
SOCIETY NEWS



THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

September 1998

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Society News is published quarterly in March, June, September and December and is free to members. The Hon.Editor, to whom all correspondence and articles for publication should be sent is: John C Stevens, 3 Scarborough Road, London N9 8AT. T/N 0181.804.6918. The statements and opinions of contributors to this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor.

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 will open at 7.30 when tea and coffee will be served and there will be an opportunity to look at the sales and information table. Visitors are very welcome, for whom a charge of 50p will be made.

Friday 18th September

“The King Arthur Cross”
Geoffrey Gillam

Before the commencement of this lecture, at the request of the Executive Committee, a Special General Meeting of the Society will take place. The purpose of the meeting is to seek the agreement of the membership to the election of Geoffrey Gillam to a Vice-Presidency of the Society in recognition of more than forty years of unstinting and invaluable service to the Society in many capacities culminating in his Chairmanship which he vacated at this year’s AGM. These proceedings should be quite brief but this notification is required by Section 7 of the Society’s Constitution. (John Stevens – Hon.Secretary)

In December 1981 a local man claimed to have discovered a lead cross in silt being removed from the lower lake in the grounds of Forty Hall, Enfield which appeared to be identical to a cross alleged to have been found in the grave of Arthur by the monks of Glastonbury Abbey in the 12th Century. Apart from a single visit to the British Museum, when a student on duty there was only permitted a very brief look, the finder of the Enfield cross refused to allow any further examination of the object.

This talk will attempt to tell the story of the cross alleged to have been found at Glastonbury and the Arthurian background against which it is set; from the last days of Roman Britain into the medieval period and the many legends which grew up around the story of Arthur, his battles with the Saxons, the search for the Holy Grail and finally his death. The story will end with details of the search for the truth behind the story of the Enfield cross in 1981.

The talk will be illustrated with slides of Glastonbury, Tintagel, and Cadbury Castle – all places which have become associated in legend with Arthur – as well as paintings and drawings from the Middle Ages and later which illustrate many of the well-known scenes such as the drawing of the sword from the stone, Merlin, the various knights and the death of Arthur.

GRG

Friday 16th October

“A Walk Through Gardening
History at Capel Manor.”
Steven Dowbiggin

Capel Manor's gardening history only extends back twenty-five years because the name "Capel Manor" is a modern invention but in two ways the gardens there have a history of hundreds of years and a walk there is a walk through the whole history of gardening.

THREE

Firstly, the real name of the Manor of Capel is in fact "Honeylands and Pentriches" although it was also known in Victorian times as "Capels". The earliest evidence of the manor comes from the 13th century but the Capel connection did not arise until 1486 when the estate was bought by Sir William Capel and held by the Capel family until being surrendered to the Crown in the middle of the 16th century. The first surviving evidence of a garden at Capel is seen in the many mature trees which surround the present house – the Copper Beech, Zelkova and others were probably planted in the 1750's either by Mr Boddam or Mr Hamilton and they mark the beginning of a continuous period of gardening at Capel. Since becoming a horticultural college, Capel has established a whole range of new gardens which are a living demonstration of gardening through the ages.

SD.

Friday 20th November

"London's Medieval Monasteries - the Fruits of Post-Excavation Research"
Barry Sloane.

Excavation on a large number of London's medieval monasteries in the last two decades has produced a huge body of records. In concert with English Heritage, the Museum of London Archaeological Service has undertaken detailed research on the archaeology and history of the sites. This talk will explore some of the more fascinating aspects of the Hospital of St.Mary Spital, the Priory of St.John Clerkenwell and the Nunnery of St.Mary Clerkenwell, all 12th century foundations. In particular, the layout and probable above-ground appearance of these important London institutions will be demonstrated by integrating evidence from the site records, the finds and documentary and antiquarian records.

B.S.

Salisbury House – London Open House '98. Sunday 20th September.

Ian Jones, Geoffrey Gillam and, hopefully, at least one other member, will be acting as guides to Salisbury House as part of the London Open House '98 event. The house will be open between 1.00 pm and 5.00 pm on Sunday 20th September when it is hoped that members and their friends will take the opportunity to explore this late 17th century building. It is proposed to carry out a small excavation there during July and details of the results achieved and finds should be on display. Copies of the short history of the house previously published in the bulletin will also be available.

GRG

FOUR

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – The Historical Association (North London Branch).

The following meetings are to be held at 8.00pm on Tuesdays at Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

- 8th September. “Memoirs of Maiden’s Bridge, Enfield in the Late Victorian Period”
Michael Rye
- 13th October. “A Journey from the Yorkshire Stingo: How Public Transport
Developed in London”. (illustrated)
John Wagstaff (London Transport)
- 10th November. “Ottonian Art: Illustrated Manuscripts of 10th and 11th Century
Germany”. (illustrated)
Professor Henry Mayr-Harting (University of Oxford)

Further details from Robin Blades 0181.368.5328

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – Edmonton Hundred Historical Society.

- Wednesday 23rd September “Stories of Enfield Inns”
(Jubilee Hall – 8.00pm) David Pam.
- Wednesday 7th October “Edmonton Before World War 1”
(Edmonton Green Library Graham Dalling.
2.30pm)
- Wednesday 28th October “The Enfield Comprehensive Education Dispute”
(Friend’s Meeting House, Graham Dalling.
Church Hill, N21 8.00pm)
- Saturday 31st October Day Conference 9.45am to 4.30pm.
Jubilee Hall
- Wednesday 25th November “Around Barnet & Hadley”
(Jubilee Hall 8.00pm) Ron Kingdom

Further details of all the above may be obtained from the LBE Local History Unit
0181.982.7453

FIVE

MEETING REPORTS

THE ANATOMY THEATRE OF THE BARBER SURGEONS OF LONDON.

Professor Dennis Hill

Friday 15th May

The choice of subject by Professor Dennis Hill for his dissertation when studying for a Diploma in Archaeology at Birkbeck College was influenced by the fact that he is a Liveryman of the Barbers' Company and he therefore decided to institute a search for the site of the original operating and dissection theatre of the Barber

Surgeons' Hall in Monkwell Street in the City of London. A Barber Surgeons' Hall has stood on the site since the middle of the 15th century but after serious damage during the Great Fire of London in 1666 it was rebuilt to a design by Sir Christopher Wren. During the Second World War it was totally destroyed in the bombing of 1940 and rebuilt yet again in 1966 – it was unfortunate that no watching brief was maintained when the latest rebuilding work was carried out.

The theatre built in 1636 “for anatomical purposes” was elliptical in shape and the Barber Surgeons were allowed four bodies of executed criminals per year for the purposes of dissection for medical purposes – it seems that the subjects were chosen before they were hanged. Pepys records in his diary how he attended the theatre to watch dissections being carried out there. The bodies were eventually buried in St.Olaf's Churchyard.

A plan drawn in 1671 shows the basic design, although some details of the layout remain unclear, and details of the expenditure accounts for work done in the theatre, in all their macabre detail, have survived. The lack of any means of refrigeration meant that the fact that more dissection was done in winter came as no surprise! In 1740 the surgeons transferred their work to the Royal College of Surgeons and the materials obtained from the subsequent demolition of the theatre were sold. Later, a warehouse was erected on the site and after its destruction in 1940 no further building took place there.

From his study of the documentary evidence Dennis Hill narrowed down the search for the site of the theatre to an area of land of which half is a car park and half a grassed area. He persuaded Bill McCann to carry out a search using Ground Penetrating Radar (a technique still at an experimental stage), the results of which suggested that certain anomalies existed beneath the ground surface and were enough to justify a small excavation. Fund raising, as always, proved difficult but Dennis was successful in obtaining sufficient money to enable him to invite the Museum of London Archaeological Society to begin work within the confines of the grassed area next to the car park.

It was, however, soon discovered that no trace of the theatre remained and all that was found was a drain and the base of a pillar from a 19th century warehouse. It was soon established that the original ground level had been reduced by at least 1½ metres during the 18th century removing all traces of the foundations of the theatre.

Although it proved to be a disappointing end to a carefully planned step-by-step programme of research the evidence available at the time justified the decision to proceed with the excavation. The search for and examination of documents, maps and drawings and the use of GPR and the final excavation made a fascinating lecture.

SIX

AN AIR RAID EXPERIENCE.

On Sunday 5th July, at half-hourly intervals, visitors to the Summer Extravaganza at Millfield House, organised by Penny Wilkinson, the Arts Facilities and Developments Officer for the LBE, were able to visit the large World War II air raid shelter there. This part of the event was arranged by this Society, when, escorted by a fully uniformed Air Raid Warden and to the strains of a warning siren, groups of people made their way into the interior of the partly-underground shelter.

After listening to the recorded voice of Neville Chamberlain telling us that we were at war with Germany, those present were given a short talk about the war and its effects on Enfield, followed by the sounds of an air raid, warning siren, enemy bombers, anti-aircraft fire, falling bombs and eventually the "all clear". Later came the sound of the engine of a V1 flying bomb (or "Doodlebug" as these missiles became known).

Outside the shelter Ian Jones arranged a display of part of his collection of wartime memorabilia and he and Caroline McKenna manned the exhibition, handed out leaflets advertising the Society, sold a few publications and issued free tickets to anyone who wanted to visit the shelter.

Our thanks must go to Ranger Don Green who, as on previous occasions, set up the electric generator to provide lighting, guided visitors in and out of the shelter and marshalled the estimated 300 people who made the visit.

On the previous Thursday, parties of children from Fleecefield School in Brettenham Road, Edmonton came to Millfield and were guided around the house by Penny Wilkinson. They also took part in an "air raid experience" inside of the shelter. To my delight, two or three of these children came again on Sunday and brought their parents with them.

The subject of the Second World War now forms part of schools' curricula and knowledge of the construction and administration of air raid shelters is an essential part of this learning process. In any event, and as I have said on many occasions, the physical remains of wartime structures of all kinds are a reminder of a great European conflict and are as worthy of preservation as medieval castles, Roman forts or prehistoric earthworks.

The Society is grateful to Enfield Council for the initial clearing of most the earth from the shelter entrance, the recent removal of the remaining material and the fitting of a secure steel door at the entrance which has made it possible to arrange these visits.

G R G

THE ROYAL SMALL ARMS FACTORY AND ITS WORKERS by David Pam

This latest publication dealing with yet another aspect of local history is the story of the Royal Small Arms Factory by the prolific David Pam. Here we are told not only about the buildings which stood on the site but also about the processes which went on inside them and much about the people who worked there. The book is an impressive addition, both in content and in presentation, to the growing list of publications on our local history.

Presented in hardback with a dust jacket, there are 213 pages including 111 illustrations, maps and plans and is available from local bookshops at £14.00.

SEVEN

A LINK BETWEEN FORTY HALL AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

I am grateful to Mr P Stevenson for drawing my attention to the following inscription on a monument in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, erected to the memory of Mary Hope, daughter of Elizabeth and Eliab Breton of Forty Hall, Enfield.

G R G

"To the memory of MARY HOPE who died at Brockhall in the County of Northampton on the 23rd June 1767 Aged 25 & whose Remains unnoticed lie in the neighbouring Church at Norton this stone an unavailing Tribute of Affliction, is by her husband erected and inscribed.

She was the only Daughter of Eliab Breton of Forty Hall, Middlesex Esq. and was married to JOHN HOPE London Mercht. to whom she left three infant sons: Charles John & William.

Tho low in earth her beauteous Form decay'd
My faithful Wife, my lov'd Maria's laid.
In said remembrance the afflicted raise
No pompous tomb incrib'd with venal praise.
To Statesmen, Warriors and to Kings belong
The Trophied Sculpture and the Poets long
And these the Proud expiring, often claim:
Their Wealth bequeathing to record their name
But humble Virtue, ftealing to the duft
Heeds not our lays or monumental Buft
To name her Virtues ill befits my grief
What was my blifs can now give no relief
A husband mourns, the reft let friendship tell
Fame fspread her Worth a husband knew it well."

APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE 1.

As members will be aware, preliminary work has already begun on the renovations to the Enfield New River Loop, towards the cost of which a grant of £1.8m has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In the near future work will begin on the removal of a vast quantity of silt and mud from the bed of the New River so that a through flow of water can eventually be restored and this Society has been asked to provide an occasional watching brief on the removal of the material in case any interesting artefacts come to light.

Anyone who may be interested in assisting with this task is requested to contact Geoffrey Gillam on 0181.367.0263.

EIGHT

APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE 2.

In the Spring of next year we hope to be able to present an exhibition at Forty Hall Museum on the subject of the 'The Tudor Royal Palace of Elsyng' although dates and other matters have yet to be finalised. We would be grateful to hear from any members or friends who would be interested in assisting in any way with the creation of the exhibition or with day to day operation after the opening. All assistance would be very welcome but we would especially welcome the involvement of anyone who has experience of stewarding at exhibitions or teaching/lecturing on medieval/Tudor history. Please contact Professor Dennis Hill on 0181.440.1593.

MISCELLANY.

Enfield Leisure Services have issued their first bulletin reporting progress on the **NEW RIVER LOOP RESTORATION PROJECT**. Vegetation has been cleared from the area of Carr's Basin and Riverside Gardens which has allowed a detailed survey of the river to be completed. Measurement of the silt and an examination of the problems associated with its removal have been undertaken and removal should begin in the Autumn. There has also been an examination of the pipework which connects the river between Southbury Road and Baker Street. As soon as the silt has been removed work will begin on the replacement of the timber bank revetments, after which attention will be given to the footpaths.

Part of one of the large timbers from the bridge that once spanned **CAMLET MOAT** was recovered during recent refurbishment of the site. It carries a carpenter's mark and dendrochronology gives a date of c1357 for its use as part of the bridge. The question must then be asked whether the timber was part of the original construction or did it form part of later repair work?

Roger Eddington has completed his examination of the cupboard door in the Rainton Room at **FORTY HALL** from which he has identified 636 names of children and a record of their heights at various ages entered on the inside of the door. The earliest entry was in 1800 and the latest in 1951 – when private occupation of the house came to an end. The collection of names appears to be unique in Great Britain – the National Trust knows of only one other such collection and that is in a house in Ireland. The first article on the subject appears below in this bulletin but a more detailed account will be published when the names have been fully researched.

The **ABC CINEMA**, formerly the Savoy, in Southbury Road, Enfield, closed in May and the building was demolished soon afterwards. It was built in 1935 to a design by George Coles who was known for his many architectural styles, including: Egyptian at Islington, Chinese at Southall and the Art Deco Odeons at Woolwich and Muswell Hill. In Enfield there was seating

for 2,300 persons – 1400 in the stalls and 900 in the balcony. A Wurlitzer organ provided musical entertainment and a large stage enabled live shows to be performed there. Some years ago the cinema was divided into four studios, some of which were often unkindly described as broom cupboards, but it did enable the cinema to remain open. Ironically, the current discussions concerning the remodelling of Enfield Town have included a suggestion that a cinema is required!!!

NINE

Plans are in hand to mount an exhibition at Forty Hall Museum about the **TUDOR ROYAL PALACE OF ELSYNG** which once stood at the foot of the avenue of trees in the grounds of Forty Hall. The exhibition will illustrate the history and archaeology of the palace as revealed by documentary research and excavations carried out on the site by this Society between 1963 and 1966 and in particular the results of the recent geophysical survey sponsored by English Heritage.

G R G

FORTY HALL - FAMILY NAMES ENTERED INSIDE THE CUPBOARD

DOOR IN THE RAINTON ROOM 1800-1951

Roger Eddington

In 1997 I answered Geoffrey Gillam's request for a volunteer to record the names on the back of the cupboard door in the Rainton Room at Forty Hall. The cupboard, on the right hand side of the fireplace, extends to the full height of the room and has two doors one above the other. The upper, smaller door is fixed and boarded over and is not obvious when viewed from the room. The lower door is 6ft 3¾ins by 2ft 6¾ins and is painted grey on the inside – I assume that it was white or a much lighter colour originally. The names, initials and dates are nearly all in pencil; the height marks in many cases have been emphasised in recent times, again in pencil, the indentation causing the surface to break away revealing a lighter, previous coat of paint.

The job of recording had been started by a Middlesex University student but he was only allowed 40 hours, which was quite inadequate. I started from scratch using the same method of measuring the co-ordinates as the student had, from the left top of the door, each entry being given an individual number. I had seen the door only briefly before starting work and had guessed that there were about 250 names but in the event I have discovered and recorded 646 readable entries.

James Meyer bought the house in 1800 and it remained in the Meyer family's possession for 95 years. Some of the family married more than once and some had many children so one would expect the Meyer entries to be numerous – I have identified 238 Meyer entries from 23 different members of the family.

"Solly" and "Goldfinch" were two families that the Meyers married into. In fact, two generations of Meyers married Solllys so it is not surprising that I found 79 Solly entries as well as several Goldfinchs.

Rawson Hart Boddam of Capel Manor, whose daughter Louisa married Christian Paul Meyer in 1813 headed another family represented by six signatures plus initials which I think are also Boddams. The Ibbetson and Colvin families were also linked to the Meyers by marriage and

the latter family is represented by 21 signatures. Other regular visitors, but not apparently related, were the Jennings (1811 to 1821) and the Reids, of whom there were eight different members signing the door 27 times from 1836 to 1865.

When Henry Ferryman Bowles occupied Forty Hall in 1895 things went very quiet on the door signing front (or back? - editor) only to pick up again in the period 1945 to 1949, although we do have Eustace Parker in 1912 (Henry's son-in-law before Bowles was added to his name) and Derek (Parker Bowles) his son in 1927. Andrew Parker Bowles and his brothers and sister

TEN

are all represented – the last entered date appears to be “Mary Ann Parker Bowles July 1951 aged 6 years.” Unfortunately, with the exception of one item, someone has highlighted the Parker Bowles entries with a cross at either end.

There are a number of “one off” signatures, two of which stand out because of the quality of the handwriting. One is “Prescott 17 Feb 1817” which must be Sir George Prescott of Theobalds, a local landowner who, with others, managed to get common land in Enfield enclosed. The other is “A M Lochier 7 July 1844” about whom I know nothing.

The earliest entry is “CPM 1800 10yrs” (Christian Paul Meyer) but this has been heavily overwritten - not very accurately - recently but as the height recorded is 4ft 4ins I believe the original entry to be genuine. The earliest unretouched entry is “CPM Oct 12 1803” and there is also “CPM July 16 1804 without shoes”.

I had assumed that most of the one-off names on the door would be servants but the census returns of 1841 to 1891 show none of the names on the door that I have recorded so it seems that family visitors only were invited to record their heights and names. There is one enigmatic name however: “W Elliott” whose height was recorded by 16 entries from 1811 (4ft 0 5/8ins) until 1824 (5ft 9 3/8ins). Who was he or she?

Two scales were drawn on the door to aid measuring the height of individuals. They are both old but one is 3/16 inch higher than the other relative to current floor level, indicating that either the door has been rehung or the floor replaced at some time.

Although I have only recorded legible names and initials there are many old entries that are too faint to decipher or have been overwritten by later entries. There are only a few modern (post 1951) names, recognisable by the poor quality of handwriting or by being in ball-point pen.

The ideal way to have recorded the names would have been to remove the door and by using strong light identify and photograph each entry but this was apparently not an available option. The door will only open 90 degrees and it would be difficult to display and protect the names for public viewing – the afternoon sun shines on the door and fading of the entries would result. The names have only lasted this long because of the protection of the dark interior of the cupboard.

Roger Eddington.

“The Lea Valley and Britain’s Forgotten Greatness”

An article by Jim Lewis under this title appeared in ‘Electrotechnology’ magazine in January of this year and Ian Jones was able to arrange with the author and the publishers that the article may be reproduced as part of this bulletin for the benefit of members. What you will read is a second generation copy and I apologise for any slight lack of quality of reproduction. The Society is extremely grateful to the author, editor Bernard Dunkley and the publishers for their kind permission to include the article here.

JCS
