



# NEWSLETTER

2016, Issue 4

September 2016

## We welcome as new members

Miss K Wood

Mr M Teasdale

## Chairman's Notes

There has been a flurry of speculation over the perceived implications of the Neighbourhood and Infrastructure Bill which is connected to the Government declared intention of simplifying the Planning System. No bad thing some might say with the long lists of appraisals, assessment statements, impact evaluations etc. that are required by the LPA and which I wonder are ever actually read rather than just a tick in the box. Post PPG16 has produced quite a bonanza for heritage consultants to satisfy these demands, good for them. However, there is a fear that the heritage issues may be a casualty and the simple requirement for archaeological excavation or a W/B considered as over onerous. We hope that any new climate will not diminish this such requirement which in our case is done at no cost to the developer!

I noticed that the hugely important Joris Hoefnagel watercolour of Nonsuch Palace in 1568 appeared for sale again earlier this year. The last attempt was in 2010 when it failed to reach a reserve at Christies. Martin Biddle provided a suitable review of the historic significance of the picture for the sale catalogue at that time. This was important but I can't help thinking that it simply helped to increase its sale value with the owner apparently now seeking £1M! There was an export ban on the picture leaving UK which seems to have been slightly extended so we await the result of the appeal.

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## Lecture Diary

October 5th A-Z of Wartime by Amy Graham

November 2nd The History of AC Cars by John Spencer

December 7th Christmas Members' Talks

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

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

## June Meeting – Epsom College and the First World War - Alan Scadding

Jeff Cousins

Given the centenaries of the Somme and Jutland, the emphasis of Alan's talk on Epsom College was changed from the medical profession to the First World War.

When Alan first joined the college over 30 years ago, commemoration of Remembrance Day had been a fairly low-key affair, but now it has become much more significant.

Epsom College had been founded in 1855, with a view to helping the orphans and widows of doctors, and providing the doctors of the future. Discipline collapsed though, culminating in the "Great Rebellion" of 1882. A new headmaster, Rev. Hart-Smith, arrived in 1889 and imposed tough discipline and "Christian values". The Lower School opened in 1896, and the Rifle Corps was refounded in 1899. The college's reputation improved, but pupil numbers remained below 300. In 1910 the college was relaunched as "Epsom College", a more mainstream public school. In 1914 Rev. Barton took over as headmaster.

In 1909 the Rifle Corps had become an Officer Training Corps (OTC). Pupils tended to join the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment, based at Kingston upon Thames. Pupils in the OTC were away at a training camp in Tidworth when war was declared in 1914. 231 Old Epsomians joined up within a month, some in the University and Public Schools Brigade (UPSB). The billeting of thousands of the UPSB in Epsom, until a camp became ready for them in the grounds of the RAC at Woodcote Park in February 1915, brought much income to the town. In January 1915 over twenty thousand men gathered in blizzard conditions on Epsom Downs for an inspection by Lord Kitchener, but he only stayed for a few minutes, and many men collapsed due to the cold. In May 1915 the UPSB moved on to Clipstone Camp in Nottinghamshire, but in September 1915 Woodcote Park Camp became the Canadian Convalescent Hospital, plus other regiments were stationed there during 1916-7.

In the "Fog of War", the public had few real facts about how the war was really progressing. The press was tightly controlled. The carnage on the first day of the Somme was not reported. To some extent this was counter-productive, as fears of Zeppelins and spies became exaggerated. In realisation of this, the government's war aims were published in October 1916. Some information was provided following on from this, but with much "spin". Other communications were not controlled though – Hilaire Belloc was free to lecture at Epsom College on the true situation of the war, and letters from the front back to the college magazine gave surprising detail about troop movements.

The war caused problems in obtaining sufficient food for the college. Prices went up, and the college had two meat-less days a week. Rationing was introduced to improve fairness. Offers of the boys helping at local farms were turned down, so they went on their own farming camp to Stow-on-the-Wold.

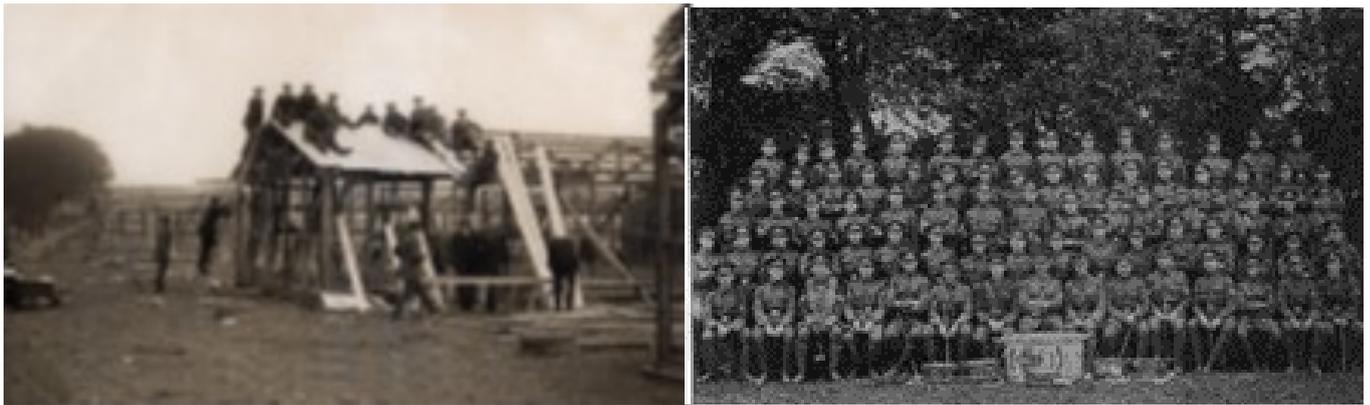
Although at the start of the war the college only had a roll of 276 boys, 957 Old Epsomians went on to serve, and 155 died. Alan went on to give brief details of some who served – some died, some survived. For example: Roland Bradford V.C., M.C., both became the youngest ever general in the British Army (a Brigadier General) and died at the age of 25. Major Hugh Glyn Hughes of the RAMC, recommended for the V.C. three times. He went

on to organise the relief of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the end of the Second World War.

In 1917 the headmaster Rev. Barton shocked the college by marrying a wealthy suffragette of German extraction, and asking for a greater salary, which was refused. After a dispute about the masters receiving below average salaries, he resigned in 1922.

After the war there was then Spanish Flu, almost bringing teaching at the college to a standstill by the end of 1918, though fortunately only one boy died.

It took a long time to repatriate the thousands of Canadians still at Woodcote Park at the end of the war. In June 1919 they rioted, resulting in the death of local policeman Sgt. Thomas Green. The land wasn't returned to the RAC until 1923.



### **July Meeting - Archaeology of the NESCoT site – Industry and Magic: Quarrying and Selective Deposition in Ewell, Surrey – Alexis Haslam**

**Jon Cotton**

EEHAS members will be well aware of the wholesale redevelopment of the former NESCoT animal husbandry site on the Ewell by-pass which is currently under way. Fewer perhaps would have been aware of the archaeological programme that preceded it – that is until Alexis Haslam of Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) gave us the edited highlights in his surprisingly well-attended lecture. (I say ‘surprisingly well-attended’ because he was up against the Wales v Portugal Euro 2016 football semi-final!)

Alexis outlined the results of PCA’s extensive strip, map and record exercise carried out between February and July 2015. This followed an initial evaluation conducted by Oxford Archaeology, which had drawn attention to the archaeological potential of the site. Given its size and position at the foot of the North Downs above the spring line, students of Ewell’s archaeology could confidently have anticipated a long story of human inhabitation

here, and they were not disappointed.

Alexis noted that field walking and test-pitting carried out on the western side of a dry valley which bi-sects the site had recovered struck flint of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date within a thick hill wash deposit. The later flints (which comprised some 80% of the whole assemblage) were probably associated with a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age drove-way and field system aligned broadly N/S (i.e. along the valley side and within its floor), together with several post-built fence-lines and animal pens. Traces of similar field systems have been located elsewhere within Ewell (e.g. at Warren Farm near Nonsuch Park).

Having outlined the prehistoric evidence, Alexis then turned to the Roman features – many of which appear to have been associated with the extraction of the North Downs chalk. A series of three conjoined quarries in particular, accessed by a sloping ramp to the west, measured over 42m in length, 17m in width and 3m in depth, and must have been exploited on a semi-industrial scale – though to what end the chalk was put remains unclear. Alexis explained that they are likely to have been dug soon after the conquest and had been back-filled c AD 120–300. Notable finds from their fills included a stray late Iron Age Class I potin coin.

Our speaker paid particular attention to a somewhat deeper shaft nearby which produced substantial animal remains including parts of 67 dogs, 7 pigs and 4 foals. Coins dated the closure of the shaft to c AD 87-100. Alongside the animals were the disarticulated remains of up to 53 human individuals, along with a number of neonates, and the articulated skeleton of a middle aged adult male who had been flung face-down into the centre of the shaft along with pottery dated AD 40-80. A bone handled iron knife lay just above him (though Alexis nobly resisted the obvious temptation to speculate as to its exact relationship with the body).

Other burials were found further to the west, and included a crouched adult female inhumation cut into a ditch dated c AD 120-160, above which lay a young adult female placed face-down. This second individual had copper alloy hook-and-eye bracelets on both wrists, and two glass beads around her neck. Prone burial is not a normative arrangement, and might suggest that the young woman (and also the middle aged man in the shaft) had suffered a bad or unlucky death. Finally, a further adult female buried in the upper fill of one of the chalk quarries was accompanied by an iron knife and a single silver coin dated c. AD 675-710. Her grave, placed well away from the other known Saxon graves towards the centre of the village, suggested that she too might have represented an outcast or 'deviant' burial.

Those members who ignored the siren calls of Euro 2016 were offered much food for thought in a lecture crammed with excellent pictures of finds and features (some taken at altitude by an unmanned aerial vehicle or drone). Questions relating to Ewell's prehistory, to the early industrial exploitation of the local chalk, and to the disposal of the dead – hitherto something of a puzzle for the Roman period – were all addressed by a confident, engaging and knowledgeable speaker. We wish him every success with the ongoing post-excavation programme, and look forward to seeing the final report in a future number of the Surrey Archaeological Collections.



The conjoined chalk quarries, looking west towards their sloping access ramp, the latter re-used by the excavators as a barrow-run.



Excavating the middle-aged adult male flung face-down in the centre of the deep chalk shaft.

## August Meeting - Walk around Woodcote – Ian West

**Jeff Cousins**

There was a good turnout for the latest of Ian West's ever popular guided walks, this one being around the Woodcote area of Epsom. We viewed the exteriors of Woodcote Grove, Maidstone House, the Amato, the former Ladas, Woodcote Villa, Westgate House and 2-14 Chalk Lane. Although the properties appeared to be reasonably old, several were in fact much older, having been re-fronted at some point to keep in fashion. Afterwards Ian kindly provide refreshments and a quiz.



Ian West outside of Woodcote Grove



Ian West outside of Maidstone House

## Railway Bridges

**Jeff Cousins**

Most people in our area will have heard of the Drift Bridge, the name of the railway bridge having become a colloquial name for the local area. Drift Bridge is said to be shortened from Driftway Bridge, a driftway being a driveway, the Reigate Road having been used to drive cattle that had been fattened up in the Reigate area to market in Kingston.

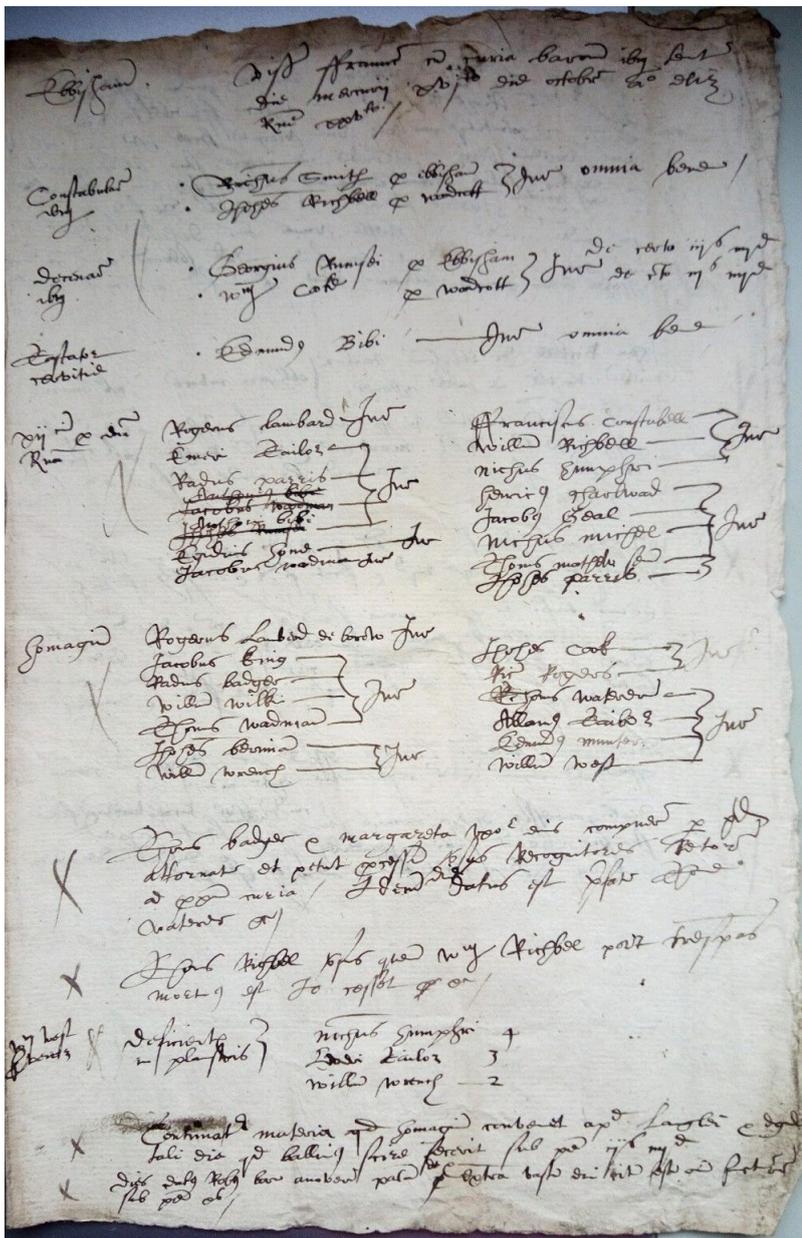
But in days when railway bridges were a more prominent feature in a still mostly rural landscape, others had names too. Windmill Bridge is on Windmill Lane, Reigate Road Bridge is obvious, and Harefield Bridge is where the Cheam Road crosses the border into Cheam. Harefield House stood just SW of the last, where Sutton Cricket Club now is.

### A Glimpse of Tudor Epsom

Jeremy Harte

A lost court roll from Tudor Epsom has been purchased by Surrey History Centre. The roll, for the view of frankpledge and court baron of 16th October 1583, is the only surviving record from the years 1576–1611, when the manor was held by the Carews of Beddington. Some earlier rolls and a manorial survey survive from the years when the manor was held by Edward VI (TNA LR 2/190ff.55-62 and SHC 578/1), but there is no continuous series until 1663, the year that Elizabeth Evelyn inherited the manor (SHC K31).

The newly discovered roll is a draft for a meeting at which constables were appointed for the two tithings of Ebbisham and Woodcote. The Richbell family appeared to claim copyhold land, and there are references to tenants supplying building materials and fencing beside the common. The roll is accompanied by minutes of another meeting which was told that Thomas Coddington of Ewell would remove his workshop. The meeting also made orders for trimming hedges which grew too close to the highway and resolved that pigs should not be allowed on the common un-ringed.



The roll sheds more light on families already known to local historians. The Richbells were yeoman farmers in Epsom, apparently in the wool trade as one of their sheep was stolen in 1578 (*Calendar of Assize Records: Surrey Indictments*). Averie Richbell died in 1606, leaving a son of the same name (*Surrey Record Soc* 4 p269). Thomas Codington held a Ewell property in 1577 – “a tenemente a kitchen a barn a backsyde a garden & an orchard conteyning ½ acre and a close of arrable of the backside conteyning 1½ acre”. This may be 31 High Street, recently the Star pub and now awaiting a new owner. The building is said to lie south of the Epsom road, however, so the identification only works out if the upper High Street line has shifted from the south to the north of the property.

The 1583 court roll and minutes were found on eBay earlier this year. They are now accessioned as SHC 9579/1 and 2.

## ARTEFACT OF THE MONTH

Thanks to Steve Nelson for this information.

### A Feather Curler from Epsom

In beginning to draw together a full report on one of the society's old excavations (108/110 High Street, Epsom) in 1980, an odd small find was identified. It is a bone knife like object with a curved terminal. It was associated with a C17 building which had existed to the rear of the High Street and under what is now TK Maxx. Its actual purpose was uncertain at the time and various suggestions were – butter knife, child's toy, letter opener, etc, etc. However, the view of the late Geoff Egan, formerly of the MoL, is that it's most probably a "feather curler". A similar such curler was found in excavations in Aldgate in 1978 and a more recent example comes from St Mary Spital, both in the City of London and both of which date to the later C17/early C18. The use of feathers was particularly popular in Restoration England for hats and headdresses. However, when wet from rain they could become limp and straight and there are household manuals which explain how they can be dried and re-curved over a blunt knife; the example from Epsom shows wear marks at right angles across the blade. While the use of large feathers in hats was also especially fashionable in Edwardian England it does seem that these bone "knives", where excavated, are of an earlier date and of course Epsom was very popular in the Restoration period.



## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: Sheen Charterhouse**

Thursday 8th September 2016, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton.

### **Heritage Open Days**

Thursday 8th - Sunday 11th September 2016. Includes Elmbridge, Kingston upon Thames, Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead.

### **Leatherhead & District Local History Society: Farnham and its Castle**

Friday 16th September 2016, Leatherhead Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead.

### **Open House London**

Saturday 17th - Sunday 18th September 2016.

### **Surrey in the Great War: Brooklands Great War 100**

Sunday 25th September 2016, Brooklands Museum, Weybridge.

A special event to mark the centenary of World War One, encompassing the many aspects of Brooklands' involvement in the Great War of 1914 - 1918. For this special event they will be gathering automobiles, motorcycles, bicycles, commercial vehicles, buses and aircraft from the period up to 1919.

Cost: Adult £11.00, Senior Citizen/Student £10.00, Children (5-16) £6.00, Children under 5 FREE, Family ticket £30.00 (2 adults & up to 3 children).

### **Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society: Prehistoric and Iron Age Excavations at Virginia Water**

Thursday 13th October 2016, Surbiton Library Halls, Ewell Road, Surbiton.

### **Surrey Local History Committee and Surrey Heritage: From Loseley to Lushington: Family Archives at Surrey History Centre**

Saturday 15th October 2016, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking.

### **Leatherhead & District Local History Society: St John's School in WW1**

Friday 21st October 2016, Leatherhead Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead.

*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

**Newsletter Editor:** Jeff Cousins

**Programme Secretary:** Vacant

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

**If you wish to contact any of the committee please e-mail [info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk](mailto:info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk)**

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

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**[www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk](http://www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk)**