



society

NEWS

The Bulletin of the ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

September 2001 No 162

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Society News is published quarterly in March, June, September and December
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings of the Enfield Archaeological Society are held at Jubilee Hall, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield (near Chase Side) at 8.00pm. Tea and coffee are served and the sales and information table is open from 7.30pm. Visitors, for whom a charge of £1.00 will be made, are very welcome.

Friday 21 September 2001

York Minster: England's Largest Stained Glass Museum
Nigel Swift

York Minster is one of Britain's most spectacular cathedrals, constantly undergoing rebuilding right through the Middle Ages. The magnificent structure that has come down to us retains a nearly total glazing of medieval stained glass, making it the biggest stained glass museum in Britain – in spite of wind, weather and fires. The talk will take a "virtual" walk around it with stops at important points to provide an almost continuous history of English stained glass from 1200 to beyond the Reformation. The reused early panels in the nave, the 13th century grisaille of the Five Sisters in the north transept, the 14th century great west window and the spectacularly large 15th century east window, the Tudor period figures of the south transept, all combine to make York a huge, fascinating and living textbook of stained glass history.

Nigel Swift

Friday 19 October 2001

Kensal Green Cemetery
Robert Stephenson

Kensal Green Cemetery, founded in 1832, is the first and largest of the seven great early 19th century cemeteries encircling London. It houses some outstanding monuments, several of which are listed, and is the final resting place of royalty as well as many household names associated with the arts, literature and science. It is also a conservation area and has a special role in providing a habitat for certain insects, plants and animals in the city, some of which were here before the cemetery.

I have been guiding in the cemetery for seven years and teach on the subject of British death customs.

Robert Stephenson

Friday 16 November 2001

New Thinking About 16th and 17th Century London
Dr John Schofield

The Great Fire of 1666 devastated much of the City of London. So what can be known about it? A combination of archaeology, study of pictorial evidence and documents enables us to rectify our ignorance and explore some important questions. The conurbation of London grew four times in size of population and probably area in a century. The Reformation and Dissolution of the Monasteries changes people's surroundings and attitudes on a scale matched only by the Norman invasion 600 years previously, and in the middle of the 17th century London began its new and most important role as the centre of an increasingly worldwide commercial and colonial empire. How did London manage all these changes?

Dr John Schofield

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MEETINGS OF OTHER SOCIETIES

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION – NORTH LONDON BRANCH

All meetings are held on Tuesdays at 8.00 p.m. in Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

Tuesday 11 September 2001

The First Nationalisation: the Fire Service
Chris Whippe

Tuesday 09 October 2001

Richard Trevithick and the Steam Revolution
Richard Dawe

Tuesday 13 November 2001

Pompeii before the Eruption of AD79
Prof. Michael Fulford (Univ. of Reading)

For further details, contact Robin Blades, 020 8368 5328

EDMONTON HUNDRED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7.45 for 8.00 p.m. in Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield unless otherwise stated. Visitors £1.00

Wednesday 19 September 2001

Everyday Life in the South Mimms Area in the Middle Ages
Brian Warren

Wednesday 10 October 2001

At Union Church Hall, corner Ferme Park Road and Weston Road, London N8
Joint Meeting with Hornsey Historical Society

Saturday 03 November 2001

Jubilee Hall, 10.00 am
Day Conference: Gone but Not Forgotten

Wednesday 21 November 2001

Jubilee Hall 2.15 for 2.30 pm
Anthony Trollope and the Waltham Cross Connection
Graham Handley

Enquiries to the Local History Section, Town Hall, Green Lanes, Palmers Green London N13
Tel: 020 8379 2724

SOCIETY MATTERS

HELP WITH ADMIN NEEDED

If anyone is able and willing to help with the running of the Society in any way, please contact the Chairman Dennis Hill, telephone 020 8440 1593. Although the programme for 2002 is arranged, a new Meetings Secretary is required. We also need a Membership Secretary: this post does require the use of a PC with simple database software – the days of card indexes are long gone!

FIELDWORK AND EXCAVATION

Thank you to all those who responded to the appeal in *Society News* 161 for volunteers to form a Fieldwork and Research Group, which is likely to be called the "Enfield Pastfinders". We are beginning to build up a list of possible projects, including small excavations, one of which is already under way in Bush Hill Park.

Training can be provided for those with little or no experience, and anyone interested should telephone or write to Jon Tanner in the first instance on 020 8367 8000 (day) or 020 8350 0493 (home) email jmt@bhpp.co.uk

THE FORTY HALL TRUST

Members will probably be aware that an agreement has been reached between the Forty Hall Working Party and the London Borough of Enfield to establish a Trust to administer the running of the house. It has been suggested that the Society put forward a candidate as a Trustee, and anyone interested in offering their services is asked to contact our Chairman Dennis Hill on 020 8440 1593. Ideally candidates would be able to offer experience of work of a similar nature.

MEETING REPORTS

Retrieving London's Prehistory

Friday 18 May 2001: Jon Cotton

This was the title of an excellent lecture given to the Enfield Archaeological Society on 18th May by Jon Cotton, Curator of Prehistory at the Museum of London. His theme was that archaeological studies should always aim to put the person(s) back into the archaeological data. Thus, he opened with a computer-generated image of a Neanderthal man and child and a picture of a piece of prehistoric pottery from the River Thames at Mortlake decorated with indents made by a woman's thumbnail together with holes made by her long fingernail.

The Thames is a key element in our sense of what London means. The river originally flowed eastwards across the Vale of St. Albans and out to the North Sea near Clacton. The Thames moved progressively southwards cutting into the gravels to its present position. Prehistoric encampments were situated along the banks of the river and excavations have found a large number of skilfully made flint tools distributed across the whole of the Thames estuary, such as the butchery tools found in graves at West Yiewsley.

Drowned forests can be seen at low tide on the Thames foreshore at Purfleet, dating

back five to seven thousand years. Superb Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered from the Thames, which in those times was an uncontrollable force which needed to be propitiated with valuable offerings.

Excavations at the Perry Oaks sewage works at the western end of Heathrow Airport reveal that in the period 4000 to 3000 BC a large scale clearance of the natural woodland occurred. It has been confirmed by the MoLAS timber expert that it takes 90 minutes to fell a 225-250mm diameter tree using a stone hand axe.

The Stanwell Cursus is a long ceremonial avenue some 4km long and consists of double ditches and a central raised bank. It could only have been constructed as a result of a sustained community effort, but who organised this?

At Shepperton there is a 20m diameter circular trench, which contained the skeleton of a 40-year-old female with good teeth and a bad back. There were squatting facets on her legs, perhaps due to prolonged crouching by fires. DNA and stable isotope analyses are aimed at uncovering her origins.

At Harmondsworth the remains of an aurochs (large cow) were discovered in a pit. The beast had been placed in a pit with its bones articulated, together with six barbed and tongued stone arrowheads dating to about 2000BC.

A Bronze barrow was found at Hurst Park near Hampton. A ring ditch stops at the barrow and indicates that the barrow was still there after 1500BC. The finds are now being laid out and examined. Tracks, farmsteads and small family cemeteries were probably held in common ownership, but later changed to private ownership of plots of land marked out by substantial ditches.

In the Iron Age around 600-500BC there was a group of 12-13m diameter thatched circular houses, which were warm and dry, but very smoky. The Thames flood plain reveals much of our prehistory.

A series of wooden trackways deeply buried 4-5m in the alluvial soil and contemporary with the cursus at Heathrow have been found downstream of the City. They run out from the Thames into the hunting grounds in districts such as Newham. Alder stakes were driven into the soil cross-ways and the gap in between filled with alder brushwood.

Fenning's Wharf hard by the southern end of the modern London Bridge has revealed a circular Bronze Age barrow 8-9m in diameter. The cremated remains of 4 – 8 children in a

ditch together with Bronze Age pits and what might have been saunas.

At Vauxhall, two small metal Bronze Age heads were found near pairs of massive wooden timbers which were complete trees 400-500mm in diameter and which had been debarked. ¹⁴C dating gave a date in the period 1700-1200BC. Was this London's first bridge across the Thames? Another bridge crossing a silted-up channel of the Thames 30-35m across was found at Eton. A number of human remains were found in the river channel and appeared to have been thrown in from the bridge.

An interesting female burial was found in Harper Road, Southwark. She was in her twenties and died in the AD50's, probably witnessing the arrival of Roman civilisation in London. In her grave was a square copper flagon.

The lecture was delivered in faultless style and illustrated with a comprehensive set of slides.

Dennis Hill

ROMAN CHESHUNT AND THE TIME TEAM

I had always refused to believe in coincidences but I recently had cause to revise that opinion when a few weeks after submitting my article on Roman Cheshunt for publication in the June bulletin I was contacted by a representative of the Time Team who informed me that they intended to carry out excavations in Cheshunt Park. In response to a request for information about the site, I provided a copy of my article and details of excavations in 1967 by this Society on the line of Ermine Street elsewhere in Cheshunt. I was subsequently invited to be present during the excavations by the Time Team on 26, 27 and 28 June and in the company of Brian Warren I made extended visits on the second and third days.

The object of the exercise by the Time Team was twofold; an attempt to locate the line of Ermine Street within Cheshunt Park and to identify the true nature of the structures previously found nearby. Ermine Street was successfully located when identifiable remnants of the Roman road were found at two points along its alignment within the park. Elsewhere, the remains of the stokehole and the hypocaust room described in *Society News* 161 were re-excavated. The excavations were then extended

to uncover more of the building to which the hypocaust room was associated when part of a tessellated floor, of plain red tesserae, was among the discoveries made. The excavations were limited in scope but it is hoped that enough evidence was found to make a more positive identification of the site than has previously been possible.

The event was of course filmed and will be shown early next year on Channel Four television as part of the Time Team series.

Geoffrey Gillam

VISIT TO THE ROYAL GUNPOWDER MILLS AT WALTHAM ABBEY SATURDAY 21 JULY 2001

Ten members of the Society enjoyed a visit, in company with colleagues from the West Essex Archaeological Group, to an Archaeological Weekend arranged by the newly opened Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey.

The Mills have been making and developing explosives for more than 300 years. Originally gunpowder and then guncotton, nitroglycerine, cordite paste, the high explosive tetryl, and after World War II the site developed non-nuclear explosives and rocket propellants.

Gunpowder making started at Waltham Abbey in the mid-1660's on the site of a medieval fulling mill. The Mills were privately run until 1787 when they were purchased by the Crown.

The manufacture of gunpowder involves the mixing of three components – saltpetre (potassium nitrate), charcoal and sulphur – as intimately as possible. The steps involved are: the initial crushing, mixing, incorporation, pressing, corning, glazing, drying and finishing.

The oldest part of the Mills had 21 buildings along Millhead Stream. Foundations survive of a 19th century mill built on the site two water-powered stamp mills – giant, noisy pestle and mortar type mills – the Head Mills used to thoroughly mix the ingredients. In the 1760's they were replaced with stone (later metal) edge runner type mills. Horse powered mills were also in use. The Head Mills overlooked the Hoppit Pool. Opposite was the Loading House where gunpowder was stored for subsequent loading into barges for the journey to London via the River Lea. These form the oldest group of buildings on the site.

Walton's House, named after the last private owner of the site, was built as an office

building and nearby are the Mixing House and Saltpetre Melting House.

Until the 1850's the energy required to operate the gunpowder mills was derived from a head of water and also manpower. The first steam powered mills date from 1857 and used beam engines. Some of the mills were destroyed in the explosion of 27 May 1861. The mills were unusual in utilising an interlocking design of trapezoidal bays.

The Crimean War of 1854-56 saw the expansion of the Mills around the central area of Queen Meads. This new group of Italianate style mills comprised the largest and most impressive steam gunpowder mills in Britain. There was a total of 30 mills served by a hand operated tramway system.

In the 1890's the steam gunpowder incorporating mills were converted to house cordite incorporating mills and presses.

Following World War II, the site became a research laboratory for high explosives and rocket propellants.

The highlight of the day was the tour of the northern part of the site which includes the old system of canals with antique bridges, alder plantations for charcoal and a heronry with 20 pairs of breeding birds. Unfortunately, over the years nearly all of the historical machinery has been removed and there was little buried archaeology.

However, the museum and displays were excellent as were the lectures. There is much industrial archaeology to see including a water wheel driven gunpowder press house, accumulator towers for the supply of hydraulic power and elephant skins used for making a soft, spark-proof lining fixed with copper nails for floors and barges.

We hope to return in the winter when the foliage has died down for a more detailed tour of the northern portion of the site.

Dennis Hill

THE 38th LAMAS CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 31 MARCH 2001

The 38th Annual Conference of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society was held at the Museum of London on Saturday 31 March 2001. Harvey Sheldon, the President of the Enfield Archaeological Society, did an excellent job as Chairman of the Conference.

The Opening Speaker was Philip Treveil of MOLAS on "Recent Excavations at Plantation Place, Fenchurch Street". Plantation House was built in 1934 and was home to the London Commodities Exchange. In 1998 test trenches were dug in the basement and there was a peak of 70 MOLAS staff on site.

The early portion of the main gravel Roman East-West road crossed the site and was 3m wide and cambered into box drains on either side. It was constructed in AD47-48 and subsequently widened, the Roman invasion occurring in AD43. The buildings were long and rectangular, made of clay and timber with thatched roofs, facing the street and used for industry or commerce as well as living quarters. There were also round houses for the native population.

The major fire of AD120-30 destroyed the buildings, the site later being occupied by the Roman army and having better quality buildings with painted wall plaster. A large masonry building had a courtyard with columns and facing the street. A spectacular find comprised a hoard of 43 Roman gold coins dating to the late 2nd century AD.

Dave Sarkey of MOLAS then spoke on "Recent Excavations at Dollis Hill in the London Borough of Barnet". This was an open site which had never been built on at an altitude of 75m, compared with some 17m for the City. 145 sherds of prehistoric pottery were found out of a total of 600, the rest covering the 8th – 5th centuries BC. There was a Roman field ditch and quarry pits. A burnt layer contained mill stones of Hertfordshire pudding stone or imported lava. Flue tiles were likely to have come from grain driers. It was considered that the site was farmland for a nearby Roman villa.

Ron Humphrey of AOC Archaeology discussed excavations at Floral Street, Covent Garden, part of Lundenwic the Saxon trading port for London. There were timber and thatched buildings with alleys and quarry and rubbish pits dating to the early 6th century AD. There was a little pottery and some worked antlers. Six graves were backfilled with clean clay and all were aligned east – west. Three had grave goods such as an iron knife. A noteworthy find was the finest Early Saxon brooch to be found in central London. It was made from a pair of copper discs sandwiched together with a beeswax filler. The face was embellished with gold strip and wire and had five domed Indian garnets in bosses interspersed with a mosaic of tiny garnet slabs.

Rob Kinchen-Smith of Oxford Archaeology spoke on "Excavations at the

Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, 1999". The site comprised high ground with a long history of crossing the Thames to North Woolwich and industrial activity back to the 1500's. The Royal Laboratories were built in 1674. The Arsenal employed 80 000 people at its peak and had the largest machine shop in the world. Evidence was found of horse powered gunboring machines and a twin cylinder steam engine. There were 130 Roman graves, of which 30 had grave goods but no human remains and a pile-built kiln dated to 1300.

Douglas Killiwick of Pre-Construct Archaeology outlined "The Findings from recent Excavations at Narrow Street, Tower Hamlets". Early in the 17th century this long street parallel to the Thames had wharves and ships on its south side and new houses on its north. Cellars, pits and wells were packed with dozens of wine bottles and hundreds of complete or broken pots from Germany, Portugal, Turkey, Persia, and the Far East. Many had come from Spain and northern Italy – countries with which England was at war, so they may have been booty. A porcelain manufactory was located on the street's south side.

The afternoon session commenced with Jane Sidell of the Institute of Archaeology on "Archaeology in the Landscape". There were still problems in establishing a topography and the natural resources of the region. Alluvial archaeology was concerned with deposits in the flood plain which can be found beneath the alluvium.

John Barrett of Sheffield University spoke strongly on "The Inhabited Landscapes of London's Prehistory". It was necessary to handle large amounts of material and bring it together. The problem lies in who drives the research agenda?

The Perry Oaks cursus near Heathrow effectively redefines a hunter-gatherer landscape. The Bronze Age landscape was broken up by enclosures and trackways. The earlier people were re-made as inhabitants of Roman London.

Bob Cowie of MOLAS spoke on "The Saxon Landscape" and described the patterns of settlement on the river gravels, in many cases sparsely populated single farms or hamlets in Roman fields. In the 7th-9th centuries large blocks of land were given to churches such as Barking Abbey. The Saxon trading port of Lundenwic was only about 2 days sail from northern France. Viking raids in the mid-9th century forced the Saxons to retreat to Londonburgh – the former Roman city.

Barney Sloane of MOLAS outlined "The

Landscape of Medieval London" mentioning that in Greater London there were 299 parish churches and some 200 hamlets. There were few moated manor houses.

John Schofield of the Museum of London concluded with "A View of the City from the North" giving a scholarly account of two old maps showing the area around St Paul's with the two theatres in Curtain Road. The day was a *tour-de-force* of London Archaeology

Dennis Hill

AUTOGRAPHS FROM GROVELANDS HOSPITAL 1916-1917

Recently I was loaned a copy of an autograph book belonging to Elsie Tidy. It was given to her by her sisters Sylvia, Isobel and Gladys one or more of whom may have worked at Grovelands House when it was used as a hospital during the First World War. We do know that another Tidy, Mary was a member of the Middlesex Voluntary Aid Detachment and did work there. In addition to the signatures of some of the soldiers treated there it contains a selection of verses and drawings which give us a glimpse of the thoughts and feelings of the men who fought on the Western Front. As was customary at the time few make more than passing references to the horrors of trench warfare. The humour is typical of the British soldier and much would be regarded today as politically incorrect. The examples given below are exactly as written but though grammar, spelling and punctuation may leave much to be desired the writing is generally excellent.

When the distant sun is setting,
And your thoughts from care are free,
Whilst of absent friends you're thinking
Don't forget to think of me.

Pte A. Syles 5th Dorset Regt. Nov 8th 1916

it was a stormy & windy night
and the huns were extra quite
the guns we had laid on the stay line
and we lay ourselves down to rest

when all of a sudden we here a shout
come on boys turn out turn out
L.C.L. is being sent up

then we fired & fired till we heard a shout
then we new that the boys was over the top

G. T. Palmer 84th Brigade Royal Field Artillery

Sum in this book have written
Sum in this book write
but no one likes you better
than the one who writes tonight

*No 9218 Private W. Whitewell 8 Queens R W S
With the R.A.M.C. in the Dardanelles*

For fear we had no time
though we had a stiffish climb.
With the snipers watching for us as we came.
But we had come to do our work.
and we didn't mean to shirk
For our duty is to succor not to maim

*Pt R Veitch 33rd Field Amb. RAMC. 1 division
Oct 25 1916*

I stood on the Bridge at Midnight
And a thought came into my head
What A (-) fool I was to be standing there
When I might have been home in bed

*Somme Loos Vimy Ridge Pte. G. Golding.
43166. 13th Middlesex 16/7/17*

Think of me when you go to your bed,
Think of me when you awake,
Think of me on your wedding day,
And send me a piece of your cake.

*Pte R. H. Penfold 27502, 9th Batt Royal
Fusiliers, Wounded at the Somme August 4th
1916*

How wisely nature, ordering all below,
Forbade a beard on woman's chin to grow!
For how could she be shaved, whate'er the skill
Whose tongue could never let her chin be still.

A Huggett AB R.N.V.R. A.A.C. 23/11/17

First I went to Egypt
To fight old Johnny Turk
Then they brought me back to France
To do kore dirty work,
We beat them on the Marne
We beat them on the Aisne
We beat them up a Neuve Chappele
But I don't want to go back again

cpl E Reid (909) 13th Y & S K Ward Grovelands

Continued on page 10

DRAWINGS MADE BY THE PATIENTS AT GROVELANDS HOSPITAL

DRAWINGS MADE BY THE PATIENTS AT GROVELANDS HOSPITAL

Grovelands 11/7/17
No. 5962 Spr. James Burns Sydney Australia
Gassed at Lens 29.4.17. Alls well that ends well

There was an old man he had a wooden leg.
He hadn't any money he couldn't beg
He had a piece of pipe and an 18 inch board.
Said he to himself I'll make a Ford.

A gallon of gas a quart of oil
A piece of wire to make a coil
Four large spools and an old tin can.
He hammered them together & the darn thing
ran

*Pte Harry Shusman 169705 Mechanical
Transport A.S.G. Late 1st Sussex Yeomanry
Ipswich April 9th 1915. Grovelands Military
Hospital Southgate, N. Oct 9/16*

There was a young lady named Flynn,
Who was so outrageously thin,
That when she assayed
To drink lemonade
She slipped through the straw and fell in.

*George Vicks 2nd Bedfordshires, Invalided from
Monchy sur Arras Decr. 1916*

The Little Pilgrims of the Night

When you have a little Army Corps
On your body forming fours
Always on a night attack
Making charges up your back
Then you shout with all your might
"Strafe the Pilgrims of the Night"

Though some hundreds you may kill
Still you find there's hundreds still
Yes they hide behind each other
And are smart in taking cover
Then they have an awful bite
Plus a shocking appetite

There are families in dozens
Uncles, mothers, sisters, cousins,
And they have their married quarters
Where they rear their sons and daughters
And the take a lot of catching
And cause an awful lot of scratching

Then at last there comes a day
When you throw your shirt away
You would like to cast your trousers too
If they would only let you do
And adopt the ancient style
Of wearing nothing but a Smile

*Cpl. R. Doke 95th (s) btt RGA
Groveland Hos 6-10-17*

Ian K. Jones, March 2001

SMALL FINDS

RAMMEY MARSH

Wessex Archaeology will shortly be returning to Innova Park (Rammey Marsh) to commence excavation of the settlement site. It is understood that a public information display will be provided in a specially designated cabin.

