



# NEWSLETTER

2014, Issue 4

September 2014

<p><i>Welcome to New Members</i></p> <p>Mrs S Henson</p> <p>Mr L Dickinson</p> <p><b>Inside this issue:</b></p> <p><i>Peggy Bedwell obituary</i> 2</p> <p><i>June meeting Coombe Hill conduit house</i> 3</p> <p><i>July meeting Memorial Landscapes Benchmarks of the Borough</i> 4</p> <p><i>NESCOT fields Church Meadow Ewell</i> 5</p> <p><i>August members evening</i> 6</p> <p><i>Nonsuch Park ditch Development in Epsom</i> 7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman's Notes</b></p> <p>It is with great sadness that we record the death of Peggy Bedwell in July. A full obituary, based on the eulogy given by Jon Cotton at her funeral, appears in this Newsletter.</p> <p>Members will have noticed that the Organ Inn, built as a classic road house pub when the Ewell By-pass was opened in the 1930s, has now been demolished. It is a vagary of the planning system that it is quite legal to demolish an unlisted building not in a Conservation Area, even without an extant planning permission for future use. The result, of course, is a moral pressure on planning permission for a development that might not otherwise be appropriate. Proposals for the Organ site are for yet another mini supermarket. I just wonder how the economic viability for a new food store is calculated by the big chains - aren't they all just chasing the same people! There must be some data available on markets and catchment areas available to the planners to consider the wider picture.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lecture Diary</b></p> <p>October 1st      The Impact of WWI on the Borough: Tim Richardson</p> <p>November 5th    History of the Borough's War Memorials: Clive Gilbert</p> <p>December 3rd    Christmas Party</p> <p>Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell KT17 2BB</p> <p>Doors open 7.45 for 8pm start. Members free, visitors £4, includes refreshments</p>

## PEGGY BEDWELL

Peggy Bedwell who died on 5 July was a longstanding member and stalwart supporter of EEHAS (previously NAS) having first joined the society in 1968.

Peggy was born, and lived her early years, in Blackpool in 1920. She went to Kings College, London to read English Literature where she met her firm friend Audrey and husband Tom through whom she met and married their friend George Bedwell in 1946. George became a solicitor and they moved to 37 Seymour Avenue, Ewell, home to Peggy until she died and they had a son, John. George suffered from MS and sadly died in 1967. Her son John died suddenly in 2003 – like his father and Peggy's father none reached 50yrs old. Peggy bore her grief with dignity.

Peggy joined the Society in 1968, initially to help organise the monthly lecture meetings, in those early days held in the rather cramped conditions of Pitt House in Ewell. The Society soon recognised a willing volunteer and she was co-opted onto the Committee in 1971 and became Programmes Secretary. She also served in other capacities; as Secretary from 1985 and as Chairman from 1996. Peggy continued to arrange the monthly talks, and dutifully introduced each speaker, into her 90s. Her efficient method of calling a meeting together – two sharp hand claps – invariably delivered the required hush. All of this for many years in the 1970s when she regularly commuted to Blackpool to look after her mother.

She was no mere committee functionary, however, but was always prepared to roll up her sleeves and get stuck in at the sharp end of the Society's endeavours; from strimming at the Old Church Tower (she was a committee member of the Old Tower Trust) to leading tours on open days. For Society exhibitions she could be relied upon to produce caption labels in her distinctive copper plate script. She was involved in numerous ways on countless excavations, from digging to the less glamorous but vital washing, marking and studying the finds - in the early days at the Upper Mill and Ewell Court House and later many people will have attended the Monday evening sessions at her house in Seymour Avenue. The room was always ready, with a warm welcome, a seat and a cup of tea to hand.

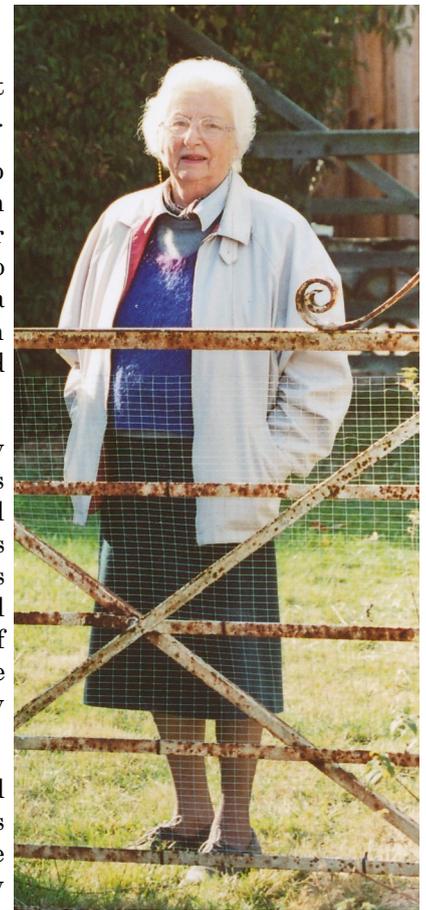
With her background in English she was a founder member of the Society's Documentary Group, where her knowledge of censuses, maps, place names, registers and deeds was a first port of call for local history researchers. It also enabled her to contribute to a number of the Society's publications. She had a long association with Bourne Hall Museum where she had a claim to be the longest serving volunteer – she was certainly a founder member of the Museum's supporters' group. More recently she was a volunteer with the Local & Family History Centre in the Library where her knowledge of the local documentary background was of great use to general enquirers.

Peggy had wider links too, both with KuTAS and with various extra-mural classes held in that town and elsewhere and with Surrey Archaeological Society, on a number of whose committees she also served and with the a Surrey Local History Council. Her many years of voluntary service were deservedly recognised by Surrey County Council in 1998, with Surrey Award for Achievement presented to her in a ceremony held in the Grand Hall at County Hall in Kingston. Part of the citation read:

*'Peggy has worked over many years to promote local history in Surrey. As a member of the NAS she has in particular worked in the areas of history and archaeology in Epsom and Ewell ... She has also served for many years on the Executive Committee of the Surrey Local History Council, organising events promoting the history of the County.'*

This was a recognition of which she was quietly but justifiably proud. Peggy was 'old school' in other ways too. In the days when she was able to drive, for example, she willingly ferried friends to meetings, hospital appointments, lecture classes, concerts and shopping trips. She could be relied upon to transport guest speakers to and from far-flung stations in good time. When she finally, and reluctantly, relinquished her car she was always on guard in her front bay window waiting in turn for *her* lift to the Church Hall, ready with her wicker basket full of refreshments, attendance book - and of course the hall keys.

She was one of those indefatigably straightforward people, with firm Lancastrian views on a wide range of topics – from central heating to ice cream. Following her stroke, in 2013, it was a source of obvious frustration to her that visits from her friends were inevitably rather one-sided affairs. But her clear



annoyance at not being able to join in as she wished was then succeeded by transparent delight when she successfully managed to make herself understood.

Peggy retained her treasured independence virtually to the end. It is perhaps for her dedicated work for EEHAS in so many ways and on which we came to rely, particularly the organising of monthly speakers and opening of the hall for so long, that we remember her but with her passing not only we – but the wider Ewell community – have lost a kind and true friend.

**Jon Cotton et al**

### **June Meeting – Coombe Conduit House, Kingston – David Kennedy by Isobel Cross**

David Kennedy from the Kingston Society delivered this talk which he subtitled ‘an enigmatic Tudor waterworks’. It is situated in Coombe Lane West in Kingston near Norbiton Station and was built to take water from Coombe Springs and send it to Hampton Court Palace about three miles away. Enough water was delivered under considerable pressure by gravitational force for the Palace’s fountains and domestic needs even to its second floor level. The lead pipes ran across the Thames, laid on the bed of the river, and were in duplicate, so one pipe or the other could be turned off if necessary.



What you see now are structures built between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is Tudor and Victorian brickwork. There is stonework; some stone may have come from Merton Priory. There is a brick tunnel, plaster and timber work, and niches for candles. There is a cistern where you can look down at the water flowing, which it does regardless of drought, and is clear and of good quality.

There is controversy about who exactly did begin the system. Simon Thurley says it was Henry VIII and has written a book about it. Other people say it was Cardinal Wolsey and even that there was something in place here in medieval times. This is still being assessed and is the reason David Kennedy used the word ‘enigmatic’.

People living in the area used to steal water by tapping into the pipes. You could poison the water like this and there may have been a guard living in Coombe Conduit House. The system was in use till about 1875 when water was taken from Hampton Waterworks. It had supplied some people legitimately. About 1850 there was a survey of this. For example, the parsonage of Kingston Parish could have one tap from it, the Palace could have 40 taps, mostly for Grace and Favour accommodation.

Coombe Conduit House is open on the second Sunday of each month from 2-4 pm April to September.

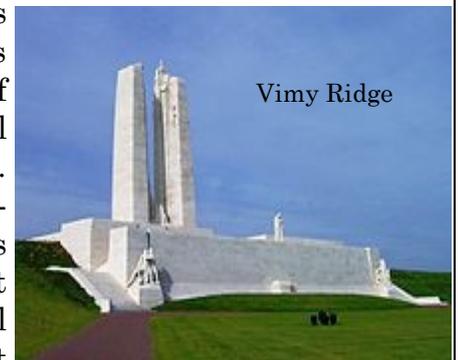
## July Meeting – Memorial Landscapes in Archaeology: Stonehenge and World War I Battlefields – Scott McCracken

Isobel Cross

‘Monuments carry a message to succeeding generations, each of whom has a different sense of what they mean’. This was Scott McCracken’s theme.

Stonehenge meant something to its contemporaries like the Bronze Age people who chose to be buried near it. Archaeologists have been excavating it for a long time, and interpreting it, and now its place in the landscape is being re-interpreted with the closure of the nearby road and new visitor centre. Also the solstice celebrations are a modern interpretation of the ancient meaning of the place.

The monuments of the First World War battlefields were put there to remember the dead, but succeeding generations find their own meaning for them. While the war was still going on plans were made for memorials and soon after the fighting stopped people began visiting the battlefields. Ypres was badly damaged and Churchill wanted to buy the whole place to turn it into a British Empire memorial. The Belgians were having none of it and rebuilt Ypres for themselves. People then as now wanted to remember the dead and how this happens varies with their nationalities. British cemeteries are laid out with reference to the churchyards at home. The German have dark, tree filled cemeteries. These are for the known dead, but the identities of 500,000 British casualties are still missing. Their names are on the Menin Gate at Ypres where every night at 8 pm there is a ceremony of remembrance. More names are inscribed on the Thiepval memorial created by Lutyens to stand out in the landscape. Nearly all the soldiers from Newfoundland died at Beaumont-Hamel. Newfoundland bought the site to preserve it. There is a visitors’ centre, The Canadians built a very large monument near Vimy Ridge, a place which is locked into their national consciousness. Australians suffered heavy casualties at Fromelles on the Somme. Here, since 1982, they have a memorial, the bodies have been recovered and reburied, and through DNA, identities and relatives have been found for more than half of them.



People continue to visit the battlefields and the monuments. Bodies continue to be found. Archaeologists work on the trenches and the tunnels, finding new bodies and new information. Memorials continue to be set up. There are educational school visits and re-enactment groups. In the next four years a lot of re-interpretation by historians will be going on. There are now no living witnesses, and this is the point where myths begin to evolve. How will we remember these events? What meaning will modern generations find in the landscapes of the War?

### Benchmarks of the Borough

Following Jeremy Harte’s note on OS Benchmarks in the last Newsletter, Jeff Cousins, after much cycling about, has supplied a list of some 56 sites around the Borough where these marks are, or were to be found. He notes that not all have survived - those on later 1930s buildings may be on relatively insubstantial structures that have been demolished or altered. But, thanks to Jeff we now have a fairly definitive list of what was where.

## NESCOT Animal Husbandry Fields

Stephen Nelson



Many will have followed the proposals to develop the fields between the railway and the by-pass by NESCOT. As part of the planning applications an archaeological desk based assessment (DBA) was commissioned from Oxford Archaeology (OA). This is a useful resume of all past archaeology & history (with the exception of reference to the work at Hatch Furlong) in the immediate and wider area. Like all such documents it reiterates much of what has been said before and to the cynical seems designed to ensure the commissioners of the work get VFM. However, the alternative view is that those in the decision making process don't necessarily know what the fuller picture is, whether it be the historic or natural environment, and as such has to be spelt out each time!

Stage 2 of the archaeological assessment was a programme of trial trenches excavated over the whole area – essentially 4 large fields – in May/June. The area covers 5.5 hectares with a shallow coombe sloping south down from Priest Hill to Ewell. OA have excavated some 30 trenches revealing the natural chalk with patchy Reading Beds/Thanet Sands often “cutting” into the chalk and which can be confused with possible archaeological features. Jon Cotton and I were able to visit the site during the work. Very little archaeology had been identified at that time other than a possible Roman, curving ditch feature in the northern most corner, adjacent to the bridle way and opposite to Hatch Furlong site. Since then we have heard that more has been found including some apparent burials of uncertain date. We await the results of all this investigative work which will appear in the usual grey literature format.



## Church Meadow Excavation July 2014

Nikki Cowlard



YEAR 3 DAY 1

A third and final season of excavation has successfully taken place in Church Meadow, Ewell. The northernmost 10m of the 2013 trench was re-opened together with 55m virgin trench completing the 10m wide consecrated strip of land adjacent to Churchyard No. 4. It was anticipated that activity would be less intense towards the north-east edge of the Romano-British settlement, and this proved to be the case. However a series of pits were found whose finds, when analysed will give us dating for the activities, and indications of possible industrial processes that may have taken place. Completion of a pit that was first opened in 2013, and thought to be a latrine pit, revealed itself as a 4<sup>th</sup> century ritual shaft with depositions of dog and horse bone, and at the base a heifer skull. This is a very exciting and important find, and may represent a shift or extension in ritual activity from Hatch Furlong and the site at King William IV. A ditch and gully running parallel to, and mirroring the ditch and gully found in 2012, appears to

define the line of Stane Street although no road surface remained in between.

Children from Bourne Hall Museum Club again visited for practical sessions on site, organised by David Brooks and supervised by Ian West. It was good to see the enthusiasm of these young archaeologists of the future. The Open Day, run as part of the Festival of Archaeology and Ewell Village Day, welcomed several hundred visitors and pupils from Ewell Grove School visited in the last week. Thanks to all the EEHAS members who took part in the project, be it in the trench or on finds processing, with particular gratitude to

Jane and Rob Pedler for allowing us access to Rectory Barn and its water supply.

An interim report of what was found will be printed in the newsletter in due course but, if you want to know more in the meantime, visit the 'Dig Diary' on the EEHAS website <http://www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk/#/cme-2014/4582683142>.

**An exhibition will be held in St. Mary's Church Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2-4pm so you can see for yourselves some of the finds from this year's excavation.**

## August Meeting – Members' Evening

Isobel Cross

### *Reminiscences of the Six Day War – Elizabeth Bennett*

There were two very clear maps showing the world as it was in 1967 when Elizabeth was 13 and set sail with her family from the Malay Peninsula on a ship called the Cathay to go home to England. Things started well with sightseeing in Penang and Ceylon – dancing and snake charming – and a bit of drama when a cargo ship requested a doctor for a case of appendicitis. But more drama was to come. On 5 June the Egypt/Israeli War broke out, the Suez Canal was closed and the way home blocked. The Cathay set off down the coast of Africa, lengthening the voyage by two weeks. The crew managed to make the food last (this was quite a serious problem in such circumstances). Entertainment was kept going including a Crossing the Line ceremony and there was sightseeing in South Africa, Senegal and Gibraltar. Finally the Cathay docked in London at Canary Wharf, and luckily, perhaps, Elizabeth was too late to go back to school that summer.

### *The Hogsmill River Improvements – Steve Nelson*

The Wandle Trust is improving the environment of the Hogsmill River to encourage fish and other wild life, but fish cannot cope with two concrete weirs, so these have been demolished. They were near old gunpowder mills belonging to the Bridges family of Ewell Court, and the demolition gave an opportunity to look into the remains of the mills. These mills were photographed before being demolished in the 1950s but there is not much left. The incorporating mill where the gunpowder ingredients were mixed, was difficult to interpret. The demolition cut into the old brickwork which was built into the river bank. There was a south wall, a north wall and between, a leat, a channel to discharge water from the mill wheel. The brickwork is 18<sup>th</sup> century. The site was cleaned up and planned as well as it could be. Not much could be done with the corning house by the other weir, where gunpowder was granulated. The brickwork is visible. There are no information boards at these sites and this is something the Council should consider.

### *Gozo – Martin Upward*

Gozo is a small island, greener and prettier than Malta, where you can visit several interesting sites in a day, using the local bus services. There are Neolithic remains like the "cart" tracks in the limestone, which also occur in Malta, and which nobody really understands. Principally there is the huge temple of Ggantija, a Unesco World Heritage site, excavated by the British, and its associated finds.

There are a lot of striking churches in Gozo and these were especially interesting in the

run-up to Easter with their impressive tableaux ready to take out for processions. The churches are really big, no matter how small their associated villages. In the capital Victoria there is an old prison and among the graffiti in the cells is a depiction of a Venetian galley. The views were wonderful, of the sea, and being April, of the wildflowers and the small productive fields.

### *A Sudanese Odyssey – Brenda Allen*

Northern Sudan is safe to visit and there are not many tourists. It is significant historically as Nubia which had a relationship – mutually aggressive – with Egypt. In the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC the kings of Kush in Nubia became rulers of Egypt. Meroe was the capital of Kush. Here there are pyramid tombs and the ruins of the city. We saw a picture of the royal baths.

Brenda's journey was quite strenuous, travelling in four by fours and staying in everything from a luxury hotel to a basic tent. She showed us many photographs of tombs and temples with wall paintings and decorative details. Some of these were typically Egyptian and some seemed to be more locally influenced. There were also pictures of things like a nomad's house of acacia branches, and two boats from Kitchener's expedition left behind after Gordon's death.

### **Nonsuch Park Boundary Ditch**

In April some work was undertaken to clear the ditch in the Woods to the east of the Mansion that had been causing problems. This ditch follows the east boundary of the Little Park which on the 1731 map bordered Cheam Common Field. We took the opportunity to watch the work in progress as little is known about this area though in the event only the modern fill of the ditch was removed. At the time of the Nonsuch excavations in 1960 a large brick structure, probably a lime kiln, was noted in The Woods area (photo in the Dent archive). We have not yet been able to track down exactly where this was.



### **Development in Epsom**

WS Atkins held a public consultation on proposals for redevelopment of their site off Chalk Lane. This includes removal of the 1960's office block, not a nice building and replacement with a new one sited away from the historic Woodcote Grove. Overall the development, although increasing the office space seems acceptable. They said all the right things at the public open day and I gather that their planning advisers are the same as those advising on the NESOT site so any archaeology here may not be missed.

However, what seems not so good are the current proposals for redevelopment at the RAC club. These include replacement of the 1960's admin block. While not a nice building the proposed new build includes material (bricks & windows) not in keeping with the main building which although a rebuild of 1936 retains the classic design of the old Woodcote Park. Also worrying are plans for extensive new build in the walled garden. However, the plans as submitted do provide for repair of the walls themselves, to be welcomed as they are currently fenced off with an ominous "Dangerous Structure Keep Out" notice. We will also be seeking an archaeological condition.

**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](mailto:info@epsomewellhistory.org.uk)**

**President:** Jon Cotton MA, FSA

**Chairman:** Steve Nelson

**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 13 October 2014**

**Visit our website**

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

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You can see a colour copy of this newsletter on the Society website from mid-September

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