
SOCIETY NEWS



THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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TWO

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The following meetings will be held at Jubilee Hall, at the junction of Chase Side and Parsonage Lane, Enfield at 8.00pm. Doors open at 7.30pm when tea and coffee will be served.

Visitors are very welcome, from whom a charge of 50p will be made.

Sunday 15th September

Visit - "An Air Raid Experience"

The air raid shelter in the grounds of Millfield House, Silver Street, Edmonton, will be open on Sunday 15th September between 1.00 and 5.00pm. At half-hourly intervals visitors will be able to enter the shelter to hear a short talk by Geoffrey Gillam about the effect of air raids on Edmonton. They will also take part in the "Air Raid Experience" with sound effects.

This event will be part of the Open Day when various houses throughout the borough (and, indeed, nationwide) will be open to the public and will include Millfield House itself. Full details will be given in local papers and in libraries.

Friday 20th September

Lecture - Nelson's Navy
Ian Jones

We are now nearing the end of the second year of what the national Maritime Museum is calling the NELSON DECADE, the 200th anniversary of the ten years which culminated in the Battle of Trafalgar, during which time Nelson's victories played a major part in establishing the supremacy of the Royal Navy for the next 100 years. A single lecture can only hope to scratch the surface of this topic by just looking at selected elements. As we are an archaeological society concerned with understanding the past through the interpretation of its physical remains, it seems appropriate therefore to concentrate on the ships of the period, of which five examples survive. These are, in order of launch, HMS Victory (1765), USS Constitution and Constellation (1797), HMS Trincomalee (1817) and HMS Unicorn (1824). Underwater archaeology might one day provide yet further examples if the armed American schooners Hamilton and Scourge, currently sitting intact 300 feet down on the bed of Lake Ontario where they were sent by a squall in 1813, can be raised.

Friday 18th October

Lecture - St.Paul's Cathedral.
John Lockyer

John Lockyer, a retired St.Paul's Cathedral vicar, will explain and illustrate the historical significance of London's great landmark; both as the cause and effect of developments that have shaped the modern world.

This is a "behind the scenes" view to prove that there is more to Wren's masterpiece than meets the eye. St.Paul's will never be the same after this evening.

THREE

Friday 15th November

Lecture - Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the St. Albans Area.
Rosalind Niblett.

Most archaeological work at St.Albans over the last five years has taken place on the outskirts of the Roman town of Verulamium. Much of it has been concentrated on the site of a religious complex that grew up around the site of a royal burial dating from the end of the Iron Age. The talk will concentrate on the burial itself, its importance to Verulamium and the cult centre that flourished around it until the rise of Christianity in the 3rd century.

EDMONTON HUNDRED HISTORICAL SOCIETY - forthcoming events:

Wednesday 25th September
United Reformed Church,
Fox Lane, Palmers Green.

"The Parting of the Ways - the Southgate Separation of 1881."
Graham Dalling.

Thursday 24th October
Friends Meeting House
Church Hill, Winchmore Hill.

"Southgate - A Glimpse into the Past, Part Two."
Alan Dumayne.

Saturday 2nd November
Jubilee Hall, junction of Chase
Side and Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

Day Conference (subject to be announced)

Wednesday 27th November
Jubilee hall

"Typhus, Sanitation, Water and the Ratepayers."
David Pam.

All meetings start at 8.00pm. Further details may be obtained from the Local History Unit at Southgate Town Hall. Telephone 0181.982.7453.

MEETING REPORT

ROMAN FORTIFICATIONS ON
THE SAXON SHORE

By the late third century the Roman Empire was on the defensive. Barbarian tribesmen

Harvey Sheldon

Friday 17th May

had attacked and penetrated far into central Gaul and elsewhere. In addition the Channel coasts of Gaul and Britain were vulnerable to attacks by sea-borne Saxons and as a result chains of fortifications were developed on both sides of the Channel to

prevent such raids taking place. In this country forts were built along the eastern and southern coasts from Brancaster on the Wash to Porchester near Southampton. The area being affected by the raids became known as the Saxon Shore and details of the forts and their garrisons can be obtained from a late Roman document (c400 AD) known as the Notitia Dignatatum. The Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britannias (the Count of the 'Saxon Shore' in the British Provinces) was the official in charge of the forts.

FOUR

This was the theme of the address given by our President, Harvey Sheldon, during his welcome visit to Enfield. He explained how the forts evolved; they were not all built at the same time nor did they all conform to exactly the same plan. The meaning of the name 'Saxon Shore' was discussed; it was not so named because of the attacks by the Saxons but may have had more to do with Saxons already settled here as part of the population movement carried on throughout the Roman Empire, which some have suggested could account for the description 'Litoris Saxonici'.

There are thought to have been ten forts in all, although there could be one or two others awaiting discovery, along the defended area of the eastern and southern coasts. A reading of the Notitia Dignatatum and a study of archaeological sites gives the following list of forts: Brancaster, Burgh Castle, Walton, Bradwell, Reculver, Richborough, Dover, Lympne, Pevensey and Porchester. A similar string of forts occupied the coast of Gaul from the mouth of the Rhine to Bordeaux.

A detailed account of each English fort was given to us and, so far as it is known, the internal layout of each. Although often very different in design, most of the forts had high defensive walls and narrow gates - Pevensey is a good example - and they look like strong points which were capable of withstanding a siege rather than springboards for attack. As well as containing garrisons to repel Saxon raiders, could they also have been used as guarded warehouses where goods were assembled ready for conveying to the Continent? At present, unfortunately, many of the interiors of the forts still await excavation but when this does happen a wealth of new information will become available to us, not only about constructional characteristics but also how and by whom they were manned. The ever changing nature of the coastline means that some of the forts are badly eroded, some have completely vanished and others are now well inland.

Carausius appears to have been the first commander of the system and is credited by some with the building of some of the forts in this country. He is remembered because in 286 AD he seized power and declared himself emperor, claiming equality with Diocletian and Maximian the two legitimate emperors. There had been charges made against Carausius that he had misappropriated plunder captured by the Saxons. He was later murdered by Allectus, one of his ministers, but in 296 AD the Roman general Constantius landed in Britain and restored the province to the Empire.

The coastal defence system was maintained and seems to have done its job although there were changes in command and the number of forts in use. By the fifth century the power of Rome was declining and Britain was abandoned and, deprived of troops, the forts of the Saxon Shore were left empty. Some were taken over and lived in by the Saxons while others were used as quarries for building material and yet others became Saxon monasteries and eventually Norman castles.

This was an interesting and thought provoking lecture and we were glad of the opportunity to meet and hear our President speak on his chosen subject.

GRG.

ENFIELD PALACE, A NEW DISCOVERY.

Part of the historical introduction to Enfield Palace in *The Royal Palaces of Enfield* described various objects found when the building was finally demolished late in 1927. Recently while checking copies of *The Gentleman's Magazine* in search of an article on Capel Manor I came across a letter reporting on a series of finds made when a large part of the building was pulled down in, according to the correspondent, the summer of 1789. It has previously been assumed that these demolitions took place in 1791 on the basis of an inscription on one of the over-mantels now preserved in Gentleman's Row which mentions that it had been altered in that year by one T.Calloway. Though the items found, and presumably long since lost again,

FIVE

add little to our direct knowledge of the history of this building they provide some interesting additional details, especially as far as the token described below is concerned, about which it would be interesting to know more. These discoveries are a useful reminder that no topic, historical or archaeological, can ever be totally researched - there is always something lurking in a corner waiting to be found.

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE vol60, 1790, p595.

Enfield, June 26 (1790) (writers name not given)

"The knife, fork and spoon of silver gilt of which a drawing (missing!!) accompanies this were found in a shagreen case in pulling down part of the old palace at Enfield last summer. Though it is well known that both Edward VI and his sister Elizabeth honoured this house with their residence.....I do not think that these articles bear so old a date as it is the fashion of this town to assign them. The ornaments of the handles of the fork and spoon have some resemblance to that of the knife engraved in your Vol.LIV p279 but as I have seen a similar set which belong to a lady here, in whose family they have been 100 years, I rather incline to ascribe them to some of the noble pupils of the Rev.Dr Uvedale who kept a flourishing school in this old house at the time of the great plague in 1665 and had the honour of educating Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon.....The mark on the back of the handle of the spoon and fork is I E under a crown.

In the same house have also been found a wooden tobacco (jar?) stopper surmounted by the figure of Bacchus bestriding a tun which has in front WH and behind 1660. This probably belonged to the Doctor himself. The coins found in the rubbish have been a sixpence of Elizabeth with the rose; behind her head ELIZABETH DG ANG FR ET HIB REGINA. On the reverse are the arms of France and England quartered and over set POSVI DEVM ADIVTOREM MEV. A shilling of James I with XII behind the head; a gold piece of Charles I and the piece of copper engraved here having on one side the arms of London circumscribed GOD PRESERVE LONDON and on the other side an elephant. Of this piece, Mr Snelling of *View of Coins Struck in the West Indian Colonies* says that it is commonly called the London Halfpenny and he apprehends that it was struck from the same die as a similar one for Carolina with an elephant one side and on the other GOD PRESERVE CAROLINA AND THE LORDS PROPRIETORS 1694. This die is still remaining in the Tower and appears to be the work of the Roitiers. He had heard two or three opinions concerning the intent of uttering this piece, as, that it was for the London Workhouse; also that its inscription alludes to the plague and was struck while it raged in London and he had likewise heard that it was intended to be made current in Tangier in Africa but never took place."

The letter finishes with a description of some other finds from Enfield:

“The spoon, or rather spoon-fork, made to fold up together and serve both purposes is the property of Mrs Dix of Enfield whose father was a merchant of Norwich, and her mother a Goodrich, from whose family it came.....”

“Fig 11, 12 are a copper weight of James I, nearly equal to our perfect guinea, and found in trenching the garden of Mr John Clayton, near Enfield Church”

On page 1177 of the same volume is a drawing of a rather plain spoon, also from Enfield, with a brief note which simply says: “Record of a folding spoon the property of a Mr Philips in whose family it has long been.” No details of size or material are given.

Ian K Jones

SIX

SOME EARLY THOUGHTS ON ERMINE STREET

At various intervals since the Society was founded in 1955 it has attempted to pin down the elusive Ermine Street, the main road from London to Lincoln. Although the line of the road has been established we still lack a nice substantial chunk to show people. The fact that problems like this can only be solved by means of archaeology is well illustrated by the extract from an article in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of June 1906, the relevant sections of which are set out below. Many of the ideas therein will be familiar to some readers but what I found interesting was the writer's failure to realise that archaeology could play a part in solving the problem - a problem which he indeed regarded as insoluble. This is a typical example of the attitudes of some historical researchers and is all the more strange in the year which saw the discovery of the magnificent burial of Yuya and Thuya in the Valley of Kings and the climax of Sir Arthur Evans' work at Knossos in Crete.

Gentleman's Magazine June 1906, pp537-538. :-

ERMINE STREET AND TALLINGTON LANE

“There is not very much to be said as to the tracks and ways that formerly penetrated the forest of north Middlesex because the whole subject of ancient roads in this country is so obscure that there is practically nothing to be extracted from the tangle of conjectures and conflicting theories that have been put forward, and of tangible evidence the roads themselves afford little.....”

“Some have asserted quite positively that Ermine Street was a Roman road passing through what are now Shoreditch, Kingsland, Haringey, Wood Green, Bowes, past Palmers Green and Winchmore Hill, through Enfield, thence to Ware and ultimately to Lincoln taking this indirect route from London in order to avoid the Lea marshes. Later when these marshes were drained, it was said that a new road was made which went straight through Stoke Newington, Tottenham High Cross, Edmonton and Ponders End joining the older one at Enfield Wash. But others have believed that Ermine Street did not exist, so far as north Middlesex is concerned, in Roman times, on the grounds that the forest was then impenetrable. Dr Guest, however, in *Archaeologia XIV* considers this reason untenable although he agrees that the road is not Roman because it is barren of Roman remains. He considers that it is represented by the present road through Kingsland, Tottenham High Cross and Edmonton but that after leaving Edmonton it took a slightly more westerly course than the modern (pre A10 - editor) road over Hounds Fields and Forty Hall thus directly proceeding to Ware.”

“Ermine Street existed at least as early as the time of Edgar, but less than two centuries afterwards its identity was doubtful. It is hardly possible therefore to decide the matter now. The meaning of the name, too, is also disputed. Some interpret it as the Street of Ermin, the Teutonic divinity, others as the Street of the Earmings, a few men as Earminga Street and others as the Street of the Army, man or soldier - Hereman’s Street. The last explanation is the one usually accepted although that is not a strong argument in its favour. It may be a corroboration of this etymology that six centuries ago, and doubtless earlier, there was in Edmonton parish a thoroughfare called Rodestrate or Rodeweye. Now “Rode” here may only be an old way of spelling “road” though used in this sense it seems a useless redundancy. It is also capable of other interpretations, the most obvious being “rood or cross”, here referring to a crossroad. But according to Wright’s *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English* and Hallwell’s *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words* “Rode” means also “a company of horsemen” and the connection between a company of horsemen and Hereman is obvious.”

SEVEN

“Yet whatever antiquaries may decide, tracks or paths of some sort must have existed in the old forest.....The forest, it is true, was long haunted by wild beasts and dangerous human beings as well and travellers needed to be brave and well armed, but it is not to be believed that wolves and thieves were allowed to have it all their own way and to stop all communication between London and Middlesex.....”

Ian K Jones

A MESOLITHIC ADZE
FROM ENFIELD.

Part of the blade of a tranchet adze of cherty grey-brown flint, with iron staining on the high points, was recently picked up by Mr & Mrs Smith on their allotment next to Worcesters School in Goat Lane, Enfield (grid reference

TQ 33999821). It is of Mesolithic type although the use of such tools continued through into the Neolithic and the date of manufacture and use of the tool would therefore be between 8500 and 3500 BC. The blade had been resharpened with the removal of a transverse flake which is a feature of such adzes.

The site of the discovery has been examined but no further finds were made. Mr & Mrs Smith have generously donated the adze to the local collection and it is hoped that, with other prehistoric material, it can be put on display in the not too distant future.

The adze was examined by Jon Cotton at the Museum of London who kindly provided the description and date of this artifact.

G R G

A FOSSIL ECHINOID, OR SEA
URCHIN, FOUND IN ENFIELD.

An interesting fossil was recently picked up by the occupier of a cottage near Maidens Bridge, Enfield, and kindly donated to the local collection.

It is a member of a group of marine animals known as Echinodermata; the example here is an Echinoid, or Sea Urchin, and is closely related to the Sea Cucumbers, the Starfishes and the Brittle Stars. Echinoids had spines which in some types were used for burrowing and in others as a method of locomotion. The Echinodermata first appeared during the Ordovician period (500 to 400 million years ago) of

the geological time scale and, often with only minimal evolutionary changes, are still to be found today.

This example was found in the flood plain gravel of Maidens Brook and must have been brought there, first as debris brought by the advancing ice sheets and later rolled and tumbled into the place where it was found during the formation of Maidens Brook by melt water flowing from the edge of the decaying ice sheet.

GRG

EIGHT

PROPOSED EQUESTRIAN CENTRE AT FORTY HALL FARM

The proposal to establish an equestrian centre at Forty Hall Farm has been discussed by your committee who see the proposal as the only way in which the historic, but derelict, buildings there are likely to be saved.

The first stage of the redevelopment, which has already been agreed, involves twelve acres of land to the west of the house. Along the north side of the outer courtyard is an 18th century stable block, an 18th century barn (with brick foundations of an earlier building) in the middle of the courtyard and part of an even earlier structure of 17th century date with later additions in the south-west corner which is contemporary with the enclosure wall itself. It is hoped that funds will be forthcoming for the repair of these three buildings and their subsequent re-use, such as the barn which is to become a museum dedicated to the working horse.

We have corresponded with English Heritage and Capel Manor regarding the restoration of these buildings and have also received assurances that a proper archaeological evaluation, possibly involving excavation, will be carried out in the Warren Field where it is believed that the rabbit warren associated with the nearby Tudor palace of Elsyng was situated.

All the farm buildings to the west of the enclosed area are in very poor condition and of little historical interest, although some may prove on examination to have re-used timbers in their construction, and tiles from the roofs would be useful for repair work elsewhere. Having studied the plans we have suggested to Capel Manor that a new stable planned to be built beyond the south-west corner of the outer courtyard should be re-sited a little further north to avoid obscuring the gable end of the 17th/18th century building there and this is being considered.

The second stage of the redevelopment plan involves a further 137 acres and includes one or two farm buildings of historic interest which appear to have been brought to the site from elsewhere during the second half of the nineteenth century. There are also archaeological features such as the sites of three 18th century summer houses and large linear earthworks with raised walks on top which may date from the original layout of the grounds in the mid 17th century. Details of all of these sites have been supplied to English Heritage and to Capel Manor and we have been assured that every effort will be made to protect them.

There is considerable local opposition to the plan to create the equestrian centre and most objections centre around the lack of car parking space. On one occasion last summer the car park at Forty Hall was full and cars were parked all the way along Forty Hill, and this on a day when no publicised event was taking place there! This is not an unusual situation and we have long objected to cars being allowed to park in the meadow which contains the foundations of Elsyng Palace when the official car park is full. It is therefore gratifying to record that the council has now ruled that this practice will no longer be permitted.

The problem of traffic is not confined to Forty Hall and the situation is the same elsewhere. The popularity of the New Forest led to the proposal that the Forest be divided into seven zones - all the trees in two would be felled and the land used for car parking and visitors would only be allowed on foot through the remainder of the Forest. Then there is the traffic congestion in the Lake District where the engineers saddled with the task of trying to solve the problem refer to hamlets and villages there as "honeypots" where at times it becomes impossible to move in any direction.

There have been two public consultation meetings to hear the views of residents concerning the proposed equestrian centre but on neither occasion was there any mention of the possibility of trying to improve public transport to Forty Hill.

Geoffrey Gillam
