



NEWSLETTER

2013, Issue 4

September 2013

Welcome to New Members

Georgia Newman
Marion Morrison
Sharie Dakota

Inside this issue:

June meeting 2
Church Meadow 2012

Artefact of the Month 3
Spring Street cannon
Mary Rose Exhibition

July Meeting 4
Nonsuch Palace
Faversham Visit

Epsom Clock Tower 5

August 6
Members Evening

Church Meadow 2013 7

Nonsuch Palace model

Chairman's Notes

In 1972 one of the barrows on Banstead Downs which had been badly damaged by the golf club grounds men was excavated. The barrow proved to be Saxon with the primary burial accompanied by a spear, knife, shield boss and bronze hanging bowl. The finds and skeleton were stored in BH Museum. Current plans to rebury the skeleton have raised a mini storm of controversy, although not quite as stormy as the on going controversy over the future of Richard III's remains. Many issues have been raised - ethical treatment of human remains, non Christian burial, museums storage capacity etc etc. However, my simple suggestion of reburial in the grave from which it came has not been accepted!

Current improvement works by the Wandle Trust to the Hogsmill have revealed the remains on the left bank of one of the gunpowder mills dating from the early C18. It seems this may be part of the 'incorporating' mill which ground the basic powder ready for further processing in other parts of the Ewell mills complex. It is hoped to prepare a full report for the next Newsletter.



Lecture Diary

October 2nd Rudyard Kipling - His Life and Remarkable Story: Gary Endstone
In the presence of the Mayor Colin Taylor

November 6th An Introduction to the Carshalton Water Tower: John Freeman

December 4th Christmas Party

January 1st Prehistory in Malta: Richard Watson

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 : Excavations in Church Meadow 2012

Nikki Cowlard

Members of the Church Meadow team talked about the Church Meadow Project and what had been found during the 2012 season last July. The interim report was printed in the September 2012 newsletter, and together with a report to Surrey Archaeological Society, is available on the EEHAS website. **Nikki Cowlard**, the site director, set the scene for Roman archaeology in Ewell. Church Meadow is an important site in that it is the last open space within the village through which Stane Street is thought to run. Archaeological investigations and chance finds suggest that Roman Ewell was a linear settlement which grew up alongside the road, most likely providing accommodation and supplies to travellers and acting as a market centre. The springs seem to have held a particular significance, religious as

well as water source, and it is thought Stane Street deviates towards the springs to benefit from this. The Church Meadow Project came about when St Marys Church consecrated a 10 metre strip of land to be used in future for burials; once burials commence the archaeology will be out of bounds so a series of excavations are planned over 3-4 seasons to record what is there.

Several geophysical surveys have taken place in the field but have been rather inconclusive as to the line of Stane Street and the settlement alongside it. Excavation in 2012 revealed that much of the Roman ground surface had been destroyed by an episode of steam ploughing but a series of gullies, pits and ditches were uncovered, all of Roman date. A large number of low denomination coins, brooches and other personal adornments were recovered together with many pottery sherds, all of which will aid dating of individual features. A small amount of prehistoric pottery was also found but surprisingly little medieval evidence.

Phil Stanley, who is undertaking the reporting of the Roman pottery, then talked about the process of pottery analysis. The task is huge, in that over 40kg of pottery was found in the plough soils alone. The pot is examined for fabric, form and decoration which help identify where it was made and when. Initially sherds are divided up into greywares (the most common type of Roman pottery), oxidised (red) fabrics and finewares, and distinctive pieces pulled out to give initial dating for the 'closed' or undisturbed contexts. With so much pottery from lots of different features it is vital to have a system to ensure they are not muddled up. All pottery is marked with where it came from in the trench and bagged accordingly with descriptive labels. Phil then went on to describe how he would analyse the data resulting from the pottery identification and put the final report together. He concluded by showing a varied range of pottery found in 2012.

Frank Pemberton, EEHAS' Archaeological Officer and the site Finds Director then took the audience through a whistle-stop tour of special finds found in 2012, including Roman brooches, bone hair pins, a bone die and a post-medieval cloth seal. He then went on to show examples of ceramic building material (CBM) found in Church Meadow. Most of this is Roman in origin but a medieval roof tile was also shown. A number of small pieces of decorated box flue tile have been found together with Roman roof tiles (tegulae and imbrices) as well as floor tile, mortar and opus signinum (waterproof mortar). The question is whether these were brought in as rubble for hardcore or roadfill, or were there building/s with tiled roofs and hypocaust heating system in, or close to, the settlement.

[See separate note, p 7, on this current year's work]



Artefact of the Month Spring Street Cannon

Stephen Nelson

For those of you who know Ewell there is an old iron cannon barrel buried in the ground in the entrance to Chessington House in Spring Street. It acts as a bollard, standing about 2 feet high, protecting the left hand gate pillar. It appears to have a ball stopping the 2.5 inch calibre muzzle. It is uncertain how old it is or indeed if it is a real one. Those that have seen the rest of the cannon below ground say it looks real with trunnions (the round lugs that fit the gun to its carriage) unlike the ones outside Ewell Castle school which are simply bollards. It is said that the set back in the wall of Bourne Hall opposite was contrived by the owner of Garbrand Hall, Thomas Barritt, to allow a carriage to swing into the entrance drive. Willis in his History of Ewell says into Spring House but the drive is now into Chessington House. Barritt owned Garbrand Hall from 1796 to 1817 and the cannon could date from that period. In view of its small calibre the gun may be a saluting cannon rather than military or naval. My purpose in mentioning this now is that the footpath in this stretch of Spring Street is being widened and resurfaced. It is hoped that the cannon does not “disappear” during these works!



The Mary Rose New Exhibition

Stephen Nelson



The new Mary Rose exhibition opened on 31 May after a thorough redisplay of the objects and in a new state of the art cover – all at a cost of some £27m! The ship itself has been in the dry dock, next to Victory, since it was raised in 1982. Many will recall watching this on TV at the time. The current opening coincided with the ending of spraying in Polyethylene Glycol (PEG) which has been continuous for the last 30 years.

I visited, in June, with members of the Medieval Pottery Research Group who were the first users of the lecture room facility. There were mixed feelings – some thought the new building looked like a large space ship, actually it is, a large space for a ship! The interiors arranged on three galleries around the remains of the ship are dark, intentionally so to simulate conditions below decks at the time. However, if you want to read or make notes you have to squint by the light of the displays. The ship itself that has survived is now viewable for its whole length through porthole like windows but is well lit inside and you do get a good impression of its size and layout. The main spraying tubes are still there but are due to be removed as the timbers dry out over the next 4 years. I noticed some worrying looking white powder deposits but was assured this was just excess PEG which will be swept up.

Great play is made of the fact that the majority of the 19,000 objects discovered with her are on display but what they mean is the majority of objects displayable – many are of course just fragments. However, the conservation of the wood and leather is remarkable. A star for me was the Martincamp type pottery flask in its original wickerwork cover with loop handles and cork stopper; this must be a unique survival of its type. A particular moan from the group I was with was that the pottery, of which there are some 50 vessels not on display was not available to see, even to a specialist interest group. All in store? It is difficult if you want to study just one class of object as they are spread through the themed displays but then you can't please all the people... All in all the Mary Rose is a remarkable survival.

July Meeting -Nonsuch Palace: Steve Nelson Isobel Cross

This was an overview of the history of Nonsuch Palace, which was not only a place for the court to stay while Henry VIII was hunting, but also an elaborate building designed to enhance the reputation of the Tudor dynasty and to educate the young prince Edward in the status and conduct of a modern monarchy, mostly through the decorative scheme of the inner court. The hunting park occupied the Great and Little Parks as well as Nonsuch Park; that is the area between Worcester Park Road and Cheam Road, Ewell. We know generally what the Palace looked like from such images as the 1568 Hoefnagel watercolour, the anonymous view in the Fitzwilliam of about 1620 and the Dankerts view of about 1670. John Speed's 1611 map of Surrey includes a decorative engraving of the Palace. Nonsuch Palace was destroyed in the late 17th century, but 18th century maps mention the name. It was not forgotten and so in the mid-20th century John Dent the Borough Librarian of Epsom and Ewell began documentary research. An excavation committee was formed and in 1959 work directed by Martin Biddle began. It went on for 12 weeks, involved many volunteers and attracted huge public and media interest. This resulted in the establishment of the Nonsuch Antiquarian Society (now EEHAS) and the Borough Museum.

The unique stucco work on the Palace decorated both the outer sides and the inner sides of the inner court, – about 21,000 square feet in 700-800 panels, and of the 100,000 pieces of decoration about 1500 were found. They showed, in the inner court on the King's side the labours of Hercules and busts of Roman emperors, and on the Queen's side goddesses and images of the liberal arts. A major artist was Nicholas of Modena whose payment for work survives. He had worked in stucco before and was also responsible for the gilded slate frames round the panels. He was poached by Henry from Francis I. The finds were interesting too and included exotic foreign objects, like German stoneware, Flemish tin glaze and Italian wine glasses.

An extensive part of the Palace was revealed by the excavation, and also the remains of Cuddington Church and Manor, pulled down to make way for the Palace. In 1960 Martin Biddle also excavated the Banqueting House. George, Lord Berkeley, the final Keeper of the Palace commenced its destruction in 1667 by demolishing the Banqueting House. In 1671 the Palace was given to Barbara Villiers (involved in a complicated dispute with Berkeley) who got rid of the outer court in 1690. Gradually over the years, the Palace disappeared – except.....It is said that stones from Merton Priory recycled in the building of the Palace were again recycled and turned up in the cellars of the Durdans and they have been found elsewhere around Epsom and Ewell. Possibly painted panels at Loseley Park came from there. At the moment there is not much to see, apart from some markers on the ground, and the foundation of the Banqueting House, overgrown and near collapse. More could be done, perhaps by restoring some of the gardens. We are awaiting Volume I of the final report. (Volume II is published.)

Visit to Faversham on Sunday 4th August

Isobel Cross

Chris and Gay Harris organised an excellent visit to Faversham which 24 of us very much enjoyed. Two of the town guides took groups of us on their guided walks. One of the highlights of these is Abbey Street which is a medieval street which public pressure saved from demolition in the 1960s. One of the houses is Arden's house. *Arden of Faversham* is an Elizabethan domestic drama based on the true story of how this business man was murdered by his wife – a granddaughter of the navel architect of the Mary Rose – and her lover. We saw the back gate out of which they dragged his body. Elsewhere we noted houses where James II was detained attempting to flee to France. The Parish Church has a magnificent spire and one of the pillars still has its medieval painting. We saw a great deal more but there was always more again. The Faversham Society is an enthusiastic organisation which runs the museum without much financial support. We were given a tour of this to see images of domestic and industrial life throughout the history of the town. There was a Georgian shop front, items from civic ceremonial life, the world wars and industry. Faversham was always a brewing town, a centre of trading and shipbuilding, and it made bricks. Many of London's yellow bricks were made here. Also there was gunpowder making and in the afternoon we visited Chart Mill, where the machinery and a working model are on display. Members may recall Charles Abdy's talk in February 2012 about the history of gunpowder making here.



You could spend a week 'doing' Faversham and still not see it all. Our visit was really well organised and we saw a great deal of it. I suspect most of us thought we would like to go back on our own and see more. Many thanks to Chris and Gay.

We have been sent, by Irene Baker, the following excerpt from the Sussex Agricultural Express for 12th June 1847

Epsom The Town Clock

Of the fact that 'old Father Time' is the sure leveller of all things human, bringing decay upon all the works of man, our town clock certainly is an excellent exemplification. This relic of by-gone years does, undoubtedly, recall many an early association to our more aged inhabitants; but, whatever its claims may be as an old and faithful servant, we do not think anyone will assert that it ought to remain in its present position – the great public deluder of the day! Its sombre, weather-beaten face, and shattered frame and constitution, proclaim with unerring certainty, that its earthly pilgrimage is well nigh run. With but one hand left, and that palsied with old age, it but feebly and imperfectly performs its daily task. Often, indeed, so slow it is in its movements that it prevents young men from returning home with the regularity young men always desire, while, at other times, it proceeds with a rapidity perfectly astonishing, but invariably terminating in a dead stand still, leaving the whole town of Epsom in a glorious state of uncertainty as to the state of the time. In these days of railroads it is particularly desirable that precision in such matters should be observed, and we hope the great clock question will shortly receive a proper solution.



What occasioned this unsolicited testimonial for a new clock is unknown but it was clearly support for the new clock tower for which there was a design competition in 1847. Its striking Italianate lines were a world apart from the old watch house and clock about which the writer was so disparaging. It is of course still there, albeit with the ground floor accretions that used to be the public lavatories, but what happened to the lions? Also, recently members will have noticed that the clock has stopped again!



August Members Evening

Isobel Cross

Martin Upward – A Brief Visit to New England

Martin and Christine Upward began by visiting Boston which was founded in 1630 by Puritans from Lincolnshire. The War of Independence took place from 1776 – 1783 and in 1798 the Massachusetts State House was built. To their surprise, after the Boston bombings, access was unrestricted. Martin showed pictures of the grand interior, including a chandelier topped by an effigy of a cod, commemorating the cod fishing, one of the foundations of Boston's wealth. Also in the city is the old colonial State House, still decorated with a lion and a unicorn, dwarfed by the surrounding skyscrapers. Old Boston has narrow streets lit by gas lamps, alight 24 hours a day. The Cathedral has stained glass by William Morris and Burne Jones. There is a statue of Paul Revere in Boston and his house exists. He lived there 1770 – 1800. The house itself dates from 1680. The municipal library in Boston dates from 1849. It is called Bourne Hall.

The coast of Maine has remarkable scenery, its waterfalls, valleys and lakes the result of glaciation. The weather was variable, but the photographs show a landscape well worth exploring. Along here settlers called places after familiar names like Epsom and Banstead. The Upwards made a steep and unpredictable drive up Mount Washington where the wind often reaches hurricane force.

In Vermont there are memories of Calvin Coolidge. We saw the bed he was born in and the cemetery where he is buried, in Plymouth Notch. In Canterbury the Shakers started a commune in 1792. Their buildings are now run by a Trust, the Shakers being no more. They had a self sufficient organisation with their own farm, printing press and furniture making. Unafraid of technology they invented things like the washing machine. The Upwards packed a lot more into their brief visit, this account being just a taste of it.

Lou Hays – Excavating Oplontis Villa B and taking a look at Villa A: Pompeii 2013

In June Lou had the opportunity to dig with the University of Texas in Pompeii. Her pictures showed the depth of the volcanic ash from the eruption on the site, and in her trench the charcoal and building material from the prior earthquake. The damage to structures like pillars from the force of the eruption is plain to see. In a warehouse there is a collection of skeletons. Some were rich people who had gold and jewellery. These are in boxes, but some who seem to be women and children with no associated wealth are still in a heap, covered with volcanic ash. There are damaged paintings in the villas, many with allegorical scenes, and as the quality varies the Americans think they were done by students of a master painter. Everything would have been very bright, from the walls to the bright orange floor tiles, except for the black and white corridors at the back, probably where slaves lived. There was a garden with a water-course all round it to cool the air, and the remains of a pool where people could swim.

It has to be said that Lou did not have a high opinion of American techniques. Finds were over-washed and scrubbed and then left in full sun to dry. There was a photograph of a pile of unsorted finds, probably unstratified. However, archaeologists are faced with warehouses full of stuff and wall paintings that can be repaired but never restored, because there is not the money or even the time to deal with all Pompeii has to offer.

Brenda Allen – Khmer Temples Part I.

Brenda Allen has seen many temples in Cambodia on a study tour. The early ones vary in date from the 6th to the 10th centuries AD. The Khmer empire began in the 8th century and it was the early period that was discussed here. The empire was at its peak in the 11th century and had failed by the 15th. It was in this later period that the famous Angkor Wat flourished and this will be the topic for Part II.

There were many temples because each king wanted his own and because they kept moving their capitals. The domestic buildings were wood and have all gone. The architecture, decorative details and religious significance owe much to Indian influence. The gods Shiva and Vishnu dominate, and the carved figures refer to Hindu epics. Later Buddhism became the dominant religion as it still is today.

Typically a temple is composed of concentric enclosures with the central one being the inner sanctum accessible only to priests. They are approached by causeways over moats. They feature long corridors which may have been for storage, long corridors surrounding courtyards being a feature of later temples. Temples could be flat, or step pyramids. Temples on hills or mountains represent the sacred Mount Meru. Accessing these involved climbing very steep stone stairways, but the views from the top were rewarding.

Brenda had photographs of much of the structure and details of the 35 temples visited. Multi-headed serpents, lions, elephants and human figures feature. Some temples are quite massive. Some have been invaded by the jungle as Angkor once was. We look forward to seeing Angkor Wat in the future.

CHURCH MEADOW EXCAVATION 2013

Nikki Cowlard

A second successful season of excavation took place in Church Meadow, Ewell, during the first three weeks of July. This series of rescue excavations aim to uncover the archaeology along a 10m wide consecrated strip running parallel to the south-eastern boundary of St. Mary's graveyard No.4; this strip will be incorporated into the graveyard in due course, at which point any archaeology present will no longer be accessible, and is likely to be destroyed during grave digging. There is evidence for a high level of Romano-British activity on the site, which is towards the North-eastern extent of the known Roman settlement, and Stane Street is thought to run across the meadow.

More than twenty EEHAS members took part in the excavation, many in organisational roles, together with members of Surrey Archaeological Society and school work experience students. Many volunteers experienced their first taste of practical archaeology and we hope we will see them back again next year. We also welcomed more than 70 Museum Club children and their parents to the site, where the children had a chance to try excavation and finds processing. Hopefully some of them will be the archaeologists of the future.

Last season's 30m x 10m trench was re-opened, to further investigate a number of features, together with a further 30m x 10m strip. Several interesting features were investigated but not all the archaeology conformed to expectations. The weather was particularly hot and dry, which made the ground hard and slowed progress. An interim report of what was found will be printed in the next newsletter but, if you want to know more in the meantime, visit the 'Dig Diary' on the EEHAS website <http://epsomewellhistory.org.uk/#/cme-2013/4577853304>.



Church Meadow Day 1 Year 2

The new model of Nonsuch Palace, mentioned in Steve Nelson's talk in July, can be seen in the Mansion House at the following times -

Openings of the Nonsuch Palace Model in the Nonsuch Gallery ONLY

Entry £2.50, Concessions £2, Children under 16 and FoN Members free

The Nonsuch Palace Gallery is open on every Sunday, whereas the Service Wing Museum is only open on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in the summer months because of stewarding requirements and lack of winter heating.

All openings in April-September (i.e. in British Summer Time) will be 2pm – 5pm and all openings in October – March will be 11am – 2pm. (NB. Extended hours on Sept. 15th are because of Nonsuch Awareness Day, at the Borough Council's request. On this day, the Mansion's magnificent ground floor reception rooms will also be open to the public.)

Access: The Service Wing entrance is on the east side of Nonsuch Mansion just beyond the gate into the Formal Garden. The Nonsuch Palace Gallery is in the adjacent Stable Wing and that entrance is through the small garden court. Vehicle access is via the Cheam Gate into Nonsuch Park and follow the signs to the Mansion where there is a further car park. For sat-nav users, the Mansion's postcode is **SM3 8AL**. There is a café and public toilets round at the front of the Mansion.



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 (020) 8393 7233

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

Treasurer: Lou Hays

Archaeology Officer: Frank Pemberton

Conservation Officer: Nikki Cowlard (see details above)

Membership Secretary: Doreen Tilbury

Newsletter Editor: **VACANT**

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

Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Secretary by 12th October 2013

Visit our website

www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Gift Aid

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 and send it to Lou Hays, our Treasurer. Forms will be 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-September
www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk