **2. Archaeology**

### **2.1 Contribution to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet by Charles Abdy**

The formation of the Society came about because of archaeology, the large scale excavation of Nonsuch Palace in 1959, and since then members have organised or taken part in many archaeological excavations in the area. The two reports referred to in the introduction list 56 excavations covering a wide variety of sites and a wide range of archaeological material. Many of them have been opportunistic excavations; others have been 'rescue' digs carried out in advance of development work. A few have been investigations of sites not threatened by development where there were high expectations of increasing knowledge of the area.

The artefacts and building materials that have been found have been representative of most periods of history including Mesolithic, Roman, Saxon, medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian. As might be expected, in Ewell there has been a preponderance of Roman material, whereas in Epsom finds from Stuart and later times have been more abundant. Detailed information is given in the two earlier reports, but it will not be out of place to make a brief reference to a few of the more outstanding digs.

#### *Bourne Hall*

Extensive excavations took place in the grounds of Bourne Hall in 1962-65 following demolition of the Georgian house. Digging took place for about 40 weekends in each year under a number of directors including Cedric Yardley, David Cousins, Tex Baxter and Norman Nail. The area investigated was a rectangle of about three quarters of an acre to the south of the house where the stables had been, now under Bourne Hall car park. The large quantities of flintwork found, which included waste flakes and cores, suggested that it could have been a Mesolithic camp site. The situation above the springs would be a natural one for a camp site. Roman remains included two V-shaped ditches, lots of coarse pottery and a cremation burial of a middle-aged man. Medieval and Tudor finds included



Digging at Bourne Hall 1962  
(Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)

foundations of a house from each period. Several filled-in wells were found, and a Georgian rubbish pit that yielded a good array of broken pottery and glass.

#### *King William IV*

The most extensive excavations ever to take place in Epsom and Ewell were over the period 1967-79, largely in the garden behind the King William IV public house (now an Italian restaurant) in Ewell High Street, under a succession of directors. The work involved 26 trenches and brought to light Romano-British material from throughout the period AD 70 to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. There were fragments of buildings, and many wells and pits. There was a wide range of pottery, glass, metal and bone artefacts as well as 30 coins, a large proportion of which date from the period AD 69-275, plus a hoard of 3<sup>rd</sup> century coins in a bronze flagon.



Excavations at King William IV Public House, Ewell in 1968  
(Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)

Non-Romano-British finds included material from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages and also Saxon, medieval, Tudor, early post-medieval and modern periods.

The processing of the finds was directed by Clive Orton, Reader (now Professor) in Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London, in a series of evening classes at the Sutton College of Liberal Arts, lasting a number of years. Clive Orton also wrote a comprehensive report on the excavations that was published by Surrey Archaeology Society in Volume 84 of their *Collections* in 1997. The King William IV site was on the presumed line of Stane Street but no evidence of the road was found. There was evidence of prehistoric use of the site and Clive Orton has suggested that it had such religious significance that the Romans took Stane Street round it, rather than risking upsetting the natives.

#### *St. Mary's No. 4 Churchyard*

Excavations in 1971 in the new churchyard of St. Mary's Ewell under the direction of Frank Pemberton located Stane Street and other Roman remains that included the foundations of two buildings, together with pottery and metal objects.

Further excavations in 1974-5 located a spur road or yard adjoining Stane Street, quantities of pottery and numerous coins.

*The Church Field (St. Mary's Meadow)*

Excavations in the Church Field, Ewell in 1976-8 under Frank Pemberton revealed Stane Street and an associated flint floor and building material; also an open-air hearth, pottery and numerous coins.



St. Mary's Meadow 1977  
(Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)

*Headley Drive, Tadworth*

When graves were found during development work in 1986, Stephen Nelson, then Chairman of NAS, and Sean Khan of Bourne Hall Museum, directed excavations. In all more than 40 Saxon burials were unearthed with grave goods of the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century including knives, bronze belt fittings and an amulet of rock crystal with bronze fittings.

Given the many people who have contributed to NAS excavations it might seem invidious to refer specifically to particular people, but mention must be made of the following. Norman Nail, Chairman of the Society from 1965 to 1985, was active in directing many excavations in Epsom and Ewell and surrounding areas.

Stephen Nelson, Chairman from 1985 to 1990, directed a number of excavations and so did Dick Temple. Site records were meticulously kept by Ina Godman and Phyllis Davies. Frank Pemberton directed several major digs and is currently helping in work on processing the finds from excavations at Ewell Grove and Grove Cottage in the 1970s which continues at Bourne Hall Museum on Monday evenings with the aim of bringing the publication of Ewell excavations up to date.

It has to be said (in the year 2000) that there has been much less NAS involvement in archaeology in recent years than in the early days of the Society: this is owing to a number of factors:

1. There has been a change in the attitude to archaeology nationally, with more acceptance of the fact that excavation is a destructive process and not always the most appropriate way in which to deal with buried remains. Increasingly sophisticated scientific equipment making use of such techniques as the measurement of soil resistivity, magnetometry and ground radar enables more and more information to be obtained without digging. So unless a site is to be lost by development or other reasons, it can be best to leave it alone in the expectation that in a few years time the archaeology will be more fruitful and possibly less destructive.
2. In recent years there has been legislation requiring developers to have archaeology carried out in advance of their work on sites with archaeological potential. This has led to the setting up of professional archaeological units that compete for contracts. Work that would previously have been done by local archaeologists is now undertaken as a commercial activity by such units.
3. Although the Society has a number of members prepared to take part in excavations, for several years past there has been a shortage of qualified archaeologists willing to direct digs for the Society. Hugh Waterhouse began directing a dig for the Society in 1991, but sadly he died suddenly and has been much missed as a director as well as for his personal qualities. It was possible to do some archaeology in 1994 when Richard Watson directed the excavation of the ice house in the grounds of the former Convent of the Sacred Hearts, Epsom, as described in *Occasional Paper No.36*. Charles Abdy did some minor excavations in Glyn House Pond in 1992 as reported in *Occasional Paper No.20*.

The excavations initiated by the Society since 1960 have added greatly to knowledge of the archaeology of the local area, particularly with regard to Roman Ewell. The work was summarised in 'A Gazetteer of Romano-British Archaeological sites in Ewell' by Abdy and Berton published in Volume 84 of *Surrey Archaeological Collections* in 1997, from which it can be seen that the Society has been associated with most of the major excavations in the village carried out since 1960.

## 2.2 Update for the past 10 years, 2000-2010, by Frank Pemberton

In the period from 2000 Jon Cotton and Frank Pemberton as qualified archaeologists have led a revival of excavation projects, at Hatch Furlong, St.Mary's Churchyard and tracing the precise route of the Roman road Stane Street through Epsom and Ewell, in partnership with the Surrey Archaeological Society. An archaeological survey of Epsom and Ewell Downs to trace prehistoric and Roman farmsteads has also begun, led by Nikki Cowlard.

Excavations and watching building sites have also added to the sites in the 1997 gazetteer, with information on all sites in the Borough available at the Surrey History Centre, Woking and Bourne Hall Museum. The Society's archaeological group, led by Frank Pemberton, has been working through the evidence and finds of prehistoric and Roman settlement in the area, producing research reports. Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age sites and settlement appear to be concentrated around the springs at Bourne Hall and the banks of the Hogsmill River. Sites of these periods have produced flint tools, and a variety of handmade bowls and jars, as well as hollows used for cooking and rubbish pits/hollows.



St. Mary's Churchyard 2003 (Photo: Don Cooper)

Evidence of Iron Age farmsteads has been studied from the hinterland on the North Downs dip slope above Ewell, with a number of farms continuing to exist into the Roman period.

Arising from the recent research Roman Ewell now appears to be a rather amorphous settlement spread out about 1km along the main Roman road, Stane Street, with its route from Chichester to London, built in the late 40s AD. Sites in the St.Mary's Churchyard area show that timber buildings with cobbled yards faced onto the road from the 1<sup>st</sup> up to 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The lack of tiles suggests that the buildings were thatched as elsewhere in most Roman countryside settlements.

The analysis of finds from these roadside structures shows a wide range of pottery vessels, including kitchen wares such as Spanish olive oil amphorae, cooking and black burnished storage jars from the potteries at Farnham, St.Albans and Dorset, as well as table vessels such as flagons, drinking beakers, bowls and dishes from the potteries at Highgate, north London and St.Albans, fine colour-coated drinking beakers from Cologne and Nene Valley and the superior red Samian ware from Gaul (France) as drinking cups and a bowl decorated with mystical Roman iconography. Such an array of vessels could have been used to serve the travellers on the Roman Road. And, given that Ewell appears to be the last settlement before going onto London, the capital city, refreshment would be important, and Ewell could also have been a stopping point before travelling south towards Chichester across the Downs and Weald. The range and nature of the coins and animal bones found within the Roman settlement suggest a small scale market could have thrived up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Frank Pemberton

### **3. Local History**

For half a century, members of EEHAS have pursued the study of local history and so fulfilled one of the objectives set out in the Society's Rules, namely 'to encourage, for the public benefit, interest in matters of archaeological and *historical* importance in Epsom and Ewell.' In the early years, emphasis seems to have been given to archaeological excavations, probably because the Society was founded by those who took part in the excavation of Nonsuch Palace and wished to continue to excavate other sites in the area. However, the Society's records show that a great amount of work has also been done to bring to light many aspects of the historical importance of Epsom and Ewell.

EEHAS has fulfilled its obligation to its Rules about encouraging local historical interest in many ways. Activities have included the transcription and interpretation of historic documents relating to the Borough. This has largely been the work



Peggy Bedwell, Chairman (far left) and Eve Myatt-Price , Vice- President (far right) with the Mayor, Jean Smith (centre right) and her consort (centre left) during a mayoral visit to an EEHAS meeting on 5th October 2005



Frank Pemberton, Archaeological Officer  
Left- at Hatch Furlong 2009



Right- in Churchyard in 1970s



**Left-** Paul Eland rescuing an 18th century door case from “The Shrubby”, Epsom in 1976 (Photo: Ian West)

**Below-** Celebrations at the re-opening of the 17th century Epsom Well on Epsom Common (Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)



of the Documentary Group which was founded in 1968 by George Wignall, formerly Secretary of the Society. Barbara Abdy provides information about the Group elsewhere, referring to sources which have been investigated, analysed and recorded. The Society has also encouraged members to write about their own research into historical features in Epsom and Ewell and to publish their findings in a series of Occasional Papers, in Nonsuch Extra papers and in many interesting short reports, articles and reviews printed in the Newsletter issued five times a year. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year has seen the publication of Occasional Paper No.50, so output has averaged one per year. Foremost among authors of Occasional Papers has been Charles Abdy (former Secretary of EEHAS and present Editor of the Newsletter) who has written no less than 18 and who has also written five books: *A History of Ewell* (1992); *The Glyns of Ewell* (1994), providing biographies of the most prominent family in Ewell village during the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; *Ewell Past* (2000); *Epsom Past* (2001) and *Ewell: A Surrey Village that Became a Town* (2004).

Mention must also be made of the major work of Philip Shearman in transcribing and editing, jointly with C.A.F.Meekings, *Fitznell's Cartulary*, which led to its publication by the Surrey Record Society in 1968, the year in which he became President of EEHAS. The Cartulary is a collection of medieval deeds relating to Ewell and the surrounding area, and is an invaluable source of local history.

As to local church history, access was given, by kind permission of the Vicar of St.Mary the Virgin, Ewell Parish Church, consecrated in 1848, to the collection of church magazines and newspapers from 1878 onwards before they were deposited for safe custody in the Surrey History Centre at Woking. Supplemented by the collection in Bourne Hall library for the beginning of this period, they provided valuable information about the church and the people who made up the congregation and were an illuminating source of material for the Guide to St.Mary's which I published in 1998 to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the church. Ten years later, a supplement was added to the Guide about two features created in St.Mary's since the Guide was published: the Millennium-Jubilee window in the wall of the south aisle, and the set of the Stations of the Cross and Resurrection mounted on the front of the gallery.

Maurice Exwood produced the book entitled *Burials and Their Monuments in the Old Churchyard of Ewell in Surrey* (1997) as well as numerous reports on his work in connection with St.Mary's churchyard and the Old Tower, also by reference to original records. Other contributors, too many to name, have written on a variety of topics for EEHAS newsletters. Originally intended for members' enlightenment, they are available for all who want to read and learn about the history of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell.

Further opportunities are provided by the lectures and visits that Peggy Bedwell describes elsewhere.

There has always been a close and productive working relationship between Bourne Hall Museum Curators and EEHAS, and the Museum is a corporate member of the Society. Several members have worked as volunteers in the Museum office, assisting in recording procedures and the mounting of exhibitions from which the general public, especially schoolchildren, can learn about the Borough. They have also worked as volunteers in the Museum Shop. Isobel Cross, EEHAS Committee member, is one of a team running an independent shop selling books and other items. This is situated immediately inside the entrance to Bourne Hall at the foot of the stairs from the concourse area to the gallery. From time to time, they are able, from the proceeds of sales, to give donations to the Museum.

EEHAS is always ready to encourage people, whether or not they have academic qualifications in History or experience in working on local records, to research and write about aspects of local history. An Editorial Sub-Committee appointed to maintain standards in EEHAS publications is willing to provide advice to would-be authors who are, in any case asked to consult the Secretary of EEHAS before starting work, so that a check can be made that no one else is working on the same subject.

Eve Myatt-Price

#### **4. Documentary Group**

##### **4.1 Contribution to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet by Mabel Dexter**

The group came into being over thirty years ago, but had a predecessor in the group of volunteers recruited by John Dent, the Borough Librarian at the time, to process the Glyn Papers which he had acquired for the Borough.

In 1968 George Wignall planned to set up six research groups to cover all aspects of Ewell history and archaeology. One of these was the documentary group, its aim being to collect and record all reference to Ewell in printed or written sources. It was a good time to start, as local history studies were fashionable. Population studies attracted much attention, and the group's first task was to make a card index of the parish registers, and analyse the information for the Cambridge group for the study of population, which was much interested in the correlation of the dates of various farming activities (ploughing, sowing, haymaking, harvest) and the incidence of births in a rural parish. However, our records were deemed to be inadequate, so no more was heard of this.

Meanwhile George had supplied a comprehensive list of sources, especially the material at Surrey Record Office. A band of faithful workers spent many hours in the search room there, with sympathetic support from the staff, extracting information from papers relating to the Calverleys and the Gadesdens, the successive owners of Ewell Castle. Prominent among these workers was Phyllis Davies. She also transcribed, single-handed, three of the census returns for the parish of Ewell, all the available 19<sup>th</sup> century rate books and much more. Altogether she filled four large volumes with invaluable information, and in addition she was the leader and inspiration for the working group which for many years met weekly at her home to compile a card index of the census information and analyse it to build up a picture of 19<sup>th</sup> century Ewell. In addition, she handled enquiries from correspondents trying to trace their family history, thereby gathering items of information about past residents. She was also active in the group which recorded the gravestone inscriptions in the new St.Mary's churchyard, as a supplement to the old churchyard record which had been compiled shortly after World War II by a lady who has not, so far, been identified.

The information gathered and studied by the group provided material for many of the displays in the memorable exhibition '*History on Your Doorstep*' at Bourne Hall in 1982. Some of the material has since been published in the Society's series of Occasional Papers. Since then more census material has become available and the card index now covers the years 1841-1891 not only for Ewell but also for Epsom and Cuddington although in slightly less detail.

Meanwhile, the Glyn papers were not entirely neglected. For instance, Anna Glyn's letters to her family giving a lively account of her visit to the Holy Land in 1892 were painstakingly transcribed and subsequently published as Occasional Paper No. 13 (1982).

More recently a detailed study has been undertaken of the voluminous records relating to the manorial holdings of the Northey family, which give a good deal of information about the ownership of copyhold properties. Although too fragmentary to furnish a volume parallel to Dr H.L.Lehmann's work on Epsom copyholds, it adds to our knowledge of the village.

George Wignall's ambition was to write a history of Ewell, and the documentary work would have helped in this. Sadly, he died while still gathering material, but Ewell is fortunate in having another enthusiastic historian in Charles Abdy, whose work has already been published.

The aim of the documentary group now is to consolidate the information accumulated, and make it available to anyone interested in the history of the locality.

Mabel Dexter



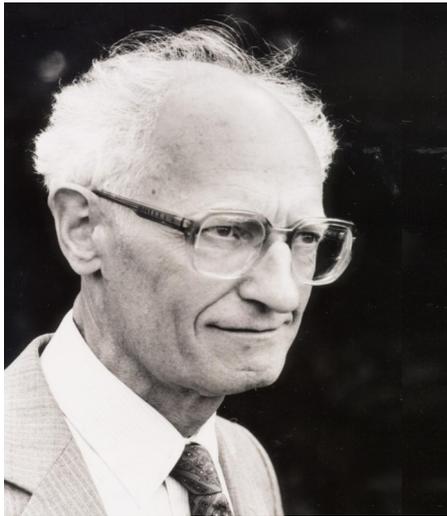
Jon Cotton,  
Current President



Rosemary Burleigh,  
Current Treasurer



Nikki Cowlard,  
Current Secretary



Charles Abdy,  
Past Secretary



Jon Cotton, Peggy Bedwell, Graham Brown and Margaret Nobbs watch the opening of a trench at Hatch Furlong



Society diggers in the rain at Hatch Furlong (Photo: Jon Cotton)

#### **4.2 Update for the past ten years, 2000 – 2010, by Barbara Abdy**

At the beginning of 2000 the Documentary Group was still meeting at Mabel Dexter's house every Monday afternoon. There was work to be done in transcribing Census returns and copying out information from official papers relating to Epsom and Ewell. In 2001 Mabel intimated that she would like to step back from being in charge of the Group and its papers. The documents took up a lot of space in her dining room. Later in that year the Surrey County Council stated that they wished to open History Centres in libraries throughout Surrey and in March 2002 the inaugural meeting of the Epsom & Ewell branch was held in the library at Bourne Hall. Several members of NAS (later EEHAS) were on the rota of volunteers to man the centre.

Also in 2002 Jean Walsh of the library agreed to allow storage and desk space for the index cards, books, files and sundry documents to be transferred from Mabel's to the back room of the library so that the Documentary Group could continue. (Mabel died later that year). Some of the work done was to benefit the library. Between 2002 and 2008 a number of projects were carried out by the remaining members of the Documentary Group – Rosemary Burleigh, Roy Hayman and myself. Among the projects were the listing of the library's Chuter Ede books, indexing the copyhold properties in Ewell, researching the state and private schools in Epsom and Ewell, researching and writing about pubs in Epsom (Occasional Paper 41) and Ewell Wills (Occasional Paper 43.)

When the Local History Centre (now the Local and Family History Centre) was set up, Peter Reed of the Centre began putting local and family history archives on to the computer which meant that information was more readily available to the public who visited the Centre. It also meant that our handwritten records were largely superfluous.

At the end of 2008 a Health and Safety Inspector decreed that the glass-fronted bookcases lining the corridor at the rear of the library, which contained much of the library's own important local history archives, were a fire hazard (notwithstanding that they had been installed when the library was built) and that the stack of index cards in the EEHAS work area was unstable and therefore a safety hazard. The space allotted to the Documentary Group was therefore reduced to allow the library's own documents to be housed. Fortunately, Jeremy Harte, the Museum Curator, agreed to store all our records in the Museum store.

The Documentary Group was disbanded in 2009 but individual members of EEHAS still consult the papers in the Museum in order to research and write further Occasional Papers, Extras and articles for Newsletters.

Barbara Abdy

## 5. Conservation

One of the objects of the Society, as set out in the Rules, is to use its influence to achieve the preservation of objects, buildings and sites of archaeological and/or historical importance within the area that it covers. This involves the study of local planning applications to assess their effect on the conservation of historical buildings and other environmental features, and possibly making comments and presentations at public enquiries. These activities under the general heading 'conservation', have always been considered an important function of the Society.

The report *The First Twenty One Years*, listed 60 conservation matters on which the Society made representations during the period 1959 to 1980 while the corresponding figure for 1981 to 1994 was 24. Between 1994 and 2000 more than 30 planning issues were dealt with, some of the most significant being the Goodship and Saunders site in Ewell Village, extensions at Woodcote Park, the Stoneleigh Inn and Waterloo House. In the last decade the pressure on our historic buildings and conservation areas has not abated and more than 40 separate sites have required comment including The Durdans, 13-15 High Street and the Cheam Motors site, Ewell.

For some years Stuart Senior, a one-time town planner, kept an eye on planning applications and gave the Committee expert advice on any action required. In 1995 Stuart's daughter, Hilary, took over this work: being a trained architect she was able to make informed comments on building plans and sometimes, as in the case of Waterloo House, put forward drawings of constructions that would be more acceptable. When Hilary retired from the Committee in 1999, Bill Gibbs began to monitor planning applications and was succeeded by Charles Abdy in 2004. Nikki Cowland and Lesley Hays took over the role in 2006.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council does not have a good record for protecting historic buildings. Its inability to prevent the demolition of Pitt Place, Epsom in 1967 despite two Building Preservation Orders is described in *The Buildings of England* as scandalous. Two grievous losses in Ewell in the 1960s were Nuttall's shop and Carpenter's Bakery, both Tudor buildings. In 2005 the demolition of the Granary wall at 24 High Street, Ewell had an impact on the street scene of the village. More recently the Council has been more pro-active in working with EE-HAS and other local societies to highlight areas for conservation. Unfortunately, it is likely that current financial restraints will push the needs of conservation down the Council's list of priorities and increase the need for public vigilance.

NAS played a major role in advising on the comprehensive relisting of buildings that led to the Department of the Environment's list of 1974, which has made it

more difficult to ignore the need to protect old buildings. Experience, however, has shown how difficult it is to prevent the demolition or destructive redevelopment of even listed buildings. We live in an age where profit has top priority: once a developer has set his eyes on a property that can make money for him by being replaced or reconstructed he is not easily deterred. It is not difficult to persuade the Council that anything is better than having a building standing empty or derelict.

The Society's conservative campaigns have not always been successful. However, much has been achieved in getting planning applications modified to remove their most objectionable features. Although we could never agree that the best use that could be found for Waterloo House, the oldest surviving spa assembly rooms in the country, was to turn it into a pub called The Rat and Parrot and ignore the original layout of the two assembly rooms, our criticisms, and those of English Heritage, Epsom Protection Society and other bodies did lead to some improvement in the plans before the developer pulled out of the deal. The building is now known by its original name of The Assembly Rooms. More recently EEHAS joined the fight to prevent the conversion of the Grade II listed indoor riding school at the Durdans into offices: currently negotiations are underway to lease the site to a racing trainer, bringing the school and stables back into equine use. So, all has not been in vain, and we shall continue to 'fight the good fight'.

We are always on the lookout for buildings of sufficient merit to be listed, or added to the Register of Buildings of Local Interest. In 1994 we were able to have the ice house in the grounds of the former Convent of the Sacred Hearts in Epsom listed Grade II and were instrumental in having four buildings added to the Register in February 2000.

If an interesting building is in danger of demolition, it is important to record details of its construction before it disappears. Recording can be useful also in respect of monitoring changes in the appearance of a building, or as a means of study of a special feature or building type. This was a particular useful activity in the early days of the Society, when so many historic buildings were under threat, and much good work was done under the direction of Ian West in association with the Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group. A prominent member of the DBRG was Joan Harding, at one time a Vice-President of NAS. Photographs of the interiors of buildings under threat have been taken by Bill Gibbs and Charles Abdy and currently a project is underway to photographically record building frontages starting with the High Street areas of Epsom and Ewell.

Charles Abdy and Nikki Cowlard



Examination of the Ice- well of the Ice House in the grounds of the former Convent of the Sacred Hearts, Epsom, 1994

(Photo: Bourne Hall Museum archive)

## **6. Lectures and Visits**

### **6.1 Contribution to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet by Peggy Bedwell**

When I joined the Society in 1968, monthly meetings, arranged by Ina Godman, were held in Pit house with an average attendance of between 15 and 20 members. After Pit House was closed we tried other local halls but we needed a settled venue. In 1971 having been co-opted to the committee I found myself taking over the job of arranging speakers and Ina continued being the projectionist. We were delighted to find a regular booking at Glyn Hall where conditions were a little Spartan but we were content. But by 1976 attendances had grown until we were splitting at the seams. I remember an occasion when we had to feed in extra chairs from the outside store through a side window because the back of the hall was so crowded. So we had to find a larger hall. Fortunately we found a regular booking at St.Mary's Hall where we have been with one or two hitches ever since. The convenience of this hall suits us very well. Long may it continue. In about 1984 Charles Abdy took over the projector and he has introduced some refinements to our equipment such as the microphone and the 'next slide' light.

Meetings have covered all kinds of subjects connected with archaeology and local history including churches, castles, bridges, windmills, pottery of all ages, geology, Roman town, Saxon towns, place names, historical sites abroad and aerial photography. Speakers have always turned up on time, except on one memorable occasion when we sat and waited in vain, until Dr Frank Greenaway came from his seat and offered an impromptu talk. So what might have been a disaster turned into a successful evening with a lively discussion on the study of antiquities. Not only that, but when it came to finding our next president we knew where to look.

We have been fortunate in having members who volunteer talks. Our Secretary, Charles Abdy, who makes such excellent slides, is always travelling around here and abroad collecting interesting material. Combining archaeology, geology and history, Enid and Richard Butler contribute regularly to our programme. Ian West continues to explain the intricacies of old buildings and is a willing stopgap in case of emergencies. Richard Watson tells us about archaeology in this country and abroad. Our president Jon Cotton has contributed talks on archaeology. We continue to be grateful to these stalwarts and others who give freely of their time and trouble. This makes us able to pay those who require a fee and still keep the subscription low, or to offer exchange lectures with local societies.

A regular feature in recent years has been our Members' Evening, usually in August, when we invite anybody to volunteer short items on any subject of general interest, with or without slides. We have a few regulars on these evenings, Eve Myatt-Price, Richard Butler, Richard Watson, Jeff Cousins, whom we appreciate, but we welcome any contributions, however short.

In 1998 we contributed to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of St.Mary's Church, Ewell when our July and August meetings were held in the church. Charles Abdy talked about the Victorian churches of Surrey, including St.Mary's and in August our members' meeting covered subjects connected with the church such as the windows, the bells, the old gravestones and a fascinating talk about the organ by the vicar which included a visit to the organ loft.

Visits to places of historical and archaeological interest have also formed part of our programme – sometimes as a follow up to a talk, sometimes to other places. Typical examples of such visits are outings to St.Albans (town, abbey and Roman remains at Verulamium) Royal Holloway College and Horsley Towers. As the NAS is affiliated to the Surrey Archaeological Society, NAS members may join their visits also. At one time, many of these visits were organised by our member, the late Jean West. Other outings have taken the form of walks around interesting parts of Epsom and Ewell and visits to historic buildings, frequently led by Ian West.

Accounts of our meetings and visits have regularly appeared in our newsletters, at one time written by Jean West, and recently by Isobel Cross and others and these make an interesting record for non-attenders as well as for those who were actually there.

The Society has held exhibitions in Bourne Hall from time to time, notably 'Our Local Past' in 1976 and 'History on your Doorstep' in 1982; and we contributed largely to the 'Nonsuch Festival Symposium' in 1988 arranged principally by Maurice Exwood to commemorate the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of Nonsuch Palace. On 13<sup>th</sup> May 2000 we held a daylong 'Millennium Symposium' at Bourne Hall to cover 2000 years (and more) of the history of Epsom and Ewell. This attracted more than 200 people and was a very successful event.

## **6.2 Update for the past ten years, 2000 – 2010, by Peggy Bedwell**

During the last ten years we have been fortunate in being able to continue our meetings in St.Mary's Church Hall. It is the right size and has all the facilities we need.

As a result of a generous bequest by the late Doug West, and with the help of the cognoscenti, Lesley Hays and Martin Upward, in 2009 we acquired a digital projector. This has demanded some knowhow, but it is now working well. We can still use the slide projector when required. Early in this period we began to benefit from a sound system installation donated to the church hall by the late Maurice Exwood. Meetings have included a variety of subjects – local industries, castles, the Hanseatic League, Hanoverians, various aspects of the postal service, archaeological sites abroad, medieval markets, timber framed buildings etc, together with our presidential update on Hatch Furlong.

There have been walks around Ewell, led by Ian West, a visit to the water tower on the hospitals site and an excursion to the open Air Museum at Singleton. There has also been a visit to Fulham Palace and visits to Bletchley Park and the Roman Fishbourne Palace ably organised by Chris and Gay Harris.

Peggy Bedwell

## **7. Publications**

It has always been an objective of the Society to publish the results of its investigations into archaeology and local history, and this has led to the issue of several classes of publication. In 1998 an editorial panel consisting of Charles Abdy, Graham Brown and Eve Myatt-Price was set up to ensure that the Society's publications maintained consistent standards. Eve Myatt-Price soon stood down and was replaced by Isobel Cross. However, Eve attended meetings of the panel in place of Charles Abdy when publications he had written were being dealt with. Graham Brown resigned in 2009 and was replaced by Nikki Cowlard.

### *Newsletters*

When the first Newsletter appeared in June 1960 in foolscap format the hope was expressed that it would become a quarterly feature of the Society. There were editions in September and December of that year, but there then seems to have been a gap until a News Bulletin was issued in June 1962.

The September 1960 Newsletter is of particular interest, because attached to it was a proposal to form study groups. There was no lack of ambition: groups were proposed for archaeology, place and road names, botany and agriculture, geology, industries, sociology, genealogy, bibliography, prints and photographs, weather records and maps. Sadly, there were insufficient enthusiasts around to get these groups off the ground, although a group for documentary studies was formed.

The June 1962 News Bulletin was followed by others at irregular intervals, usually two or three a year, mostly quarto size, but some A4 and some foolscap. Newsletters re-appeared in July 1967 and have been issued in an uninterrupted series since then, usually four or five a year, although there were sometimes six. The format was sometimes A4, sometimes foolscap and on one occasion in 1975, green foolscap. Since 1989 there have been consistently five editions a year, all A4 format.

A few Bulletins, one a year until 1971, were published after the Newsletters were established; they dealt with more substantial pieces of work at a greater length than was possible in a Newsletter. The Bulletins were eventually replaced by Occasional Papers.

Newsletters have always contained short articles on archaeology and local history as well as news of other Society activities. Presentation was considerably improved in February 1994 when Barbara Abdy started doing the typing on her word-processor and Heather Williams did the duplicating. There were further improvements in February, 1999 achieved by Graham Brown and his desktop publisher.

Since 1994 Charles Abdy has edited the Newsletter and continues to do so. Barbara Abdy continues to type the Newsletter. Most newsletters are distributed by our members to save the expense of postage. Since 1993 this distribution has been arranged by our Membership Secretary, Doreen Tilbury.

### *Occasional Papers*

Occasional Paper No. 1 was *Ewell Documentary Group Activities*. Published in

October 1972 in A5 format. No.2 *The Unnatural Father*, was quarto size, and No.3 *Trial of Joan Butts for Witchcraft, 1681*, was A5 format as have been most subsequent Occasional Papers, apart from a few for which A4 size was more convenient. However, all Occasional Papers since No.14 published in December 1983 have been A5 size, and have had a consistent cover design incorporating the Henry VIII coin logo until No. 49 when a photograph relevant to the content was introduced to improve saleability in the Museum shop which is an important outlet. For some years prior to September 2009, Graham Brown undertook the complicated task of converting the draft Occasional Papers into camera-ready A5 publications. Nikki Cowlard has now taken over this work.

Most Occasional Papers have been written by individual authors, although some have been based on information put together by members of the Documentary Group. .

To date (mid 2010) 50 Occasional Papers have been published, which represents an average of one a year, although the output has not been regular.

#### *Nonsuch Extras*

It is sometimes difficult to decide whether an article written on archaeology or local history is more appropriate for publication in a Newsletter or as an Occasional Paper: it depends on the length and the content. For this reason a new class of publication was introduced in September 1997, the Nonsuch Extra, the first title being *Recollections of Ewell* by Mrs Nora Wood. In fact, the Nonsuch Extra is particularly well suited for publication of reminiscences: they can be too long for convenient inclusion in a Newsletter, but not of sufficient substance for an Occasional Paper. So far, thirteen have been issued. They are A4 format, and intended mainly for NAS members only, although reference copies go to Bourne Hall Museum and Library, and a few are sold in the Museum Shop.

Charles Abdy

## **8. Publicity**

Before the 1990s, publicity for NAS activities was usually dealt with as required, for separate events. Among members who took part were Hazel Wynn Jones, Jean West and Rosemary Burleigh. When Isobel Cross was appointed NAS Publicity Officer, however, she developed a regular procedure which she described in the following report in 2000:

‘In the 1990s, methods of creating publicity for the Society’s activities have been developed. Master copies of posters, information leaflets and lecture programmes

for printing and distribution can now be produced on a computer using a desktop publishing program. Material is sent throughout the Surrey library system, and to the Town Hall for display on the Epsom and Ewell notice-boards. Bourne Hall Museum opened a shop in 1994. It has space for NAS posters and a stand to display leaflets. Copies of the NAS lecture programme are also displayed on the Museum notice-boards.

Access to the press has been variable at times, as local newspapers have been reorganised but reports and notices of meetings have been published. Publicity for special events, and for NAS publications has appeared both in the local *Herald* and in the Borough's *Insight*.

During the decade after the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the opportunities for publicity that we used were reduced. Surrey Libraries ceased to send our posters around through the internal system, though we continued to send them ourselves by unofficial means. The Museum shop was given a wonderful new purpose built space, but there was nowhere to put a poster. Fortunately leaflets continued to be displayed in the libraries, the Local History Centre and the Museum, and the Borough still had its notice-boards. We are listed in the What's On page of Borough *Insight* and special events can be written about it in its other pages.

Ewell and Stoneleigh together have a monthly publication called *Connection*, mainly a directory of local businesses, which also gives publicity to local voluntary groups, and Charles Abdy has regularly been writing in it about the Society and local history matters. As far as the press is concerned the newspaper formerly most willing to publish local history stories and events completely changed its content and policy and is now useless for our publicity.

This leaves the Internet as a major publicity tool and we have our own website. In this new decade EEHAS is in serious need of a computer literate publicity officer to create paper documents, to re-think their distribution, to manage the website and its associated links and to pursue other opportunities that present themselves.

Isobel Cross

## 9. Relations with other societies

The archaeology and local history of the Epsom and Ewell area need to be seen in a broader context, and this is facilitated by maintaining links with other societies in Surrey and indeed with appropriate national societies.

EEHAS is an affiliated member of Surrey Archaeological Society, Surrey Record Society, the Council for British Archaeology and CBA South East.

Some of our members belong to the Surrey Archaeological Society (SyAS) and take an active part in its affairs. Currently, our President, Jonathan Cotton, is a member of the Council and of the Excavations Committee. One of our Vice-Presidents, Eve Myatt-Price, was until recently on the Library Committee. Our chairman, Peggy Bedwell, is on the Lectures and Symposia Committee and the Secretary, Nikki Cowlard is the local SyAS Secretary for Epsom and Ewell. NAS took part in the SyAS Millennium Project relating to the historical geography of Surrey villages, as a result of which the book: *Ewell, a Surrey Village that became a Town*, was published in 2004. Peggy Bedwell is also on the SyAS Local History Committee.

Members of EEHAS who have contributed to SyAS publications include Charles Abdy, Jonathan Cotton, Nikki Cowlard, Eve Myatt-Price, Clive Orton, and Frank Pemberton. We exchange newsletters with:

Egham-by-Runnymede Historical Society  
Ewell Village Residents Association  
Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society  
Leatherhead & District Local History Society  
The Sutton & Cheam Society  
Walton & Weybridge Local History Society

Several of our members are members of Epsom Protection Society with whom there is close collaboration, particularly in planning matters.

This interchange of information is useful on several counts: it gives news of talks and other events outside our immediate area that our members can attend and can provide helpful contacts who can be consulted in relation to particular lines of research.

Charles Abdy

## 10. Officers of the Society

The successful operation of a Society such as EEHAS depends a great deal on the work of its officers, the President, Vice Presidents, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. It is of course the last three who have the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the organisation, chairing meetings, dealing with correspondence, filling in the accounts books and generally keeping the wheels in motion. There are also officers for particular sections of work, e.g. Archaeology, appointed by the Committee. The monthly public meetings are the tip of an iceberg in terms of the work involved.

The list on pages 29-30 sets out the officers since the foundation of NAS. The Society has been fortunate in the number of officers who have served for long periods, such as Norman Nail, Chairman for 19 years, after two years as Secretary, Charles Abdy, Secretary for 11 years, George Wignall, Secretary for 12 years, Stephen Nelson, Chairman for 9 years after five years as Secretary, Peggy Bedwell, Chairman for fourteen years and the current Chairman, after 11 years as Secretary. She has arranged our programme of talks for more than 35 years. Philip Shearman was President for 22 years, Stan Whiddett kept the books for 13 years and Rosemary Burleigh has been doing so for 13 years.

### OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(Information derived from Newsletters)

<i>President</i>	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Date*</i>
M.Biddle	C.F.Davidson	F.C.Johnson	F.C.Johnson	6/60
M.Biddle	N.Johnson	N.Nail	M.Morris	6/62
M.Biddle	N.Johnson	C.M.Yardley	M.Morris	9/62
M.Biddle	N.Nail	C.M.Yardley	M.Morris	4/63
M.Biddle	N.Nail	M.Morris	D.R.Cousins	6/65
M.Biddle	N.Nail	G.Wignall	D.R.Cousins	7/67
M.Biddle	N.Nail	G.Wignall	M.Morris	4/68

<i>President</i>	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Date*</i>
P.Shearman	N.Nail	G.Wignall	M.Morris	12/68
P.Shearman	N.Nail	G.Wignall	M.Morris	10/69
P.Shearman	N.Nail	G.Wignall	P.Eland	12/71
P.Shearman	N.Nail	G.Wignall	Miss M.Dexter	1/74
P.Shearman	N.Nail	G.Wignall	L.LeMottee	4/78
P.Shearman	N.Nail	S.Nelson	L.LeMottee	5/79
P.Shearman	N.Nail	S.Nelson	Mrs R.Burleigh	11/81
P.Shearman	N.Nail	S.Nelson	S.Whiddett	10/84
P.Shearman	S.Nelson	Mrs P.Bedwell	S.Whiddett	4/85
F.Greenaway	S.Nelson	Mrs P.Bedwell.	S.Whiddett	5/90
F.Greenaway	Mrs P.Bedwell	C.Abdy	S.Whiddett	3/96
F.Greenaway	Mrs P.Bedwell	C.Abdy	Mrs R.Burleigh	3/97
J.Cotton	Mrs P.Bedwell	C.Abdy	Mrs R.Burleigh	10/97
J.Cotton	Mrs P.Bedwell	G.Brown	Mrs R.Burleigh	3/07
J.Cotton	Mrs P.Bedwell	Mrs N.Cowlard	Mrs R.Burleigh	10/09

\* Date of meeting or issue of Newsletter (month/year) when change of appointment to a particular office was announced.

#### **11. Postscript : Memories of the Early Days of the Society, as recalled in 2000.**

I joined NEAS, as it was then, when Chairman Norman Nail was running a dig in Bourne Hall grounds. (This was before the present library was built) and I had a really good introduction. That's when I learnt the importance of keeping a site tidy. Dorothy Nail was very hot on that aspect. We had to be very careful not to injure any of the small trees, but of course, as soon as the dig was finished the site was cleared to become the car park!

There were several small digs before 1967 but then the King William IV excavation started and we had two years before a very hurried finish. We were told it was to become a car park. It didn't, but we moved to Cheam for a six weekend rescue dig of a medieval kiln, working among builders' scaffolding (which came in very handy for photographic work). Pottery was so thickly mixed with ash that we simply shovelled it straight into large boxes to be taken home and washed. The small garden bed near my back door was several inches higher by the time my allocation was finished.

Of all the sites I think the school in West Street was my favourite. Easy parking, use of the boiler house with its sink, running water and gas ring for tea making, whatever the weather, besides plenty of interesting finds. I sometimes took a pot of tea from there to St. Mary's Churchyard where Frank Pemberton was finishing off. As I drove along the Bypass, I used to wonder what other drivers would think. But the most enduring memory is of Grove Cottage 1972. We had two weekends to look for Stane Street before the garden became a car park. It rained the whole time and being 'supply' I was wading through ankle deep mud. Twice I fell flat on my face in it!

On the social side there were monthly meetings at Pit House for talks. On my first appearance there, I answered the appeal for help with washing up the coffee cups. After all, washing up isn't very different from pot washing, except for the temperature of the water!

Ina Godman



Society visit to the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) in 2003 (Photo: Hugh Wilson)

**Occasional Papers published by Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology  
Society since 1990**

17. An Outline of the History of Ewell
18. Excavations at Ewell Grove School, St Mary's Churchyard and Grove Cottage.
19. City Posts (Coal Posts) in Epsom & Ewell and Banstead.
20. Archaeological finds in Glyn House Pond
21. Ewell Village Shops.
22. Philip Shearman Miscellany.
23. A History of Bourne Hall.
24. The Pre-Raphaelites in Ewell and a Missing Masterpiece.
25. The Lost Farms of Ewell.
26. Epsom and Ewell in Parliament.
27. A Brief History of Cuddington.
28. The Administration of Justice in Epsom and Ewell.
29. Murder and Witchcraft in 17th Century Ewell.
30. The Epsom Vestry.
31. The Unhealthy State of Epsom in 1849.
32. The Taxman Cometh to Epsom and Ewell.
33. Victorian Ewell Revealed Through the Census.
34. The River Hogsmill.
35. The Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments of Epsom and Ewell.
36. Ice House in the Grounds of the Former Convent of the Sacred Hearts, Epsom.
37. Waterloo House: The Epsom Spa Rooms.
38. Victorian Epsom Revealed through the Census.
39. Probate Inventories for Epsom and Ewell from 1561 to 1834.
40. Medieval Ewell in Fitznell's Cartulary and the 1408 Register.
41. The Public Houses of Epsom Past and Present.
42. Epsom and Ewell in Historic Maps of Surrey.
43. Ewell Wills of the 16th to 20th Centuries.
44. The Enclosure of Ewell in 1803.
45. Ewell Pauper Examinations 1617—1815.
46. The Bells of St Mary the Virgin, Ewell.
47. Frederick Prince of Wales in Epsom.
48. Ewell in 1577.
49. Vicars and Vicarages in Ewell
50. A History of Ewell in Occasional Papers



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