



Society News

The Bulletin of the Enfield Archaeological Society



Top: A Surrey-Hampshire Border Ware pot from the 1960s Elsyng excavations. See Gillam Memorial Lecture p. 3

Above: Cellar and drain, Elsyng, 1964. See Gillam Memorial Lecture p. 3

Society News is published quarterly in March, June, September and December.
The Editor is Jeremy Grove

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www.enfarchsoc.org

<http://enfieldarchaeology.wordpress.com/>

Meetings 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

Forthcoming EAS lectures:

13th September

The Chiseldon Cauldrons (*tbc*)

Alexandra Baldwin, Conservator, British Museum

18th October

The Roman Bones of Old Enfield

Neil Pinchbeck, EAS

15th November

Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre – The Whole Story

Julian Bowsher, Senior Archaeologist, MOLA

December

Winter break – no meeting

EAS Fieldwork



The Society carries out a busy programme of excavation and other activities. Dates for two summer projects are now confirmed:

Friday 12th – Sunday 14th July
Cedars Park, Cheshunt

Tuesday 16th – Sunday 21st July
Elsyng Palace, Forty Hall, Enfield

Please contact Mike Dewbrey on 01707 870888 (office number) for more details if you are interested.

Blog: <http://enfieldarchaeology.wordpress.com/>
Website: <http://www.enfarchsoc.org/>

Meetings of other Societies

EDMONTON HUNDRED HISTORICAL SOCIETY 7.45 for 8pm, Jubilee Hall, Enfield, unless otherwise stated

17 Jul	Memories of Chase Farm Schools (<i>change to printed programme</i>)	Frank Bayford
18 Sep	Octavia Hill	Pamela Wright
16 Oct	Enfield Railways Part 2 (West) Great Northern Line and The Hertford Loop	Dave Cockle

HENDON & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 7.45 for 8.00pm Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley

8 Oct	Brunel's tunnel under the Thames	Robert Hulse
12 Nov	Lions on Kunulua – Excavations of Early Bronze & Iron Age periods at Tell Tayinat, Hatay, Turkey	Fiona Haughey

WEST ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP 7.45pm, Woodford County High School, High Rd, Woodford Green

9 Sep	A Presentation of Archaeological Geophysics Techniques	WEAG Members
14 Oct	Colne Priory	Tim Dennis

WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 8pm, Parish Centre, Abbey Gardens, Waltham Abbey

19 Sep	Pompeii and Herculanium, the cities of Vesuvius	Tony O'Connor
17 Oct	The witch craze in Essex	Christopher Thompson

Note – some societies have not yet published their autumn 2013 programmes

Meeting Reports

Geoffrey Gillam Memorial Lecture: Elsyng Palace, the Early Years, 1963-69

14th June 2013: Ian Jones

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Society's excavations on the site of Elsyng Palace, making it an obvious choice for this year's Gillam Memorial lecture. In fact, the Parks Committee gave permission for work to start on 10 June 1963, fifty years and 4 days before Ian's lecture, and digging began just over a month later on 14 July.

Despite the passage of time, and the publication of an interim report on the early excavations by Ian with Ivy Drayton in 1987, many of the finds in the archive remain to be fully analysed to modern standards, and this talk was the first time some have been presented in public since the 1960s.

Although Elsyng Palace was only used by royalty for a short period in its history, that period left substantial remains below the surface of which nothing was known when excavation began in 1963. In fact, the site Director, Ivy Drayton was to remark later that had she known how much would be found she would never have taken on such a challenging project on a Scheduled Ancient Monument with a small local society. Digging took place throughout the summer, but only on Sundays. It was possible to be much more relaxed about leaving trenches open in those days!

Elsyng lies near the northern boundary of Enfield, near Enfield Chase – very convenient for hunting, and this was probably a major attraction of the site for the royals. The first known mention of Elsyng in the records is in 1374 when Jordan de Elsyng held 1/5th of a Knights Fee in Enfield, and the manor is first mentioned in 1381 as part of the holdings of Thomas Elsyng. There are few further references until the 1490s when it was enlarged by Lord Roos or Thomas Lovell – the latter having conveniently gained custody of the site after the former was declared insane.

The 1960s excavations discovered part of one of the domestic ranges, and possibly part of the moat. Most of the remains were thought to belong to the Tudor period, but a sleeper beam (i.e. timber wall footing), a doorway under a later Tudor wall, and an external wall were thought to belong to the 15th century phase.

Parts of a complex drainage system were discovered, including a brick vaulted cess pit, which could not be excavated as no pump was available.

Rye House and Nether Hall a few miles up the Lea Valley are both elaborate late 15th century gatehouses, which give an idea of how the entrance to Elsyng may have looked in this period. Compton Wynyates in Warwickshire is an excellent complete example of the grander type of brick house of the late 15th-early 16th century.

Lovell was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Henry VII, who visited Elsyng, as did his daughter, Margaret. Lambert Simnell, a pretender to the throne, was put to work in Lovell's kitchens, and was later appointed falconer. Remarkably, one of the finds from the dig was the skull of a female peregrine (*see Society News 190, Sept 2008 for a feature on this and an excellent drawing by Neil Pinchbeck - Ed.*).

Lovell died in 1524, and Henry VIII obtained the estate by exchange with Lovell's heirs in 1539. Documents show that within 2 years he had embarked on major alterations, including extensions to the kitchens and a chamber for Princess Mary. Most of the remains excavated were thought to be associated with this phase, or possibly renovation work in the early 17th century. However Ian pointed out that archaeological techniques have moved on in the last 50 years, as has our understanding of the wider site, so the phasing of the 1960s trenches may well change if we ever have the opportunity to re-open and re-examine them.



Brick plinth

The finest piece of brickwork found was the brick plinth which fortuitously appeared just under the turf in the first trench opened. There was also a small turret, probably containing a privy, a fireplace and what appeared to be a cupboard with its internal plaster still in place. Smaller architectural finds included worked stone, plaster and pieces of wooden laths, some incomplete pieces of slate, several shaped bricks for window mullions, window glass and lead, and green, yellow and brown floor tiles.



Window mullion bricks

The main drain was a fine brick vaulted structure which was found to be clear for 70 feet (by the typical 1960s expedient of sending a small volunteer along it with a camera and tape measure). It was blocked by debris which had fallen in through an opening, not a collapse.



Vaulted drain entry

Excavation on the palace site finished in 1966, but in 1967 a gas main trench was dug just to the north, within the scheduled area. Ivy Drayton was consulted on the probably extent of the palace buildings, so they could be avoided, but although she "added 50%" to her estimate of the maximum extend of the site as a safety margin, even this turned out not to be enough and the trench sliced through what was probably the edge of the north range. Society members, including Geoffrey Gillam, hastily turned out to record the features

exposed as best they could. These included an octagonal brick column, and a single fragment of decorated stonework.

As was often the case in the 1960s and earlier, only the more 'interesting' pottery sherds were retained. Nevertheless, a fair quantity of pottery and other small finds still survive in the archive, many of which are yet to be studied in detail. These include a fine example of a Surrey-Hampshire Border ware pot (see *front cover – Ed.*), the bases of several stoneware pots of the kind imported in large quantities from Raeren in Germany from the late 15th – mid 16th century, and handles from some large redware vessels probably used in the kitchens. A bone comb was also found, along with a small lock, and a 1570s jetton. Later finds include fragments of a tin-glazed bowl, a black glazed tyg (drinking jug) probably made in Harlow, and some of the distinctively-decorated 'Metropolitan' slipware, also made in Harlow from about 1630 or a little earlier.



Metropolitan slipware

An enclosed park was created at Elsyng for raising deer. In 1968 and 1969 the Society sectioned the boundary ditch of this deer park in several places, but there were no datable finds.

Elsyng deteriorated during the 1580s and 90s, with a Mr Manners stealing firewood, and James I removing large sections for re-installation at his preferred palace just up the road at Theobalds. Nevertheless, repairs were made to Elsyng in 1609-10, and the keeper entertained James there in 1612. The keeper later bought Elsyng for £5,300 in 1641, and died in 1650. It was derelict by 1656, but as a result of our more recent excavations we now think the site was used by Nicholas Rainton for agricultural purposes in the 2nd half of the 17th century before being finally cleared

JEREMY GROVE (with thanks to Ian Jones)

Monitoring of the New Cycle Track Through the Forty Hall Estate, 2012 – 2013 (Site Code FXF12)

By Martin J Dearne

As part of a larger 'greenway' project to create a cycle track through much of Enfield, the borough was required in 2012 to have archaeologically monitored the shallow cut for that part of the track which was to run along two edges of the Forty Hall estate (along Forty Hill and Maidens Brook), and so within the Scheduled Ancient Monument in which Elsyng Palace sits (Fig. 1).



A small EAS team led by Neil Pinchbeck undertook this work for them over the winter of 2012/2013 and recorded a surprising amount of archaeology. Whilst much of it was not photogenic, and some features just filled in details about the way that the estate developed in the nineteenth century (e.g. with evidence for gravel paths running down to Maidens Brook from Forty Hall, and others running along its banks), finds and features represented a chronological spread from the Neolithic/Bronze Age to modern times.

Pre-Palace Evidence

The earliest evidence was a scatter of flint flakes from near the brook which were kindly identified by our vice president, Jon Cotton, as Neolithic/Bronze Age and probably emphasise

that Maidens Brook has always been a focus of human activity, perhaps in this case for hunting.

Later prehistoric and Roman evidence was absent, as usual in the area, but the work increased the amount of Medieval material known from the environs of the palace site a little. The earliest Medieval material comprised two sherds of Early Medieval Coarse Sandy Ware (EMCS) of AD 1050 – 1200, one of Medieval Coarse Sandy Ware (MCS) of AD 1140 – 1300 and one of Late Medieval Herts Glazed Ware (LMHG) of AD 1340 – 1450+. There were also six sherds and a chip of Late Medieval Sandy Redware (LMSR) of AD 1270 – 1600, including the complete profile of a dripping dish, most likely of sixteenth century date.

Palace Phase

Features relating to the palace included a path surfaced with re-used roofing tiles, which probably ran from what is today Forty Hill west to a large parterre garden recently identified by John Pinchbeck using LiDAR data. LiDAR uses laser pulses fired from aircraft to map the micro topography of the land by 'stripping away' the vegetation obscuring it, and the parterre is one of several new features John has been able to isolate using this technique, many of which it is hoped to report on in more detail in a later Bulletin. The path also included a scoop containing most of the 76 sherds of London Area Early Post Medieval Red Earthenware (PMRE; AD 1480 – 1600) found up to this point. Nearly all of these came from the same very large vessel which may well have been a water pitcher.

Along with, for example, a small pit possibly related to brickearth quarrying, three other features relating to the Tudor and earlier palace were its approach road; the line of a large arched brick built drain near the brook which we have previously excavated part of, and a previously unknown natural channel leading from the area of the palace to the brook.

The Approach Road

The approach road line has always been known from remote sensing and traces on the ground (though the new LiDAR survey shows it even better), but had never been confirmed by excavation. However, the cycle track crossed its line and Neil was able eventually to obtain two sections across it showing that it was well cambered even as preserved, and 4.80 m wide. It had probably been constructed along a strip of the natural which had been reduced in height and on to this had been lain a cambered core of very

compacted grey clay with frequent rounded pebbles, up to 0.30 m thick. Above this core, and slightly broader than it, the actual road surface had been formed of an extremely compacted layer of gravel, typically 17 – 20 cm thick.

Immediately north of the road was a flanking ditch cut into the natural. Broad and U-shaped, it was c. 2.10 m wide and c.54 cm deep with respect to the (surviving) road surface. Landscape/LiDAR indications of a second parallel ditch or gully further north could not be confirmed by excavation. Whether a matching southern ditch existed or not it was not possible to say because the exposure available was too shallow. However, if one had existed it may well have been filled, and therefore obscured, by a later dump extending the road to the south and giving it a new width of 6.20 m. This dump was over 28 cm thick, moderately compacted, and comprised gravel mixed with some yellowish brown brickearth.

The Brick-Built Drain

At the point where the drain crossed the cycle path it had probably collapsed and been removed in the early nineteenth century, but had likely still been helping to drain the area as it was replaced by a brick built land drain.

The Natural Channel

The natural channel (the presence of which was possibly one of the reasons Elsyng Palace and its suspected predecessors were sited precisely where they were) had been filled with brick rubble and a mass of animal bones, mainly from cattle and horses, though a few pig, roe deer and dog bones are also known from the fill. As this almost certainly happened when the palace was demolished in 1657 it is likely that the bones had originally been amongst the rubbish from the palace.

Post Palace Phase

The most important discoveries though related to the period between the demolition of the palace and the creation, c. 1700, of much of the recreational landscape that is seen today. Matching the on-going excavation of an L-shaped threshing barn on the actual palace site, the cycle track monitoring identified an extensive area in which soil containing some rubble from the palace had been dumped and then widely spaced drainage channels had been created before a cultivation soil developed.

This almost certainly means that east of the palace site Nicholas Rainton the younger had begun to improve and cultivate parts of the former

palace estate once he acquired it. LiDAR again adds further detail to the picture (incorporated on Fig. 1), allowing us to map the pattern of drainage channels, which, in an area not crossed by the cycle path, also suggest the use of 'lazy bed' cultivation and a possible enclosure that could have held a building.

South from this enclosure ran a double field bank separated by a broad drainage channel and this was crossed by the track and so excavated. The main field bank included a piece of greensand stone matching a partial octagonal splayed window mullion (identified by Ian Jones) from the dumped soil and both clearly from the demolished palace. (As would be a battered limestone bracket found built into the land drain replacing the palace drain above, though it may ultimately have derived from some earlier building.) That the cultivation ceased c. 1700 is further indicated by a sherd of Delft pottery belonging to after c. 1680 from another soil dump that may have levelled up the edge of the cultivated area.

Relatively little evidence for further changes to the estate was found dating to the eighteenth century. There were signs of some landscaping just north of the Forty Hall car park and a little more was learnt about the reservoir for the cascades system on Maidens Brook, extensive work on which has been reported in earlier bulletins. But in this instance much of the archaeology had been removed by the installation of a major gas supply pipe in the 1960s (the buried access road for this work was also seen). One brick built path or landing stage of uncertain date was, however, recorded near the ponds west of the palace site when a casual watch was kept on the cycle track as it was continued out of the scheduled area.

Acknowledgements

The author, who acted as overall director of the work, is grateful to Neil Pinchbeck who supervised it on a day to day basis and to John and Lesley Pinchbeck who, assisted by Angie Holmes, comprised the rest of the site team. As usual a detailed report has been lodged with Enfield Museum, English Heritage and other interested parties.

MARTIN DEARNE

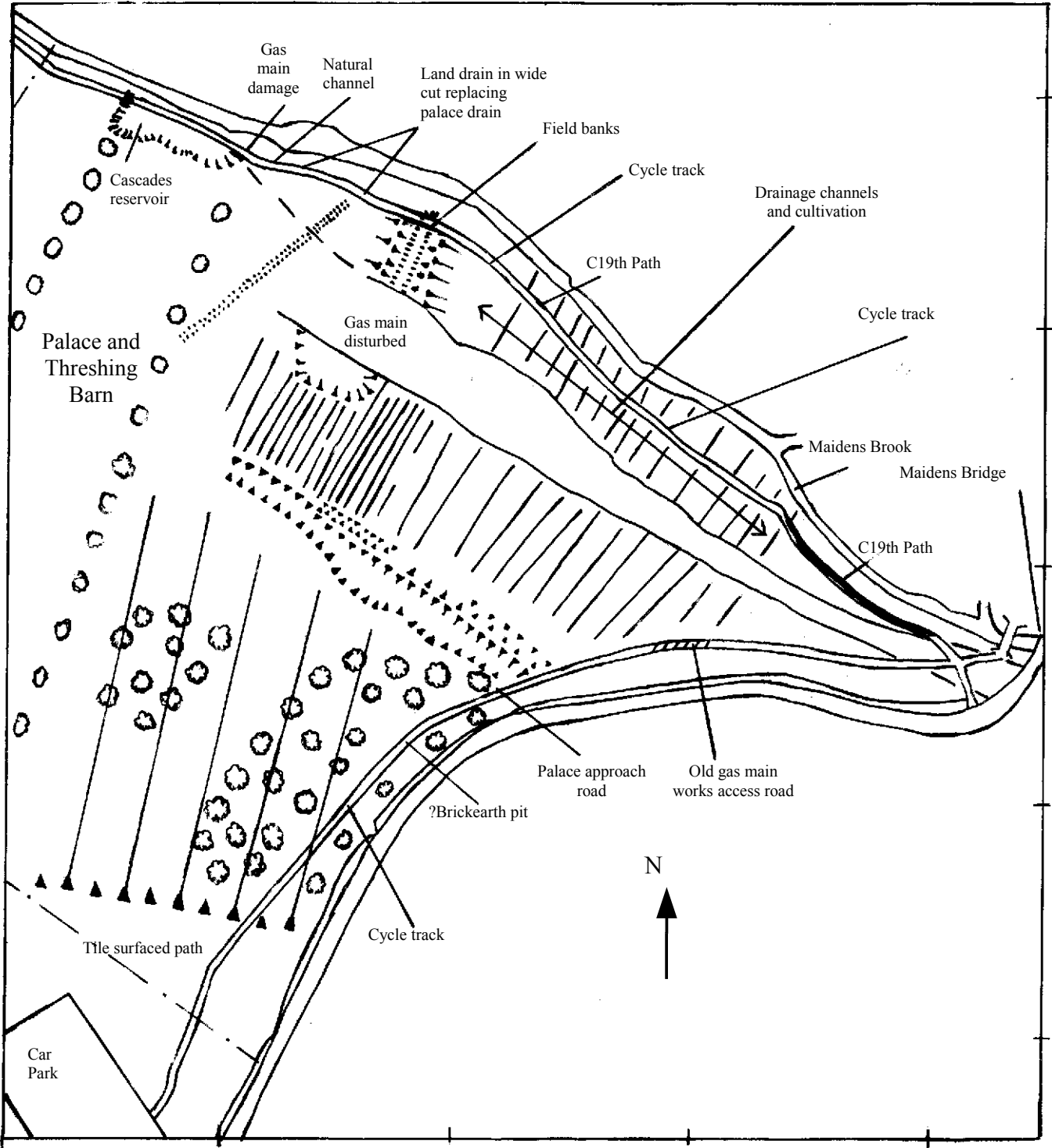


Fig 1: Location of the Cycle Track and Features Mentioned (1:2,500)

PASTFINDERS NEWS

News of the Excavation and Fieldwork Group



Our first big dig of the year on the site of Theobalds Palace, trenches will be laid out on Friday 12th July with excavation work commencing on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th of July when the dig is formally open to public view. Any members wishing to get involved with our excavations should get in touch.

There has been a lot of activity on the site over the last few months with restoration of standing walls and summerhouses. New pathways have been laid and provision for the new café on the site of the old 19th century orangery is well under way. Trenches have been cut for mains services revealing tantalising glimpses of the underlying archaeology. A confusing plethora of 18th century walls were uncovered and recorded in situ by MOLA; walls built with 16th century bricks and dressed stone from the demolished palace; and sometimes, just beneath the topsoil, the foundations of Willam Cecil's show home - rewriting the layout of this tantalising site.

This year, working with MOLA, we hope to investigate a structure close to the new car park but inside the scheduled monument on the south side of the kitchen garden where a brick culvert was seen during construction of the new access road early in the Spring.

The following week, beginning Tuesday 16th July, we will begin our annual dig at Elsyng Palace in the grounds of Forty Hall. This year's excavation will continue with a small team right through the week until Sunday 21st July when we shall be revealing our discoveries to the public. Members are welcome to come along at any time to watch, but activity will increase at the weekend. On the Sunday there will be two guided tours of the Elsyng Palace site during the afternoon. This year we hope to reveal more of the suspected late 17th - early 18th century threshing barn which we uncovered during last summer's excavation. which will help interpret the origins of this unusual structure, and perhaps its relationship to the demolished palace remains.

As always our expectations are high as to what secrets will be revealed beneath the landscaping

of the Lime Tree Avenue. Until recently no one imagined that such a large structure had existed over the palace remains. The archaeology uncovered evidence of a hitherto unknown phase of occupation over the site. It is always encouraging to see our members during an excavation, so do come along and see what we have found.

Those of you who read our society blog (<http://enfieldarchaeology.wordpress.com/>) will be aware that the building work in Leighton Road over the site of the Roman settlement has uncovered some interesting archaeology. A circular pit was sectioned by a small team led by Dr Martin Dearne which showed evidence of burning. Was this part of an industrial process? No - it was the remains of a Roman well! The upper fill contained an assortment of animal bone and pottery, much to the delight of our diggers. Alas frustratingly it was not possible to extract the obligatory ritual offerings from the bottom of the well, which remain for future archaeologists to find!

More evidence of the system of ditches that criss-cross the site has also been recorded. Due to the shallow nature of much of construction work, thankfully little Roman archaeology has been disturbed. By contrast, main service trenches for sewers, electric and gas supplies destroyed a lot of the archaeology when the houses were built here in the 1920's.

Work on the new cycle path at Forty Hall is nearing completion with another chance to see a section of the approach road into Elsyng Palace eagerly anticipated by the watchful eyes of the Pinchbecks!

As always we hope the weather gods will smile upon us during our excavation work this year and those new members who would like to dig are always welcome, if you have no experience we will find you a digging buddy to give a guiding trowel. Congratulations to our winner of the Golden Trowel at this years AGM Zey Kussan, who had never been on an archaeological dig before until a few years ago and is now one of our most enthusiastic excavators.

MIKE DEWBREY

01707 870888