



NEWSLETTER

2015, Issue 5

November 2015

<p>We welcome as a new member</p> <p>Mr G Shaxton</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman's Notes</p> <p>Congratulations to Lou Hays for organising the display on EEHAS in BHM, showcasing the work of the society. This is part of an initiative aimed at increasing our membership; particularly important in view of the slight fall in numbers that has occurred over the last few years.</p> <p>A worrying piece of news is the recent arson attack (again) on Hollywood Lodge in Horton Lane. Although the building was in a derelict condition it will presumably now be demolished. This draws attention to the vulnerability of buildings left unoccupied.</p> <p>We have continued to monitor the works to the British Legion Club building in Epsom. We have observed the construction works around the building and the alterations to the structure itself; all of which point to a date of c 1800/20 for this important building. We hope to include a fuller report on this in a future Newsletter.</p>
<p>Inside this issue:</p> <p><i>Isabella Beeton on stage</i> 2</p> <p><i>Some badge finds</i> 3 <i>Background on the badges: The MAB</i></p> <p><i>September Meeting: 100 years of world class aircraft designed and built in Kingston</i> 5</p>	<p>After many years providing the write-ups of the monthly talks for the Newsletter, Isobel Cross wishes to stand down. We thank her very much for what has become something of a fixture over the years and on which the Editor had come to rely. Unless someone would like to take over from Isobel we will have to share this around the Committee.</p>
<p><i>BAE Systems in Kingston today</i></p> <p><i>October Meeting: Rectors and Vicars of Ewell</i> 6</p> <p><i>Forthcoming Events</i></p> <p><i>Contact Details</i> 7</p> <p><i>Christmas Meeting</i> 8 <i>2016 Subscriptions</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture Diary</p> <p>December 2nd Christmas Meeting</p> <p>January 6th Ravenna, by Richard Watson</p> <p>February 3rd Architecture of the London Underground, by Jon Glover</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>



Isabella Beeton 1836 - 1865

Isabella Beeton on stage

Lou Hays

On the afternoon of Wednesday 23rd September, Nikki Cowlard, Chris and Gay Harris, Lou Hays and a few other EEHAS members visited the Epsom Playhouse to see a one woman show by the actress Alison Neil based on her own research into Isabella Beeton's life: It was directed by the award winning David Collison.

It is not too strong to say that Ms Neil held her audience in thrall for the hour of the performance, and left us wanting more. She enacted the part of one of Isabella's sisters, Bessie, and used some artefacts and memorabilia from the mid 19th Century to illustrate her act.

Many know that Isabella's family, the Maysons, moved to Epsom upon the marriage of their widowed mother to a widower friend, Henry Dorling, and part of the abundant and ever increasing combined family lived in the Grandstand on Epsom Downs as Mr Dorling was Clerk of the Course and so had access to the facilities. At the time of their mother's marriage there were four Mayson offspring and four Dorling children who were all much of an age. After the marriage another child appeared almost every year, so it was fortunate that Mr Dorling was successful in business and able to support them, albeit in different homes; those occupying the Grandstand cared for by Isabella and her maternal grandmother! In today's terms the family would probably be described as dysfunctional.

Isabella's marriage to Sam Beeton was frowned upon by some of her family as Sam was seen as 'a man about town' and was regularly noted out and about probably sowing his 'wild oats', which was fairly normal at the time, so his activities must have included excesses not mentionable in front of Victorian ladies. According to Ms Neil's performance this could explain the several miscarriages that beset their union. In addition, three sons of the marriage died in infancy, a common occurrence at the time, but heart breaking for the parents. However, throughout all her pregnancies Isabella worked hard at her husband's side in his publishing business ventures that were attended by varying degrees of fortune. It was mooted that he must have been sailing close to the legal wind as several lawsuits were mentioned almost bringing the company to its knees on more than one occasion. Nevertheless the marriage lasted until Isabella's untimely death from puerperal fever after the birth of her fourth child, a son named Mayson. After her death Sam successfully campaigned for surgeons to be more aware of hygiene to avoid so many unnecessary deaths from post operative and post parturition infection.

The performance was full of wit, humour and pathos in more or less equal measure and brought Isabella's – short – life into focus.

Badge finds

Lou Hays has written articles on two badges found over the last few years in Surrey, the one below left in a field in Surrey, the other (below right) in Church Meadow during recent excavations. The first of the two articles appears below.



Background on the badges: The MAB

Lou Hays

A few years ago whilst working on finds in Normandy, that is Normandy Surrey, not France, although its proximity to Aldershot makes it sound as if one could be under enemy fire, the site metal detectorists handed me a small round enameled military style pin with the rod of Asclepius depicted upon it together with the letters MAB. Interest whetted, I did a little research uncovering a slice of social history:

The rod of Asclepius indicated a medical connection, and research found that MAB could stand for the 'Metropolitan Asylum Board'.

Before "Benefits Street" there were 'workhouses' set up for the poor with the support of worthy philanthropists. These could be harsh, unwelcoming environments designed to put malingerers off but with little solace for the truly sick and needy. After examination of the system, 'The Metropolitan Poor Act' was passed by parliament on 14th March, **1867**, 'for the Establishment in the Metropolis of Asylums for the Sick, Insane, and other Classes of the Poor, and for Other Purposes relating to Poor relief in the Metropolis.' Six months later the Metropolitan Asylum Board was formed.

It is now arguably regarded as being responsible for the first NHS style hospitals around the London Metropolitan area as well as developing a basic ambulance service; initially using horse drawn transport, supplanted in due course by motor vehicles. In **1912** they took over responsibility for 'Casual poor' or 'Vagrants' who were expected to work for a few hours in return for each night of accommodation. Their hospitals handled most of those suffering in the epidemics of the late 19th early 20th centuries such as TB and smallpox, and the 'Spanish Flu' epidemic of **1918 – 1919**, as well as caring for those suffering from mental illness.

At the outbreak of war in **1914**, the MAB briefly undertook the organisation of accommodation for 'destitute alien enemies', a role quickly taken over by the military authorities. The Board's main wartime work became the operation of housing war refugees from the Continent. By far the biggest of these were two vast refugee camps set up in 1914 at Alexandra Palace and the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, each of which provided 4,000 beds. As well as dealing with refugees, the Board contributed two of its establishments, the Brook Hospital at Shooter's Hill, and the Grove Hospital at Tooting, for use as military hospitals.

In **1928**, the government announced proposals for the re-organisation of local government in England and Wales, including the abolition of 'Poor Law Guardians' and the transfer of their responsibilities to the County and Borough Councils. The MAB had its final meeting at its HQ on the Embankment on 29th March 1930. Following the dissolution of MAB the LCC inherited a total of thirty-seven poor law establishments:

13 institutions

1 home for the aged

8 homes for children

1 home for children and aged women

3 residential colonies for the able-bodied (Dunton Farm, Sutton, and Hollesley Bay)

9 MAB casual wards, plus the Hostel and Night Office

It is many of these properties that formed the basis of the embryonic NHS formed in **1946**.

Do we know how the insignia brooch got to that field? Flights of imaginative fancy include the fact that many old uniforms may have been disposed of after the hostilities ceased. One historic method of disposing of uniforms was to use them as soil improvers; old uniforms were made of natural fibres and would rot down nicely, unimaginable with today's man made fabrics! Sometimes they were sent to flocking mills to make the flocked wallpaper so beloved by our Edwardian forebears and certain Ethnic Restaurants in the late 20th Century; or to be turned into scrim for rags used in factories. More prosaically it could just have been dropped.

The finding of this small brooch discovered by chance in the 21 Century led me on a small voyage of discovery covering about 100 years of social history; about how the poor and needy were treated in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, the events that led to the setting up of the NHS and Ambulance Service, with echoes back to the First World War and the doorstep of the second.

(N.B. part of this is a précis of detailed primary information available on the Internet and other media was clearly written before Political Correctness was invented, therefore please do not 'shoot the messenger' should you find the language of earlier generations offensive)

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A potted history of the **RAMC badge** will appear in the next newsletter.

September Meeting – 100 Years of World Class Aircraft: Kingston’s Contribution to the History of Flying – David Hassard **Isobel Cross**

Tommy Sopwith, born in 1888, taught himself to fly in his twenties because there were no flying instructors. He opened his own flying school at Brooklands in 1912, and began also to design planes with a team which included Harry Hawker, an Australian skilled mechanic and then a talented pilot. They bought a roller skating rink in Canbury Park Road, Kingston, which had the necessary space to turn into a factory floor. Aeroplanes were wooden than, and their design evolved from boats, so the wooden boat builders of Kingston-on-Thames were employed.

The Sopwith Bat Boat of 1913 was the first successful British flying boat and the first practical amphibious aircraft when fitted with wheels. A second site in Kingston was developed since the Sopwith Aviation Company was developing fighter aircraft for the RAF for use in the 1914-18 war. The most successful of these was the 1917 Sopwith Camel. Thousands of planes were built since bad weather and enemy action could eliminate an aircraft after only eight weeks’ service. In 1918 the company expanded into the Ham works in Richmond Road. Then the war ended, leaving a redundant workforce and many partly built planes. The company downsized, functioning only in Canbury Park Road, but did not disappear.

In 1920 the Hawker Engineering Company, later Hawker Aircraft, was set up. It was joined by Sydney Camm, an aeronautical engineer who, thereafter, designed many successful fighter aircraft for the RAF. Sopwith’s enterprise became again a military and commercial success. In 1935 Hawker Aircraft bought the Siddeley group and became Hawker Siddeley Aviation. In 1936 the Hawker Hurricane, designed by Camm, was developed – top speed 300 mph, retractable undercarriage, four guns on each wing. This plane made a significant contribution to the Battle of Britain in 1940, and in every theatre of the Second World War. The design offices were always in Kingston, but the planes were assembled in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s at Ham, at Langley near Slough and at Dunsfold in Surrey. Sydney Camm and Thomas Sopwith were knighted in 1953.

Hawker Siddeley Aviation continued to supply military aircraft including the Sea Harrier built in 1979 and used successfully in the Falklands Conflict, though in 1977 the company had become part of British Aerospace. The Richmond Road factory closed in 1992, and aircraft design ended in Kingston. It is now remembered and celebrated as part of Kingston’s historical heritage.

BAE Systems in Kingston today

Jeff Cousins

Although aircraft production has ceased in Kingston, British Aerospace — now BAE Systems — is still present in the borough, but nowadays developing systems for warships. In 1991 it bought a 50% share in the “Scientific” (UK Defence) division of the French owned Sema Group, whose main site was by New Malden station, to form BAESema. This had the contracts to produce the Command and Control Systems for the Royal Navy’s submarine fleet and Type 23 frigates. In 1998 British Aerospace bought out Sema’s 50% share. In 1999 British Aerospace became BAE SYSTEMS after taking over the British Marconi, and the New Malden site became part of a joint venture with Alenia of Italy called Alenia Marconi Systems. In 2005 this partnership was dissolved and the New Malden site reverted to being fully owned by BAE Systems.

October Meeting – Rectors and Vicars of Ewell – Jeremy Harte and the Rev. Russell Dewhurst **Isobel Cross**

In the first half of the meeting Jeremy Harte talked about the medieval church in the 14th century with reference to the Rectors of Ewell. In the second half, the Rev. Russell Dewhurst, the current Vicar of Ewell, illustrated the changes in the life and ethos of the Anglican Church from 1789-1914.

The clergy were an important part of medieval society. They were literate, they were charged with the spiritual welfare of the people and the structural underpinnings of society like conducting weddings. As individuals, however, they were not all of the same social or economic class. Some were poor curates with £2-£3 a year income. Some, like the Rector of Ewell, were near the top of the social hierarchy. A priest was supposed to have one benefice, which gave him a living, which crucially was bound up with the care of his parishioners. Holding more than one – pluralism – was not allowed but was not unknown. Priests were not necessarily resident, employing curates, and the laity was well aware that their needs were not always met.

In the 14th century the Patron who appointed Rectors in Ewell was the Abbott of Chertsey. By 1789 the right to appoint Vicars was invested in the Glyn family. In 1777 Sir George Glyn appointed his brother-in-law John Lewes, who was a pluralist, holding a benefice on the Isle of Wight where he lived, employing a curate in his place in Ewell. Income was still dependent on tithes which largely depended on the quality of the local agriculture and the annual harvest. Lewes also inherited money as did his successor James Maggs.

In the 19th century a member of the Glyn Family became the Vicar of Ewell from 1831-1881. This was the Rev. Sir George Lewen Glyn, who had a true vocation and was committed to the idea that his duties as a Vicar were more important than his social status. The present church of St Mary was built at this time. In 1889, one of Sir George's successors, appointed by Sir George Turberville Glyn, had money and a Cambridge education, but he was happy to function as a parish priest and use his own money to pay for All Saints Church in West Ewell, and also the church hall in which EEHAS holds its meetings. By the beginning of the 20th century times were really changing. Walter Weston, appointed Vicar in 1906, had been to theological college as well as university, and had a professional attitude as well as much experience of life. (The Japanese remember him in connection with the development of Japanese mountaineering). The final name mentioned was Jeremiah Wallace, Vicar from 1911-1922, fully trained, committed, and a graduate of London University (not an Oxbridge man). The Rev. John Lewes had been more like a medieval pluralist, but Wallace was more the kind of Vicar we know today.

Forthcoming Events

Ada Lovelace's Birthday – December 10th will be the 200th anniversary of the birth of Ada Lovelace, known as the world's first computer programmer. She was the daughter of the poet Byron. She married William King, the 8th Baron King, in 1835. In 1838 he was created Viscount Ockham and 1st Earl of Lovelace, and in 1840 was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey. Their marital home was Horsley Park, East Horsley, Surrey. William is known for the eccentric architecture on this estate, mostly created after Ada's death. Later Horsley Park became the home of Sir Thomas Sopwith (mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter).

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

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

Please send copy for the next newsletter to the Secretary by 12 January 2016

Visit our website

www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

Gift Aid

Just a further reminder that if you pay tax EEHAS, as a charity, can claim Gift Aid on your subscription or donations, at no cost to yourself. In order for us to do this you need to sign a Gift Aid Declaration form which is available at meetings and can also be found on the Society website on the Membership page.

You can see a colour copy of this newsletter on the Society website from mid November
www.epsomewellhistory.org.uk

EEHAS Christmas Meeting 2015

This year's special Christmas meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd December at 7.45 for 8.00 pm in St Mary's Church Hall.

Tickets, priced at £4, will be available at the November meeting.

They are also by post from Doreen Tilbury at 31 West Hill Avenue, Epsom, KT19 8LE, using the detachable slip below (please enclose an SAE). Doreen would also be grateful for any contributions towards the catering.

Christmas Meeting 2015

Name and address.....

..... Amount enclosed.....

Finger food contribution offered.....

2016 Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2016 become due on 1st January. Subscriptions can be paid at the monthly meetings, or by post to the Treasurer, Jane Pedler, or the Membership Secretary, Doreen Tilbury. Subs are £10 for ordinary membership, £14 for family membership, £6 for student, or £14 for corporate and school memberships. A slip is provided below:

2016 Subscriptions

I (we) wish to renew membership for 2016

Amount enclosed.....

Name and address.....

.....

.....

E-mail address.....