



# Society News

The Bulletin of the Enfield Archaeological Society

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**Christmas Caption Competition**

What were they thinking? Suggestions to the Editor.  
(*EAS Elsyng Palace dig, July 2004*)

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*Society News* is published quarterly in March, June, September and December.

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## Forthcoming Events

### EAS Meetings

Friday 17 December: **Cursus Publicus - Imperial Post**

Friday 21 January: **The Brunel Bridge**

Friday 18 February: **The Eyes of the Fleet: Frigates from the Age of Sail**

Friday 18 March: **The Archaeology of Copped Hall**

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### Enclosed:

2005 Lecture Programme

Membership Renewal Form

**MEETINGS** of the Enfield Archaeological Society are held at Jubilee Hall, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield (near Chase Side) at 8pm. Tea and coffee are served and the sales and information table is open from 7.30pm. Visitors, who are asked to pay a small entrance fee of £1.00, are very welcome.

# Forthcoming events

A FULL LIST OF THE 2005 LECTURE PROGRAMME IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS BULLETIN

## Friday 17 December

### Cursus Publicus: The Roman Imperial Post

#### Geoffrey Gillam

Roman roads were not only constructed for the movement of troops and equipment but also formed part of the network of land and sea routes for the transport of messages and officials using the Cursus Publicus. Speed was the essential ingredient of the imperial post, an important arm of the government, whereby messages and authorized officials could travel at speeds of about 50 miles a day - although in an emergency faster speeds were possible. Mansiones, where couriers and official travellers could obtain food and lodging and a change of horses were maintained in towns or in roadside settlements. Between each pair of mansiones were the lesser mutations, smaller stations being little more than a stable and corral containing horses where remounts were available.

This talk will describe Roman roads and the documentary and archaeological evidence from which our knowledge of the Cursus Publicus has been obtained, and the types of vehicles provided for use by government couriers and official travellers using the imperial post. Mention will also be made of other forms of transport one would expect to find on Roman roads.

## Friday 21 January

### The Brunel Bridge

#### Steven Brindle (English Heritage)

Steven Brindle is the Inspector of Ancient Monuments who, working through the engineer's notebooks, identified a 'lost' Brunel canal bridge near Paddington Station, just before it was due to be demolished. Dating from 1838, it is the earliest of just eight surviving iron bridges by Brunel. As a result, the whole of this unique structure has been painstakingly dismantled, for re-erection in the local area.

## Friday 18 February

### Eyes of the Fleet: Frigates From The Age Of Sail

#### Ian Jones

During the Anglo-French naval wars many admirals, including Nelson, complained bitterly about the lack of frigates, the vital workhorse of the Georgian navy used for everything including fleet reconnaissance, trade protection and amphibious operations. Of the hundreds built for western navies, three survive from the Napoleonic era; one in America and two in Britain. Two other survivors in America and Denmark will help take the story of the ships and their men to the end of the era of the sailing warship.

## Friday 18 March

### The Archaeology of Copped Hall

#### Christina Holloway (English Heritage)

Copped Hall lies near the M25 between Upshire and Epping, and for several years our neighbours the West Essex Archaeological Group have been running an exciting fieldwork programme there, including a burgeoning summer training dig. Excavations to date, of which Tina is a co-director, have focussed on the medieval hall and Tudor great house, once home to Mary Tudor, which preceded the 18th century hall which dominates the estate today.

## EAS FIELDWORK



The Society also regularly carries out fieldwork and other practical activities in the Borough. Please see the *Pastfinders News* column for more details, and contact Mike Dewbrey on 020 8364 2244 (office number) if you are interested.

## Meetings of other Societies

### EDMONTON HUNDRED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7.45 for 8pm unless otherwise stated in the Jubilee Hall,  
Parsonage Lane, Enfield

**26 January**

The Great Exhibition of 1851 • *Ian Jones*

**17 February**

2 for 2.30pm Ordnance Road Methodist Church Hall  
North-east Enfield through Old Postcards • *Stephen Sellick*

**23 March**

AGM and More English Towns • *Graham Dalling*

### WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

8pm in the Victoria Hall, Greenyard, Waltham Abbey

**21 January**

Hidden Hertfordshire • *Ann-Marie Parker*

**10 February**

Roding Valley Meadows – Then and Now

**18 March**

Puddephatt Memorial Lecture: Forgotten Men –  
Explosion in the RGPF • *Bryn Elliott*

### WEST ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

7.45pm in the 6th Form Unit, Woodford County High School,  
High Road, Woodford Green

**14 February**

The Animals of London • *Alan Pipe*

**14 March 7.30pm**

AGM and Presidential Address • *Harvey Sheldon*

### HENDON AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

7.45 for 8pm Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley

**Tuesday 11 January**

Colchester • *Kate Orr*

**Tuesday 8 February 2005**

The Silk Road • *Susan Whitfield*

**Tuesday 8 March 2005**

Pinner Chalk Mines • *Ken Kirkman*

# SOCIETY MATTERS

**Membership subscriptions! Please remember these fall due for renewal on 01 January 2005.**

Please send the enclosed Renewal Form, together with the appropriate sum, to the Secretary, David Wills, 43 Millers Green Close, Enfield, Middlesex, EN2 7BD.

We have once again held the subscription rates constant, despite generally increasing costs and the demands of fieldwork, so the rates for 2005 are as follows:

Ordinary Members: £ 7.00

Joint Memberships: £10.00

Junior Members: £3.50

Please note that Joint Membership is defined as any number of named persons residing at one address and receiving a single copy of *Society News*.

New members who joined the Society after 30 September 2004 need take no action, as their subscriptions are valid until 31 December 2005.

Please note that it is necessary to have current valid membership of the Society before taking part in any excavation or fieldwork, in order to provide adequate insurance cover.

On a recent walk through Cedars Park in Cheshunt, over the site of Theobalds Palace, I found the flowerbeds had been recently dug over, exposing a fragment of worked stone. This turned out to be quite a substantial piece of finely dressed window mullion with moulded and chamfered facing complete with holes for window bars. My suggestion to the park ranger that King James himself could have looked out of this window produced a minimal response and I was asked to leave the fragment in a barn where I would assume it will in time be

transferred to a more secure location for recording purposes. Evidently bits and pieces of the Royal Palace turn up from time to time, which leads me to wonder what happens to them.

*Mike Dewbrey*



# Meeting Reports

## Shadwell Street Roman Baths

Friday 17 September: **Alastair Douglas**

The Society's opening lecture for Autumn 2004 was given by Alastair Douglas, a senior archaeologist with Pre-Construct Archaeology. His subject was the Shadwell Street Roman bath house in Wapping.

The Roman road running east to Colchester crossed the River Lea at Old Ford (where excavations had been undertaken by the EAS President Harvey Sheldon). A second Roman road ran eastward through the Roman Eastern cemetery and the bath house site was approximately 150 metres south of this. It lies in front of the present-day Tobacco Wharf and also on the adjacent site of the former Babe Ruth fast food restaurant.

Work commenced in Spring 2002 and revealed post-medieval archaeology in the upper levels with Roman archaeology in the lower levels of the southern half of the site. Anything in the northern half had been machined away during modern construction work.

Roman remains included a sequence of wooden buildings, hearths, pottery, animal bones, an opus signinum yard floor, two Roman wells, eighty five bone hair pins and glass. Some rooms were used for eating and others for sleeping. There were also jet bangles, jet rings, shell rings and gold earrings.

Five metres below present ground level was a large room with an apse and under-floor central heating. The bases of the brick piers supporting the floor were clearly seen. There was the usual set of hot plunges, tepid room and cool plunges. The apse was heated from a subsidiary furnace and was a hot plunge. There was a drain to remove surplus water. Four distinct phases of construction could be traced with the largest phase dating to about the mid-third century.

The sub-floor consisted of a layer of gravel and the flues were made from tile or brick with a pitched roof.

The level of water in the River Thames gradually dropped over the period of Roman occupation, so that the wharves with their massive timber revetments upstream became unusable. It is likely that Roman London's port had to be moved downstream to Wapping where ships could be beached directly on to the sandy foreshore about 150m from the bath house. By the mid-fourth century, the bath house had become dilapidated and was demolished around the end of that century. However, occupation on the site persisted for several decades into the fifth century. It is unclear as to whether the bath house formed part of a mansion or was a public building.

It has been preserved *in situ* covered in sand and lies beneath the present new buildings.

We are particularly grateful to Alastair for replacing at short notice his colleague Gary Brown, who was due to talk about the excavations at Tabard Square. We hope we will be able to hear about these on a future occasion.

DENNIS HILL

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## The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Community Archaeology

Friday 15 October: **Fay Simpson**

This was the title of a lively lecture given by Fay Simpson of the Early Department of the Museum of London, the new Finds Liaison Officer for London.

The Scheme is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and since 1997 its Finds Liaison Officers have examined and advised on more than 100,000 objects handed in by members of the public to the Scheme's local centres on an entirely voluntary basis. Many of these would otherwise have gone unrecorded. In some cases finds have led to a substantial excavation of the site and a much greater knowledge of local life of the period.

The Scheme aims to advance the knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales, to raise public awareness of the educational value of archaeological finds, to increase active public involvement in archaeology and to strengthen the links between metal detectorists and archaeologists.

This is now the largest portable archaeology scheme in the world and involves metal detectorists, mudlarks, local councils and local archaeological

societies. Finds Liaison Officers have to be out and about encouraging the public - particularly school children, co-ordinating field walks and generally working with people. They need to be familiar with local history and oral traditions.

Fay illustrated her talk with several examples such as the finding with a metal detector of a pair of Viking brooches in a field near Carlisle which lead to the discovery of a Viking timber buildings settlement and cemetery, a Viking sword and grave goods. The settlement was not on the coast, but inland and some Vikings had intermarried with local women and settled in the area. It was certainly not all rape and pillage!

Other slides showed a hoard of Roman coins, exquisite anthropomorphic metal brooches from Sutton Hoo and an Iron Age coin later converted into an attractive brooch.

Once again, we are especially grateful to Kay for having taken over this lecture commitment from her predecessor only a week after taking up her current post, having previously been Finds Liaison Officer for Cumbria (hence the Viking flavour to her slides!).

*DENNIS HILL*

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## Roman Harlow

Friday 19 November

Chris Lydamore of Harlow Museum began his lecture by saying he is not an archaeologist, but nevertheless proceeded to give an excellent discussion of the Roman archaeology of the town. Important features in the archaeology of the area are the River Stort running from east to west, and the north-south road following the course of the modern A11, along which evidence of activity tends to be found.

Stanegrove Hill is the site of the well-known Roman Temple, though it should be remembered also for archaeology of earlier and later periods. The temple, developed through several phases, would have dominated the valley. Chris showed slides of a reconstructed temple at the 'Archeon' museum in Holland, which is almost identical to Harlow Temple Phase II. The head of a cult statue, probably of Minerva, is thought to belong to the primary deity of the temple. The preponderance of lamb and goat bones at the site contrasts with the pattern at other Trinovantian sites, where cow bones are by far the most common - suggesting a possible ritual connection.

Holbrooks is the site of a large area of Roman settlement first identified by Miller Christie in 1926 in advance of gravel workings. Development pressures have continued and in the 1930s the directors of Holbrooks engineering company are reputed to have destroyed a 5-7 colour mosaic lest it hold up building work. The major excavation by Stuart Eglington-Mead in 1970 is often criticised for using inappropriate methods for a site containing wooden buildings, but in reality he had no alternative given the need to excavate a 14-acre site in a matter of weeks. His improvisation ran to persuading the USAF to mount mock bombing runs to provide aerial photographs, and sitting in front of earth-movers to prevent them from bulldozing the archaeology!

The nearby Stafford House/Priory Avenue site was identified by WEAG digs, leading to further excavations by Harlow Museum. Early in the Roman period the northern part of the site contained relatively high status buildings with a hypocaust and painted wall plaster, with lower status farmstead to the south. Over the next 200 years the pattern seems to have switched, with industry taking over in the former high status buildings, and a possible winged villa appearing to the south. Chris suggests this move may have been due to the Holbrooks settlement encroaching from the north.

Other sites include possible villas at Latton Common and Church Langley, and a vast complex at Gilden Way, maybe 5 times the size of the temple site. Recent work at New Hall Farm has identified a late Iron Age enclosure and a mid to late Iron Age field system - this represents the earliest evidence yet for farmers moving from the river valley to the heavier clayey soils higher up.

Chris moved on to discuss the interpretation of the Harlow sites and the finds from them. Evidence of many trades is found, and it is thought Haddam ware pottery was traded along the river valley. Possibly the most 'personal' of all the Harlow finds was a wooden writing tablet from Holbrooks containing a curse directed at the husband of the writer's lover.

Chris finished his talk by pointing out that Harlow is likely to be the site of a 'mutatio' or way-station on the Cursus Publicus, the Roman Imperial Post. Very conveniently this system will be the subject of December lecture, by Geoffrey Gillam. What planning!

*JEREMY GROVE*

# The Rise and Fall of Public Conveniences in the London Borough of Enfield

by Geoffrey Gillam

It was in the month of October 1922, at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, that the mayor of Clochmerle-en-Beaujolais announced to his friend the schoolmaster that he intended to build at public expense a public urinal: "which will be a shining example of the superiority of a progressive town council." The story of the planning and execution of this noble scheme in the face of opposition from local townspeople, who, for one reason or another were against the idea from the outset, can be read in that delightful book "Clochmerle" by Gabriel Chevalier.

There was opposition too in this country to the construction of 'Halting Stations' or 'Places of Convenience' during the 19th century. The few public conveniences that existed in the middle of the century were unsavoury places, which often voided directly into the sewers below. Protests from people living or working nearby caused some of these places to be removed and prevented others from being built.

The subject was an indelicate one, since the taboos of the time prevented any mention of excretory functions, and the authorities therefore refused to admit that a problem existed. It was George Jennings who broke through this barrier of reticence when he installed public lavatories in the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851. Even so, and in spite of the income previously received, no plans were made for lavatories to again be included (on the grounds of economy) when the building was moved from Hyde Park to Sydenham and Jennings was told that "persons would not come to Sydenham to wash their hands". However, he won the day and the installation of lavatories in the re-erected building produced a revenue of £1,000 a year. Jennings went on to urge the construction of

public lavatories in all places where the public gathered or passed by in large numbers, the charge initiated by Jennings having now been immortalised in the expression "to spend a penny". Two thousand years earlier, public lavatories were a feature of every town in the Roman Empire where they were usually connected to a nearby bathhouse and flushed by wastewater from the baths. The remains of Roman latrines excavated in this country show them to have been multi-seaters with apparent disregard for discrimination between the sexes. In front of the seats was a shallow gutter along which water flowed and in which sponges on sticks, used instead of toilet paper, could be rinsed. The process of fulling (the removal of grease from wool) involved the use of urine and, on payment of the appropriate tax, fullers were allowed to place jars at street corners for use by passers-by and to later collect the contents.

Throughout the middle ages and well into modern times, the provision of public lavatories was a rare event. There was one on London Bridge during the 16th century and no doubt there were a few more elsewhere. In Edinburgh during the late 18th century a man patrolled the street carrying a large iron chamber pot and a voluminous cloak and who offered these facilities to passers-by in need for a small fee.

In the local collection at Forty Hall Museum is a small pen and ink drawing entitled "An exact representation of the ceremony, laying the Foundation Bricks, for a Temple dedicated to the Goddefs Cloacina in the Gardens of S.....grew Esq Edmonton. John Nixon Fecit 1784", which is reproduced here by kind permission of the Museum. The drawing shows what appears to be the first public convenience being erected in Edmonton. A square brick-lined cesspit is under construction with a timber frame in place above and a long board neatly pierced with about five openings indicating that it was a multi-seater. Just in case there is any doubt in the mind of the viewer about the purpose of the structure there is a Hogarthian scene where a small dog is defecating into the pit. Nearby a man is discharging a pistol into the air in celebration of the near completion of this place of easement. In the background can be seen the tower of All Saints Church in Edmonton but the exact location of this event is not known.



"An exact representation of the ceremony, laying the Foundation Bricks, for a Temple dedicated to the Goddess Cloacina in the Gardens of S.....grew Esq Edmonton. John Nixon Fecit 1784".  
© Forty Hall Museum

Train journeys in the early days must have been a testing time since no lavatories were provided either on the trains or on the platforms and ".....patience was the only necessity. At early morning stops, men were wont to salute the sunrise as decorously as they might at the ends of platforms, while women stood in earnest conversation here and there, their long skirts providing cover even though the platform offered little by the way of camouflage." It was not until the 1870s that large scale provision of public lavatories was carried out by local authorities and looking through the local council minutes it is interesting to note the variety of committees that dealt with the provision and maintenance of these facilities. At different times they were administered by the "Cemetery, Park, Farm Allotment and Fire Brigade Committee", the "Baths, Workman's Dwellings, Byelaws and Bench of Magistrates Committee", and the "Sanitary, Town Hall and Fire Brigade Committee". Eventually the self-explanatory "Public Health Committee" was set up for each district.

The first attempt to meet the need was the provision of cast iron urinals, which were for men only, and appear to have been a mass-produced item as indicated by the Enfield UDC in October 1911, "that a circular iron urinal in stock be erected in the shrubbery near the Six Bells public house in

Chase Side". The last surviving public iron urinal in Enfield stood in the south-east corner of Tuckers Field Recreation Ground, Clay Hill, and was removed in 1964. A brick-built male urinal erected at the turn of the 20th century stood for many years near the Hop Poles public house in Lancaster Road. It was demolished c1960 but two or three of the lower courses of brickwork have survived as part of the archaeological record. The site is now occupied by a bus stop and shelter.

Later on there came substantial underground structures, and others above ground being built of brick with tiled roofs. Until recent times, there was a tendency to hide many of these places away from the gaze of the public: the public lavatories in Hertford Road, Ponders End being a good example, where access was only gained after finding a way through a veritable maze of high hedges which flanked the entrances.

Vandalism, although infrequent, is occasionally mentioned: Enfield Council minutes for January 1911 record that "Mr G..... expressed regret for breaking two panes of glass in the underground convenience in the Market Place and the Council accepted his offer to pay 5/- (25p) for the repair of the damage." In January 1898, Enfield Council agreed with the Enfield Parochial Charities for the

removal of the existing urinal in the Market Place and its replacement with an underground structure, the Parochial Charities being required to give up the land and pay £50, "as a pecuniary contribution to the cost of erection". The total cost was £400. At this time the new King's Head public house (Cannon Brewery) was being rebuilt to a new building line and £200 was requested from the brewers as their contribution, to which they agreed. In September 1910, William Tuttle of Chase Side wrote to the Council to ask when provision would be made for a convenience for women in the Market Place. This, and no doubt other complaints, caused the Council in 1912 to divide the existing convenience into male and female sides and to engage a female attendant who would be on duty from one hour after sunset every day until 11 pm and on Saturdays from 1pm until 11 pm. This tiled convenience which stood at the back of the Market Square with iron railings surrounding the steps leading down to the interior, survived until the 1950s when it was filled in and the site covered with granite setts to match the rest of the Square.

Elsewhere in this country, proposals to provide a public convenience for women were met with outrage when it was considered an offence to public decency! 33 residents signed a petition against the construction of an underground public convenience at the Triangle, Palmers Green, but the local ratepayers association expressed themselves in favour of the proposal. Included in the scheme was the provision of an "adjoining shelter for tram and motor' bus passengers". This convenience was built at a cost of £1800 and was opened in May 1914; it also had male and female attendants. There is a full record of the provision of a public convenience in Angel Road, Edmonton.

In April 1900 Edmonton UDC agreed to replace the existing cast iron urinal at the junction of Angel Road and Fore Street with a lavatory with provisions for men and women. Both sides had four closets and an attendant's room. The male attendant was provided with a cap, white jacket and trousers with a red stripe down each leg, whilst a blue serge dress with cap and apron were provided for the woman attendant. The times of opening, in 1908, were, on the male side 6 am to 12 pm on weekdays and 9 am to 10.30 pm on Sundays, whilst the female side was open from 7

pm to 11 pm on weekdays and from 9 am to 10.30 pm on Sundays. For some unexplained reason the closing time on the female side was changed in 1915 to 10.15 pm. The attendants' wages were 22s (£1.10) per week for men and 17/6 (87 1/2p) for women. The charges for the use of the WC were to have been one penny for men and a halfpenny for women but at the last minute this was changed to one penny for all users and there was also a charge of one penny for a wash with one towel provided, extra towels being one penny each. The minutes for March 1908 record that 'In the event of any person being without money and desiring to use the Water Closet, said person to be allowed to do so by declaring that he or she is without money and giving their names and addresses to be entered in a book kept for that purpose..' Shortly afterwards the free WC was fitted with a meter operated by a special disc, "to be obtained from the attendant after entry of the person's name in the book provided". On completion of the Angel Road convenience the old cast-iron urinal was removed and re-erected at Tramway Avenue. By 1925 the Public Health Committee had altered the closing time for both sides to 11 pm and since the minutes for 1927 record "there is a rush for the free convenience on Friday and Saturday nights". It was therefore agreed that two free places would be provided on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from 7.30 pm until the new closing time of 11 pm.

Economies began shortly after the Second World War with the gradual abolition of the white-coated attendants who looked after many of our public conveniences and kept the tiles and porcelain fittings clean and bright and the copper piping gleaming. In consequence they became less clean and suffered from damage by vandals, with walls frequently covered by graffiti depicting a wide range of obscenities - some quite imaginative, others less so!

Worse was to come when in recent years, in an attempt to cut expenditure, there was widespread closure of public conveniences, and the London Borough of Enfield was no exception. Railways, once privatised, in the London area at least, also saved money by closing lavatories on most of the stations apart from main line termini. As a result, many public houses have a notice on their doors to the effect that the conveniences inside are for the benefit of customers only.



Public conveniences, which exhibit many architectural styles, now stand closed and unused awaiting demolition. The surviving foundations will no doubt be excavated by future generations of archaeologists seeking information about the time when the actions of elected councils reflected a more civilised approach to life by our predecessors than is carried out by our present day political masters. Although most have been photographed, perhaps one at least of these socially desirable and physically necessary structures should be listed as an historic monument and preserved for posterity. The Enfield Council has recently announced that they are trying to find a use for the underground conveniences on the Triangle at Palmers Green: They should look at the former public convenience in Malvern in Worcestershire, which has been converted into a theatre, seating up to a dozen

people! Lavatories in Broomfield Park, which had remained open, have since been closed because of importuning, known as 'dogging' or 'cottaging'. Rather than enforce the law the Council took the easy route and closed them. There have been some socially undesirable results from the closures of public conveniences with people in their urgency seeking secluded places (and there are several!) but the subject will not be discussed here. One can only hope that those who approved such closures will, themselves, one day be taken embarrassingly short.

Apart from the pen and ink drawing, reference to which was made in the bulletin for December 1996, this is a revision of the article first published in the *EAS bulletin* 103 December 1986.

## Fieldwalking at Bulls Cross Ride, Spring 2004 (Site Code BCR04)

by Martin J Dearne

**P**ossibly significant features on a 1960s aerial photograph held by the society, matching a raised platform in a field recently purchased by Capel manor Agricultural College adjacent to the M25 and Bulls Cross Ride led to a fieldwalking survey in May 2004. The area has been much damaged since the 1960s both by the construction of roads and the erection of an electricity pylon, but it was hoped that following deep ploughing fieldwalking might produce material to indicate the date if not cause of some of the aerial photograph features.

Whilst a small number of Medieval / early post-Medieval pottery sherds was recovered the main finding was that there was a dense scatter of glazed reduced earthenware (the standard kitchen pottery of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries)

and transfer printed creamware of the late eighteenth to nineteenth century. (There were also a few pieces of slipware and of higher status late eighteenth / early nineteenth century pottery.) This all probably relates to field manuring with kitchen refuse / cess and is unlikely to be connected to the platform and other feature.

As is now standard society practice a full report is being compiled and the site reported to the Greater London Sites and Monuments Register and London Fieldwork Roundup. Due to other commitments there are currently no plans for further work at the site, though we will be keeping an eye on it. Many thanks however to the society members who gave up their time to do the fieldwalking, and we hope that more fieldwalking can be organised in due course for members to participate in.

# Ancient Rain: Butser Ancient Farm with Adam Hart Davies

by Tim Harper

I had a call one Friday night asking "can you get to Butser Ancient Farm by the morning?", because the BBC needed to recreate Woodhenge for a new series with Adam Hart Davies called "What The Ancients Did For Us".

I arrived at 9.05 to find that filming had been put back until 1.00pm whilst some shots were worked out and a sequence for ploughing was planned.

I was shown the famous BBC mobile location catering bus where I was able to start the day with a full breakfast - and also had a few hours to explore Butser.

Founded in 1972 by the late Peter Reynolds, whose image now adorns the controversial Roman Villa reconstruction (subject of a very different television programme last year), Butser is a centre for experimental archaeology in farming and ancient technology.

It is the buildings that first strike you as you approach, forming a small community in the centre of the complex, each made from wattle and daub and made only by authentic methods using natural locally available materials.

The main task for the day was to erect a wooden post in the centre of the complex using the same technology that would have been used to construct Woodhenge (not reconstruct Woodhenge in its entirety – that was one load off my mind).

The other task was to demonstrate ploughing of a field - but from scratch, from the cutting down of a small tree, fashioning the plough using ancient tools, to using it to demonstrate its effectiveness. The tree had been cut down from the farms own renewable plantation the day before and the demonstrator and lecturer at Butser, David Freeman, set about shaping the wood into a two-piece ard, ready to use.



*David Freeman with plough*

About 20 volunteers had turned up to help, and be treated to BBC Tea. There was a great deal of waiting in between shots and much sitting inside of the houses to avoid both the sweep of the camera lens and the heavy rain.

The very idea of experimental archaeology comes to life when you are inside the great house. Ideas of a primitive Iron Age race living in mud huts is challenged whilst you sit inside in the pouring rain. The thatch is completely water-tight and the heat from the fire both counteracted the strong wind and dealt swiftly with our soaking clothes.

While sheltering inside, the crew was able to film with Adam Hart Davis "nose to the grind stone" demonstrating the processing of grain with a rotary quern, and how this would fit into the daily lives of the people of the settlement.

Once the rain had relented the team got roped into the main event. This seemed a difficult task. There was a carved tree trunk weighing over a ton lying at one end of a field and a hole had been dug at the other into which it had to be lifted and stood upright. The team had two ropes, a set of thinner logs to act as rollers, ten people on each rope to pull and three people to move the rollers from the back of the main log to the front to create a "Rolling Track".



*The A-frame goes up*

With so many people the task was very easy, the log just slid along the ground right up to the hole. Then came the task of getting the log on end and upright. This was achieved by another hand-made wooden implement - which David had made earlier, in the best BBC tradition - which comprised of an 'A' frame, with which the log could be lifted into place. Using the ropes by pulling in opposite directions, stability was achieved in the lift and the upright log could be positioned exactly where it was needed. Once in the hole, the base of the log was back filled and packed into the ground. This for the ancient builders of Woodhenge would have been the first task of many, but for us it was to be the only one.

This was just as well because that ancient rain was back and it was time to retreat into the main hut again. It was getting late and there was still the ploughing to be filmed. Of the twenty or so volunteers only a few of us were left. The plan was to use us to pull the plough in two teams of three.



*'Woodhenge' post in place*

There was a break in the cloud and led by the new plough we marched down to the bottom of the field on the farthest side of the site, ready to begin when the biggest downpour of the day had us six volunteers, ten film crew and a director crammed under the trees and onto barbed wire, using our coats to cover some very expensive looking camera and sound equipment. (Is that why they call the end of filming a "wrap"?)

As the last of the light faded it was decided that maybe ploughing the mud in our dripping clothes wouldn't make the best of shots. Once back inside the hut the fire did its best to dry us out, one demonstration of ancient technology to finish off the day. Driving back to Enfield I don't think I've seen such a cloudless sky...



*More information about Butser can be found in Current Archaeology 171 and 188, or information on its experimental courses by contacting Butser Ancient Farm, Nexus House, Gravel Hill, Horndean, Waterlooville. Hampshire PO8 0QE. Tel: 023 9259 8838 Fax: 023 9234 6553 email: [rwh@newmil.freemil.co.uk](mailto:rwh@newmil.freemil.co.uk) or visit the website [www.butser.org.uk](http://www.butser.org.uk)*

# PASTFINDERS NEWS

## News of the Excavation and Fieldwork Group



As usual at this time of the year there is little activity going on as far as practical getting-your-hands-dirty archaeology is concerned. The dark damp winter months are a time for writing up reports and catching up on post excavation work while reflecting on the projects undertaken during the summer.

Behind the scenes the seeds are being sown with English Heritage for permission to answer some more questions about Elsyng Palace in 2005.

Early next year volunteers will be needed to help out with a project which involves clearing and surveying the site of some 18th century cottages in Flash Lane. The project, which is being carried out in conjunction with the Parks Department, is to trace the history of the site. If you would like your name to be added to our list of volunteers all you need to do is call me at my office on 0208 364 2244.

On November 5th representatives of the E.A.S., the Parks Department and English Heritage met for a whistle stop tour of some of the sensitive historical and archaeological sites within the Borough. The group visited the cast iron aqueduct in Flash Lane and the possible site of the outer guard/gatehouse at Elsyng, which the Society hopes to secure permission to investigate next year, as tree root damage to the archaeology, is believed to be extensive. The relationship between the E.A.S. the Museum Service and the Parks Department is working well as the Borough recognises the enormous value the rich historical heritage of the area can offer.



Field walking of a site west of the Ridgeway has once again produced a scatter of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint cores and blades which would suggest

that prehistoric settlers were camping and hunting on a raised area of high ground close to a natural stream. It is hoped a more thorough investigation of the site can be carried out next year once the crop is harvested.

Those of you that live locally may have been held up by the roadworks in Carterhatch Lane, which have involved the digging of a trench across the projected line of Roman Ermin Street. Never being one to miss an opportunity I inspected the site, hoping that evidence of the elusive Roman road would appear. Most of the layers exposed represented modern disturbance and hoggin laid down after the installation of mains services such as a large gas pipe. A quite substantial band of compacted gravel was exposed which could easily have been mistaken for a road surface but it was quite high up in the section, containing fragments of tarmac - which is not usually associated with the make up of a Roman road! My request to the contractors to dig a little deeper was not well received as you can imagine.

Next year promises already to be quite a busy one. Merry Christmas!

*MIKE DEWBREY*

### ORAL HISTORY SOUNDBITES

Hampstead Museum wants to hear from residents who lived in Hampstead or West Hampstead during the Second World War. They hope to collect a bank of oral memories, extracts of which will feature in a new permanent exhibition late next year. For more details ring 020 7431 0144.

Meanwhile Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey has created a listening post to recount stories from its oral history collection. For more information ring 01992 716882.