

Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society

Annual Report for 2016

INTRODUCTION

This annual report highlights the main activities of the Society for the year ending 31st December 2016. The well-being of the Society owes a great deal to the hard work of numerous members, not all of whom are mentioned in this report, and we thank them for this.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The principal officers and committee members during the year were:

President	Jonathan Cotton
Vice Presidents	Eve Myatt-Price (died 1.12.16) and Steve Nelson
Chairman	Steve Nelson
Secretary	Nikki Cowlard
Treasurer	Jane Pedler
Committee	Rosemary Burleigh, Jeff Cousins, Isobel Cross, David Hartley, Lesley Hays, Doreen Tilbury and Ian West.

The Committee held six meetings during the year.

Other functionaries are:

Archaeology Officer	Frank Pemberton	Conservation Officer	Nikki Cowlard
Membership Secretary	Doreen Tilbury	Newsletter Editor	Jeff Cousins
Programme Secretary	Vacant	Publicity Officer	Vacant

MEMBERSHIP

Memberships at the end of the year in terms of subscriptions paid were 66 (-3) ordinary, 21 (+1) family, 1 (+1) student and 0 corporate. There were a total of 88 subscriptions and the Society has 6 honorary members. There is a gradual decrease in membership, together with reduced involvement by existing members and this will have implications for how the Society can function going forward.

LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

EEHAS is affiliated to Surrey Archaeological Society, Surrey Record Society and the Council for British Archaeology. Newsletters are exchanged with neighbouring local history societies. Some of our members have individual membership of Surrey Archaeological Society: our President, Jonathan Cotton and Nikki Cowlard, our Secretary, are Vice-Presidents of the Society; Lesley Hays is a member of Council, sits on the Local History Committee, the Investment Committee and the Roman Studies Group Committee, and is a member of AARG (Artefact and Archaeological Research Group). Nikki Cowlard is a member of the Management Committee, and is Secretary of the Roman Studies Group Committee; David Hartley and Steve Nelson are active members of SyAS' Medieval Studies Group. Other members are also members of other local archaeological and historical societies such as KuTAS and Esher History Society.

PUBLICITY

Thanks go to Isobel Cross and Gay Keeble who produce posters advertising EEHAS talks for the Borough noticeboards, and to Nikki Cowlard for updating the Society information board at Bourne Hall Museum.

The post of Publicity Officer is still vacant so if you think you might be interested, do talk to a member of the committee who can advise you as to what the role entails.

PUBLICATIONS

Occasional Papers 55 and 56 were published in the course of the year. OP55, *Food and Drink in Roman Ewell* by Jeremy Harte was published in September, and OP56, *The Star, 31 High Street, Ewell: draft report on the historic structure* by Ian West and Stephen Nelson in November. We are grateful to Rosemary Burleigh for managing the sales desk.

Members are encouraged to carry out local historic research and to approach the committee if they have papers for publication.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Report 2016

Frank Pemberton, Archaeology Officer

In addition to working with the group identifying the Roman pottery, from our Church Meadow site, most of my time this year and next year is devoted to identifying and writing up reports on other excavated sites in Ewell. A reassessment of the multi-period site at Purberry Shot, Epsom Road, Ewell has been amalgamated with several sites along the High Street found during shop development works, to form a single monograph.

The site at Purberry Shot revealed Late Iron Age (LIA) settlement debris, an iron working oven, a pit of Early Romano-British date, and the cut and lining of a well. All these structures were filled in and the site levelled in the late 1st - early 2nd century, to enable the construction of a Roman road, constructed of flint nodules and pebbles bonded with sand, together with side ditches, aligned south westwards across the site. The site evidence and finds reports with discussion is set out based upon the site phasing.

The sites down the slope of the High Street revealed surfaces, structures, cut pits, containing a raft of plain and fine pottery of 1st and 2nd century AD. Building materials and personal objects were found which have all been identified and catalogued in the report.

A second report being finalised is the 1977 excavation at the Church Street end of Church Meadow. In situ layers of compacted flints, pebbles and sand consist of the structure and probable resurfacing of the Roman road Stane Street, with ditches found along the eastern edge. The roadside features consisted of flint drystone walling and settlement layers, with a dump of roof and hypocaust tiles, mortar and plaster, mixed with plain and fine pottery sherds, glass and oysters shells. This suggests a roadside building demolition dump. The report could be useful site evidence for the CME excavation report. Two further reports on excavations in churchyard No.4 are still outstanding.

Church Meadow Project

Nikki Cowlard, Site Director

Work continues on finds from the 2012-4 excavations. Thanks must go to the volunteers who are now cataloguing the final season's Roman pottery under the guidance of Phil Stanley and Frank Pemberton; part of the group has catalogued the ceramic building material and metalwork. Specialist reports have been received for animal bone from Roman contexts, and for quern (stone mill for grinding grain), and Frank Pemberton is completing the special finds cataloguing. In order to gain as much information as possible the quern for the whole of Ewell was looked at by Ruth Shaffrey (University of Reading), with funding from CMP, Surrey Archaeological Society and Bourne Hall Museum. The overall report will be published in the Surrey Archaeological Collections. Environmental samples are with an archaeobotanist, and initial results include evidence for cereal grains, chaff and weed seeds.

Church Meadow has now been stripped of vegetation, levelled and seeded in order to convert it to a sports training ground for Ewell Castle School. Metal detectorists recovered more than two dozen Roman coins but all came from disturbed ground - backfill of the trench and upcast from a water main trench. Because soil disturbance was kept to a minimum any remaining archaeology (and coins) will have been left undisturbed.

CONSERVATION

The Society's Conservation Officers check the Borough's planning applications regularly to highlight applications which affect listed buildings, locally listed buildings and buildings of interest within conservation areas. They also respond to concerns from members about conservation issues that affect the community.

As always there is pressure on built-up areas for development, whether in back gardens, knocking down buildings and redeveloping, or on brown-field or green-field sites. Whilst we cannot stop future development in our neighbourhoods we can all help reduce the negative impact by voicing our concerns and ensuring that the development that goes ahead is appropriate for its surroundings and respects our historic buildings and environs.

The Committee has liaised with the acting Council Planning Heritage Officer to raise issues of concern related to nationally or locally-listed buildings. Planning applications or conservation issues which we have discussed, commented on or viewed include: The British Legion,; The Star, Ewell; 25 Alexandra Road, Epsom; Woodcote Green House, Epsom; The White Horse, Dorking Road, Epsom; Woodcote End House , Epsom; the old Williams shop, 32 High Street, Ewell; The Old Barn and Grade II listed walled garden, RAC; Berridale, College Road; The Olde Kings Head, Church Street Epsom; Pedestrian gate to Glyn House;

Ashley House, Epsom; 16 Waterloo Road, Epsom. Building recording has been carried out on The Star, Woodcote Green House, 16 Waterloo Road, and on the head race at the Lower Mill.

We are fortunate to have the expertise of Ian West in recording buildings at risk, and to feed appropriately into planning applications.

We rely on you to let us know of any concerns you have about local buildings - we need 'eyes and ears' around the Borough to make sure problems are picked up and highlighted. You can contact us by phone, e-mail or post.

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Lesley Hays, 21 Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom KT18 7EQ 01372 724172 louhays@ntlworld.com

BOURNE HALL MUSEUM

Members of EEHAS continue to support the Museum and Jeremy Harte, the Museum's curator, aids members' work on historical and archaeological archives. Isobel Cross continues to volunteer in the running the Museum shop; new volunteers are always needed.

DISPLAYS

The Society was involved in producing one display this year. The Church Meadow Excavation display on post-excavation work yet again won 2nd place in the Margary Award at Surrey Archaeological Society's February Symposium. The prize of £100 was donated to The Church Meadow Project.

LECTURE PROGRAMME AND VISITS

Committee members have arranged another interesting and varied programme of lectures, in the absence of a lecture coordinator. This year's lectures were: Ravenna; Architecture of the London Underground; Vanished People of the Wandle; Langley Vale Memorial Wood; History of Kingston; Epsom College and the First World War; Archaeology of the NESCoT site – Industry and Magic: Quarrying and Selective Deposition in Ewell; Magna Carta through time; A-Z of Wartime; The History of AC Cars; Hidden Rome. In lieu of the Members' meeting in August Ian West led a most interesting walk around the Woodcote area followed by refreshments at 10 Chalk Lane. All who attended much enjoyed it.

REFRESHMENTS

Unfortunately no-one has come forward to run the refreshments rota so once again this role is being carried by the committee. All members are encouraged to take part in the refreshments rota - it is a good way to meet other members and helps to share the workload. Thanks to all those members who have contributed their help this year.

NEWSLETTERS

Five newsletters were produced throughout the year, edited by Jeff Cousins. Our thanks go to Jeff for producing such informative newsletters. They are also published on the website with colour photographs. The reports on the monthly lecture have been written by committee members due to lack of a volunteer from the membership. Articles that have appeared in the year's newsletters include: Ewell Court House: A phoenix from the ashes; Background on the badges: A potted history of the RAMC; Pubs, Inns and Taverns of Epsom, Ewell and Cheam; WW1 Centenary Events – 1916; History of Epsom Speakers Club; Local finds – a Saxon silver *sceat* and a 14th century punched point mirror case; A Glimpse of Tudor Epsom; A feather curler from Epsom; Carting Faggots for Christmas; New at the Museum; Pottery finds from Beech Walk; Food and Drink in Roman Ewell.

Thanks as ever to Doreen Tilbury for organising distribution of the newsletter. Assistance by volunteers in distributing to people who do not regularly attend our meetings gives a useful saving in postal costs.

FINANCES

The Treasurer's Report will be available at the AGM and will be published online in advance of the meeting. The Society's finances remain in the capable hands of Jane Pedler.