
SOCIETY NEWS

THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



December 1960

Issue No. 79

COUNCIL CHARGES FORCE CHANGE OF VENUE

The recently imposed charges of £1.50 an hour makes it impossible for us to continue to use the Conference room of the Civic Centre, and the December 1960 meeting and the 1961 programme of lectures will now be held in Millfield House Arts Centre, Silver Street, Edmonton, N.9. We hope that members will continue to give us their support and come to the new venue.

Millfield House was until a few years ago, part of St. Davids Hospital and has only recently been redecorated and opened as an Arts Centre. There are several well proportioned rooms available for use by local societies and it will be possible to offer refreshments in the form of tea or coffee. The premises are also licensed and bar facilities are available.

To add to the sense of occasion in this very pleasant meeting place, our meetings will open at 7.00 p.m. which will give members an opportunity to read the notice board for news of archaeological interest and to see what other societies in the area are doing. The publications table will continue to be manned where books and reports will be on sale. Exhibitions of archaeological material will be arranged from time to time.

The lectures will commence at 8.00 p.m. and, as previously mentioned, it is hoped to arrange a break for refreshments during the evening.

HOW TO GET THERE Millfield House is situated at the western end of Silver Street, Edmonton, a few yards from the Cambridge Roundabout to which 201 and 217 buses run along the Cambridge Road from Enfield Town. 4 and 102 buses run from Southgate to the Cambridge Roundabout and then along Silver Street. Members approaching from the other direction can get a bus along the Hertford Road to the Regal cinema (alas, now a bingo hall) and then either get a bus along Silver Street or walk the 1100 yards involved. Some members may find it more convenient to get a train to Silver Street station and to walk or catch a bus from there. For those who come by car, there is some parking space in the grounds of Millfield House.

We believe that all the forthcoming lectures are worth making the effort to come to the new venue, and once you have established the bus routes and the frequency and times of trains, it will not seem so difficult after all.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE THAT MONTHLY MEETINGS, INCLUDING DECEMBER 1980 WILL NOW BE HELD IN MILLFIELD HOUSE ARTS CENTRE, SILVER STREET, EDMONTON, N.9. FOR DETAILS OF HOW TO GET THERE SEE FRONT COVER.

3rd December, Wednesday

Millfield House Arts Centre,
Silver Street, Edmonton N.9.
8.00 p.m.

ENFIELD AT WAR 1914 - 1918

Geoffrey Gillam

When the news of our declaration of war on Germany in August 1914 was announced to the people present at a concert being given from the bandstand on Chase Green Enfield, the whole audience leapt to its feet and cheered and sang patriotic songs. This euphoria soon faded as the death toll mounted on the battlefields of France and elsewhere.

Here at home prices rose and there were food shortages. In spite of appeals from the authorities, some of the better-off sections of the community began to hoard food; one customer purchased almost the entire stock of a local shop which then had to close for several days until fresh supplies could be obtained. The food situation was not finally relieved until rationing on a national scale was introduced in 1918.

There were air raids when bombs from German airships, and later on from Gotha and Giant bombers, fell in Edmonton, Enfield and Southgate. Considerable excitement was caused when a German airship was shot down over Enfield and crashed in flames at Cuffley. Hundreds of people made their way to the wreckage only to find themselves stranded and they had to walk many miles before they could obtain transport home.

This is the story of events in the three districts, which now make up the London Borough of Enfield, during the period 1914 - 1918. It ends with a look at some of the monuments to the dead of that war.

For those members who are interested, patriotic songs and military music of the period will be played between 7.30 and 8.00 p.m.

14th January, Wednesday

Millfield House Arts Centre,
Silver Street, Edmonton, N.9.
8.00 p.m.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MESOPOTAMIA

Ian Jones, B.A., A.L.A.

From the 5th millennium B.C. the fertile valleys and flood plains of the Tigris and Euphrates have been home to a succession of highly cultivated and bloodthirsty civilisations, from the Sumerians, first seen in all their glory in the 3rd millennium B.C., to the Islamic culture which reached its height while Europe wallowed in the Middle Ages.

The culture called Ubaidian after the site where it was first recognised, and the succeeding Uruk and protoliterate phases developed the skills and techniques of building, craftsmanship and eventually writing, allied with increasingly complex trade and sophisticated religious and political organisations that saw its first great flowering during the Sumerian period from about 2750 B.C. The Sumerians developed in the potentially fertile area on the lower courses of the two rivers between the marshes of the south and the northern uplands, the heart of later Assyria. The need to organise complex irrigation works in order to survive led to the sophisticated and often unbelievably bureaucratic society. Its brilliant culture was first dramatically shown to the world by the excavations of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur in the 1920's - excavations of a very high standard for the time.

Political power ebbed and flowed between the city-states of Mesopotamia until the 24th century B.C. when Sargon of Akkad first imposed unity on the cities of the plains. After Akkad was destroyed by the Gutian mountaineers, Sumerian culture experienced a revival until it collapsed in chaos at the start of the 2nd millennium B.C. After another period of chaos Babylon under its greatest ruler Hammurabi, achieved almost total ascendancy for the first time. The city-states flourished whether under alien rule or not and the recent excavation of the previously almost unknown and now rather controversial city of Ebla, adds further depth to our picture of the area.

From about 1600 B.C., the Assyrian people of the north extended and consolidated their control of the highlands and later the plains. Under a succession of able rulers, this savagely efficient military monarchy became the new force of Mesopotamian civilisation. The behaviour of the Assyrians towards enemies was little different, more in scale perhaps, from earlier and later cultures. What is hard for us to accept is the way they gloried in it, as their art shows. One wonders about the mentality of a ruler like Ashurbanipal who could dine and relax with his wife in a beautiful garden, with the freshly severed head of the late king of Elam swinging from a nearby palm-tree; -and have the scene recorded for posterity to boot! It was another Englishman, Austen Henry Layard who first revealed this civilisation to the world in the middle decade of the 19th century - and provided the British Museum with much of its unparalleled collection of Assyrian sculpture. The strain of maintaining a large empire by methods not exactly guaranteed to inspire love and devotion led to its collapse in 612 B.C. to be succeeded by the short-lived neo-Babylonian Empire itself succeeded by the Persian Empire after its conquest by Cyrus the Great in 540 B.C.

Mesopotamia now fell under permanent foreign domination though her art and culture continued to influence her conquerors. Persia fell to the Empire of Alexander the Great and his successors, itself succeeded by the Parthian and Sassanian Empires while Rome hovered on the fringes, but despite the efforts of Trajan and Severus, failed to impose her presence. The Arab conquest in the 7th century A.D. led to a final flowering which has left us the tiled mosque of Isfahan and the painted miniatures of Persia. Later Turkish rule led to stagnation and decay until the 20th century found some further uses for a rather smelly material that the Sumerians had used in place of cement.

Over a century of excavations in Mesopotamia has left us with a vast wealth of treasures, buildings and documents. We cannot hope to look at them all, but I hope the mixture of old favourites and new discoveries will give a picture of what was I feel, despite some of the previous comments, one of the world's more attractive civilisations.

11th February, Wednesday

Millfield House Arts Centre,
Silver Street, Edmonton, N.9.
8.00 p.m.

ROMAN LONDON - G.P.O. SITE, NEWGATE STREET
THE ROMAN LEVELS REVIEWED

Steve Roskame

The site is 200 yards north of St. Pauls and 300 yards east of Newgate. It lies a few yards southwest of the re-entrant caused when the walls of the Roman fort were incorporated in the later city wall of Londinium.

The earliest Roman feature was a circular hut bounded by a ditch and dating to the 50's A.D. This was succeeded by two rectangular structures aligned on the Roman street laid out to the south. These buildings were destroyed by fire, probably during the Boudiccan revolt. Late first century burials imply that this part of the City was outside the official urban area up to the end of the first century. Substantial industrial buildings were placed on the site as part of a planned development during the early second century, accompanied by a huge brick-earth quarry. The commercial premises were destroyed by fire during the reign of Hadrian but were immediately rebuilt which, in the words of the excavator, "shows the resilience of the Roman economy at that time".

The report of these excavations was given at a recent conference arranged by the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.

It is an interesting site and provides an example of the usefulness of long term excavations as research projects within rescue archaeology, and how techniques of open area excavation allow us to ask, and some times answer, qualitatively different types of questions about topographical development than is possible on other kinds of excavations.

In the case of the G.P.O. site, new light has been shed on the industrial development in this part of the City and this in turn gives us more information about the economy of Roman London and, to some extent, of the Province as a whole.

NEW MEMBERS We welcome the following new members of the Society: Mr. G. Maslem, Miss K. Stoddart-Hayes, Mr. and Mrs. L. Harvey, Mrs. A. MacAuley, Mr. and Mrs. G. Thompson, Mr. T. Frost, Mr. D. Inward, Mrs. D. Canniford, Miss M. Canniford and Mrs. C. Howard.

CONGRATULATIONS To member Charlotte Blair who has been made a freeman of the City of London for her research work concerning the parish boundaries of the City.

LECTURE REPORT Peter Huggins ranged far and wide both in space and in time to give us 'The Christian Background to the Viking Invasions in S.E.England', during his lecture on Wednesday, 10th September.

He began by sketching the main outlines of Roman religion and its chief deities, those worshipped in a physical form as well as those of a more abstract nature. This part of the lecture was illustrated with pictures of temples in the Middle East and in Britain.

The rise of Christianity and its clash with pagan religions was mentioned, especially the conflict between the Christians and the worshippers of Mithras with its similar beliefs and rituals.

The story of Augustine's mission to Britain, on the instructions of Pope Gregory in 597 A.D. was told and of the group of Kentish churches which arose as a result of this visit. We saw photographs of St. Martins church in Canterbury (well worth a visit) and the remains of other churches and the excavated remains of the nearby monastery. Quotations were read from Bede's History of the English Church and People to help fill in the story.

As well as the Kentish churches, we looked at many other religious sites in Britain; Bradwell, Reculver, Lindisfarne, Jarrow and others.

The settlement at Mucking in Essex was described, but this was of the Pagan Saxon period and we had to turn to the Middle Saxon period, 650 - 870 A.D. for evidence of Christianity in that county. We took a close look at a Saxon site at Nazeingbury, which was excavated by the speaker, where two early Saxon churches and many burials were uncovered. The bones of the people buried there contained many who were 60 years or more of age, which is unusual for this period. The archaeological evidence suggests that the site was that of a nunnery and was a caring community. Information on the origin of the place name was given, such as the fact that Ing names are now no longer considered to be very early, but belong to the later colonisation period. Peter Huggins suggested that a nearby tongue of higher ground is the Naze of the place name.

Recent excavations at Waltham Abbey have found further evidence of the monastery there, as well as more burials close by. It was interesting to note the difference between the health and general physique of people living at Nazeingbury and those at Waltham Abbey as displayed by the skeletons, especially the teeth.

Viking raids on this country began in the 9th century. At first they came as raiders, arriving in the spring and leaving in the winter, but later on they came to stay and to settle on the land. The River Lea eventually became the frontier between Saxon and Dane. In due course, the Vikings accepted Christianity as their rulers were baptised into the faith.

Evidence of Viking settlement at Waltham Abbey was shown and the story ended on the eve of the Norman Conquest when a new phase of English history began.

The story of the Christian background was strung together with a chronological account of happenings in this country from the end of the Roman period, through Saxon settlement to the Viking invasions.

BURLEIGH HOUSE, ENFIELD I am never sure what is the dividing line between archaeology and history, but if this is in the wrong context, I do hope the purists will forgive me as it follows on from my investigations of the 'Tudor Wall' as reported in the June issue.

Since Burleigh House was on the east side of Church Street, Enfield Town, I thought the defective work must start there. But, as I said before, little is known of Burleigh House and no serious work has been done on the subject. Whitaker wrote that its age was uncertain, but its appearance suggested it was built in the 17th century. It had belonged to Mrs. Williams and had been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Withers, who gave it the name in 1865. From the sketch in Whitakers' History of Enfield, Burleigh House had three storeys, with chimneys at the east and west ends. There were five windows facing south on the two upper storeys.

In 1913, the house was pulled down for site redevelopment, without apparently a single protest; at the Greater London Record Office is a plan of the site at the time of the sale. The shop, lately occupied by Oxfam, now rebuilt for MacDonaldis, was the site of the old stables and was sold separately (after twelve feet had been sold to the Council for road widening). 'The shops on the west side of the Market Place' formed another lot (with permission of the Trustees). The back of the site was intended for a cinema and the entrance was to be from the Market Place near the Kings Head.

Also in the G.L. Record Office, Acc 1084/1 records details of the sale of fireplaces and overmantles from the house which gives us a good idea of what it was like.

On the ground floor, the entrance hall and the inner hall were paved with stone, with a stone Tudor mantelpiece 6ft 3ins. high and 6ft. and 7ins. wide and a stone panelled surround and hearth. This seems to have been the western part as there was also a circular glass window in the north side of the inner hall, with the fireplace at the west end. Also on the ground floor was a north east back room; with a white marble chimney piece of about 1700. Both these rooms were paneled and this was sold. Also on the same floor was a south east room with a black marble fireplace.

On the first floor there was a drawing room with a handsome white marble chimney piece 6ft. 8ins. wide, with an adjoining room on the south east which had a 17th century stone chimney piece decorated with figures of cranes (birds) and fruit, with a raised shield in the centre embossed BDM. There was also a south west front room with a dressing room, both with fireplaces and adjoining was a bathroom with a white marble bath. Also a north east back room with a carved white marble mantelpiece. This room was panelled and had cupboards with Jacobean hinges on the doors.

On the top floor, the north east back room had an 'antique stone chimney piece, 5ft by 5ft.' and the south east front room had a 'moulded wood mantelpiece with Adams hob-grate'. There were also two other 'Adams hob-grates' but it was not specified from which rooms they came.

Whitaker described the chimney piece in the south east first floor room as made of mahogany and suggested it came from Durants Arbour, '... which was despoiled at the close of the 18th century'. William Robinson said it was burnt down. Whitaker based his idea on the fact that the land which formerly belonged to the Abbot of Thorney was called 'Cranes' which he thought was merged with Durants in 1686. I can find no evidence for this, as in 1686, Wm. Avery Esq., had a farm of 30 acres pasture, 10 acres arable and one rood of meadow at Moors Hatch, parcel of land called Cranes, which was freehold of the manor of Enfield at 1s Id. per annum and in 1697 it was held by Nertan Avery Esq.

So, the big question is - was Burleigh House a very old, possibly 17th century house with alterations and additions down the centuries? Or had all these old fireplaces been brought in from other houses when they were demolished?

Detective work continues..... I will report further if I am successful.

Audrey E. Robinson.

CHASE SIDE SCHOOL, ENFIELD On 19th November 1838 the Chase Side British School was opened in Enfield. Situated on a plot of land purchased with money raised for that purpose, a single storey brick building with a grey slate roof was erected at the corner of Nunns Road and Chase Side, Enfield. It has gable ends, each of which contained three large arched windows, now bricked up. Along the west side are three square windows with cast iron frames. The use of off-sets in the brickwork has resulted in a pleasing architectural appearance to the building. It was divided internally into two classrooms, one for boys and one for girls. Later on, a further division was made when part of the interior was set aside for the teaching of infants. In 1895 it became the Chase Side Board School.

By the end of the century the building was far too small to accommodate all the children in the locality and in 1901 a new school was built in nearby Trinity Street.

The original building was eventually sold and for some years the site was taken over by the United Dairies when part of the back wall was demolished and ramps for milk floates were constructed in the old playground. It is known that the school had a foundation stone but it cannot be found today and it was no doubt covered up or removed during the subsequent conversion of the building for commercial purposes. A large prefabricated building was erected elsewhere in the playground.

The United Dairies were probably responsible for the construction of the walls along the west (Chase Side) and east (Nunns Road) sides of the building. They also installed a milk dispensing machine which stood for many years on the southwest corner.

When the United Dairies closed its depot, the site was purchased by a wine company (sociologists will, no doubt, draw their own conclusions!) who have recently replaced the grey slate roof with one of red concrete tiles. Part of the surrounding wall has also been demolished and where the milk dispensing machine stood, a large entrance has been cut through the wall of the building to give access for customers.

The old building is still recognisable in spite of the many alterations made, and looking at it today it is difficult to realise that the present Chase School in Churchbury Lane, with its many classrooms, laboratories, technical workshops, sports complex and large playing fields had its origin in this humble little building almost a century and a half ago.

For further reading - 'A History of a School' by R.V. Taylor, 1968.

G.R.G.

ST. ANDREWS CHURCHYARD, ENFIELD The redevelopment of the detached part of St. Andrews churchyard has at last taken place and, as originally feared, a great many of the headstones and tombs have been removed. Many of the headstones have been repositioned in neat rows at the back of the churchyard. A section of the cast iron railings in Church Lane has been taken down and the wall breached to provide access for Council equipment. Paths have been laid out round the remaining tombs and it is planned to instal seats at certain points.

One part of the layout which is rather bizarre is next to the former chapel of rest where an area has been paved and walled round with headstones. The intention is to place seats on the paved area, but the rows of surrounding tombstones and the gloom caused by overhanging trees makes this a particularly unattractive feature. This is especially galling when one remembers the number of tombs uprooted for this purpose, amongst which was that of John Tuff, a local chemist and the author of a History of Enfield.

Although the tombs have suffered it is hoped that the trees will be left alone and not be subjected to that ruthless pruning which is often carried out with the excuse that low branches present a hazard.

G.R.G.

RESIGNATION Following her recent move to Hertfordshire, Mrs. Irene Jordan had to resign as General Secretary to the Society. We express our thanks for assistance during the time she was in office.

HELP Is there anyone out there who would like to help run the Society? We are looking for a Secretary, typists, stewards at meetings and general dogsbodies'. Please 'phone Geoffrey Gillam - 367 0263.

SUBSCRIPTIONS As you know, the new subscription rates of £1.50 for adult and £1.00 for junior members comes in force on the 1st January 1981.

However, even with these increases, it will be difficult to keep pace with inflation and the problem of ever increasing costs. Apart from the day to day running of the Society, the lecture programme and the production of the bulletin demand more and more money. Cash is also required for our modest programme of research; to pay for the hire of earth moving equipment, the purchase of films, drawing paper and so on.

Your committee, therefore, considers it necessary to ask you to approve yet another increase in the subscription, this time to £2.00 for adults and £1.00 for juniors and students. A motion to this effect will be put to members at the next Annual General Meeting, which if adopted will apply from 1st January 1982.

The sale of secondhand books at meetings has been one way of increasing the amount in the publication fund. The results of recent research will shortly be ready for publication and we would welcome ideas from members on other ways of raising capital in order to publish the several research reports now in progress.

Articles and items of news for the Bulletin should be sent to the Editor - Graham Deal, 209 Latymer Road, Edmonton, N.9. Tel. 803 0675.