



Society News

The Bulletin of the Enfield Archaeological Society



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

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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

Friday 15 October

The Portable Antiquities Scheme in London

Museum of London speaker

Every year thousands of archaeological objects are found by members of the public, mostly by metal detectorists, but also by people out walking, digging their gardens, or whilst going about their everyday work. The Portable Antiquities Scheme was established to promote recording of such finds, and to broaden awareness of these finds for understanding our past. Since 1997 Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officers have examined over 100,000 objects, many of which would otherwise have gone unrecorded. Nicole Weller, who was due to speak to use as the London Region Finds Liaison Officer, has since left the post. However we are assured that her replacement starts work on 6 October and will be available to talk to us about this valuable role in archaeology.

Friday 19 November

Roman Harlow

Chris Lydamore (Harlow Museum)

We all know Harlow as an Essex New Town near the busy A10 and M11 routes, but what of its origins? Chris Lydamore of the Museum of Harlow will be speaking to us and giving us an insight into the Roman period of this area. There should be some interesting parallels with Enfield's own Roman past and its associations with the A10.

Friday 17 December

Cursus Publicus – The Roman Imperial Post

Geoffrey Gillam

A wonderful chance to hear a new study by our own Geoffrey Gillam.

Edmonton Hundred Historical Society Day Conference

Entitled 'People, Places and Events in Enfield' will be held at Jubilee Hall, Enfield on Saturday 30 October.

The morning session (10am-12.30pm) will include talks from David Pam on Winchmore Hill and Ruby

Galili on the Walkers of Arnos Grove, and the afternoon session (2-4.30 pm) Graham Dalling on people buried at Lavender Hill and Geoffrey Gillam

on the Roman roadside settlement. Charges are £3 (£2.50 Edmonton Hundred Historical Society members) for just one of the sessions or £6 (£5 members) for both – morning coffee and afternoon tea are included (no lunch).

Bookings, by cheque/postal order payable to Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, to Pat Keeble, 15 Onslow Gardens, N21 1DY, enclosing a sae if confirmation of booking is required.

Early medieval St Albans: recent research

One day conference organised by St Albans Museum. Speakers to include Alison Turner-Rugg, Chris Saunders and Brenda Bolton. Cost £10, held at St Albans School. For further information please contact Brian Adams, Historian, Tel: 01727 751821, email b.adams@stalbans.gov.uk or Claire Thornton, Collections Manager, tel: 01727 751822, email c.thornton@stalbans.gov.uk.

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

22 September

Bygones (Historic Objects) • *Geoff Nichols*

20 October

Blossoms Inn • *Bruce Watson*

30 October

10 for 10.30 am
Day Conference (see item opposite for details)

16 November

2.15 for 2.30 pm
Victorian Christmas Cards • *David Groen*

WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

8pm in the Victoria Hall, Greenyard, Waltham Abbey

24 September

The Cecil Family and Hatfield House • *Robin Perkins*

29 October

Lecture and Recital: Medieval and Tudor Musical Instruments
Richard York

25 November

Medieval St Albans • *Brian Adams*

WEST ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

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

11 October

Prehistoric Diet in the Middle East
Caroline Cartwright

8 November

Ancient Metalworkers – and the Copper Mines of Britain
Paul Craddock

13 December

Religion in Roman London • *Francis Grew*

HENDON AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

12 October

Egyptology • *Lucia Gahlin*

9 November

Durolevum • *Paul Wilkinson*

SOCIETY MATTERS

Obituary – Bernard Barr

It is with sadness that I record the death of another of my contemporaries and a former member of the Society. I first met Bernard Barr in 1956 when he provided information regarding the discovery a Roman coin in Edmonton. He was able to show that it was a false claim, the finder being one of those strange beings seeking some sort of notoriety - not the first or last to do so!

Bernard joined the Enfield Archaeological Society soon after its formation and he became part of the team digging at the medieval site of Perriers. In 1960 - 61 he and I directed the exploration of the Roman roads around Braughing as a joint exercise between the Enfield Archaeological Society and the East Herts Archaeological Society. During the exceptionally dry summer of that year we were able to trace and photograph details of the course of Stane Street and of Ermine Street, as well as the road which led into the Roman town at Braughing - all showing as well-defined crop marks. Sections were dug through all three roads and the results were recorded in the Transactions of the East Herts Archaeological Society.

Later on, Bernard began a detailed study of Roman pottery in the area of Much Hadham. During the excavation of one kiln I had the pleasure of serving as his photographer. Bernard went on to widen his area of study and he made a considerable contribution to the study of locally produced Roman pottery in that part of Hertfordshire. His daughter donated his extensive notes and the pottery recovered during his work over many years to the Hertford museum and the Harlow museum and both have created a Bernard Barr archive. He had recently been helping with the identification of Much Hadham ware from the dig at 102 Leighton Road.

I have many pleasant memories of our work together - I also remember how bleak the Hertfordshire countryside can become in bad weather causing us on more than one occasion to attempt to find shelter under a threadbare hedge.

GEOFFREY GILLAM

Found it ! The 'lost' Bowling Green House site revealed

by Martin J. Dearne

FIG.1



Bowling Green House, the (perhaps originally Elizabethan) predecessor of the present Myddleton House, demolished in the 1820s when Myddleton was built, has always been presumed to have lain in what are now the gardens of Myddleton House. But just where and what traces of it might survive archaeologically has always been the question. Along with the Hendon and District Archaeological Society the EAS has been trying to answer that question for a couple of years. Two large resistivity surveys by HADAS were inconclusive and a test pit at one end of the flat lawn south east of the present house (?perhaps the bowling green after which the house was named) called 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' cut in 2003 only produced a dump of ?eighteenth century bricks. However, at the other end of this lawn the garden staff remembered a gas pipe trench hitting brick work some years ago. Meanwhile Les Whitmore, working from maps and an original illustration of the house owned by Brig. Parker-Bowles (the Bowles family having been the builders of Myddleton House), suggested another possible location for Bowling Green House immediately south of Myddleton House. So, with the kind permission of the Lea Valley Park who now own Myddleton House and gardens and with the enthusiastic cooperation of the gardens' staff, over two weekends in April Mike Dewbrey and the author directed the excavation of two test pits, one near the gas main and one in Les's suggested location.

Trench B near the gas main (Fig. 1) was negative. There was pottery and clay pipe of later-seventeenth and eighteenth century date, but only in the topsoil and the top of the natural which had probably got there through horticulture.

Trench A in Les's suggested location (Fig. 2) was a different matter. Below a pit cut in recent years to remove an old tree we found layers of redeposited clay sealing a large area of dumped demolition

rubble. It was absolutely packed with large pieces of mortar, roofing tile (including one complete tile) and slates, pieces of dressed limestone flooring flags, decorative window surround, window glass, nails and especially brick; including not just fragments but complete bricks of a range of thicknesses and fabrics indicating that what had been demolished had used building materials dateable to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. When the demolition happened it seems too that stores may have been cleared out because, although there was not a lot of pottery around, there were many pieces of two different types of olive green or green glass wine bottles, dateable to c. 1720 – 35 and c. 1735 – 1820 (and possibly of a third type dateable to c. 1680 – 1720). Indeed, one virtually complete example of the 'mallet' shaped type of c.1720 – 35 with a scratched inscription R + R (Fig. 3) had survived, where it had rolled into a gully with a complete brick on top of it.

FIG.2



Below the rubble there was a robber trench running north north west - south south east, representing the robbing out of one, presumably brick, wall foundation so that the bricks could be reused; and at one corner of the trench a wall foundation corner built of bricks perhaps of the early- to mid-seventeenth century survived next to an iron boot scraper that was still in situ and leads one to presume that there was an entrance if not into a building then perhaps into a courtyard in the vicinity. Further, before or perhaps more likely during demolition, a pit containing animal bone and oyster shells had been dug just inside the robbed wall line and then covered with a layer that included both probable demolition rubble and animal bone etc. A notable find from this was the stub of an iron knife retaining a 'pistol grip' ivory handle (Fig. 4).

It therefore seems virtually certain that we have located, probably the south eastern end, of Bowling Green House and from the rubble and surviving wall foundation can begin to put together elements of a picture of it. By the time of its demolition in the 1820s it had probably seen a considerable number of phases of alteration or repair to judge from the variety of dates of the materials used. The surviving wall foundation indeed need not have been part of the original structure as there were earlier bricks in the demolition rubble, besides which it was so flimsily founded (being little more than a line of bricks sitting on mortar cut only a short distance into the ground) that it might only have been a courtyard wall added later, or indeed a brick 'skin' added to an earlier timber structure; a common occurrence as brick became cheap enough to be widely used but still expensive enough to be desirable as a sign of prosperity in the seventeenth century. By the 1820s it also evidently had good quality glazed windows and a combination of tiled and slated roofs; but again all these elements as represented in the finds from the rubble are likely to have been eighteenth century not 'original features'. Other elements like the limestone flooring flags might more likely be original but as yet we cannot be sure as, for one thing, we do not yet know what part of the house we have found; are we in the residential part, a service area or even out on the edge of a courtyard? This and many other questions will only be answered by further excavation if the chance arises but at least we now know where to start looking for the answers.

Further Information

It is hoped to put some of the photographs of the work on the EAS website in due course and a full excavation report on the work has been compiled by the author. An illustrated account of it will as always be given at the AGM in spring 2005 and negotiations are taking place about a display of the finds at Myddleton House and/or Forty Hall in due course.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the gardens staff at Myddleton House for all their help during the excavation; and the small band of dedicated EAS members who did the work on the site, especially those who stayed to the bitter end on the last Sunday to backfill trench A in torrential rain with spoil that had become slurry!

FIG.3

*Wine bottle of c.1720-35
with scratched inscription*

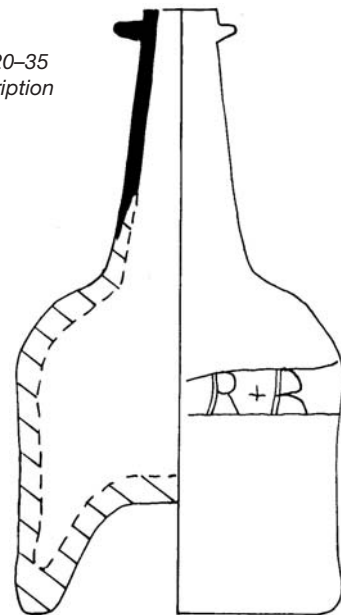
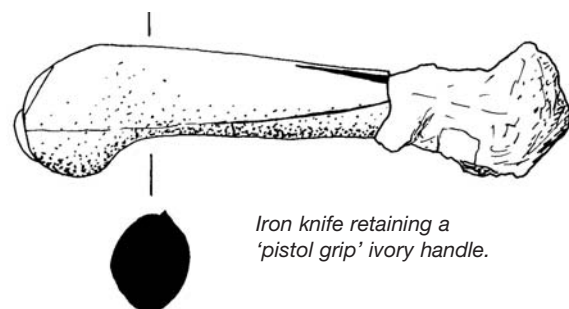


FIG.4



*Iron knife retaining a
'pistol grip' ivory handle.*

Syon Abbey - Birkbeck Training Dig 2004

by Jeremy Grove

Each year Birkbeck College runs a large scale training excavation. This year they were at Syon Park in Brentford, with, at the last count, at least four EAS members among the hundred or so students who took part, usually for a week at a time, during the five week programme.

As you may have seen on Time Team last year, or in the June issue of Current Archaeology, the former abbey at what is now Syon Park was completely lost following the dissolution. No trace of the buildings survive above ground, nor is there any surviving illustration or plan, but the Time Team investigation located the remains of an enormous church some 108 feet wide and probably over three hundred feet long under the present house and extending across its south lawn.

This was the only English house of the Swedish Bridgettine Order, which despite only receiving its charter in 1415, and something of a false start in waterlogged unhealthy Twickenham, managed to become the tenth richest abbey in the country by the time of the suppression of the monasteries, and

the richest nunnery. Actually, the Abbey claims on a technicality that it was never dissolved – since there is no record of its surrender, and the community did not deliver up the seal or keys when they were evicted - and despite a long exile in the Low Countries and Portugal, retains its name to this day and now resides in South Brent in Devon.

The Birkbeck dig opened a pair of substantial trenches spanning the full width of the church in order to investigate the structure more thoroughly.

Comprehensive demolition, followed later by the landscaping of Capability Brown, has left very little of the abbey's fabric, but the foundation trenches of its outer walls and their massive buttresses, in-filled with demolition rubble, were unmistakable. Despite the thorough removal of re-usable material from the site, a substantial collection of floor tiles, brick, and fragments of carved stone were recovered, along with modest amounts of fine window glass (in very small pieces!).

More of a surprise were a series of brick-built tombs slightly inside the outer wall on either side – these would originally have been beneath the floor of the church. The bones of the occupants were remarkably well preserved. Some had obviously been disturbed by workmen demolishing the abbey, but others were still articulated and these remains were left in place. Towards the end of the dig (that is, after I'd gone) a drain was uncovered running across the trench for some distance, and sectioned.



Syon House and the western half of the excavation from the top of the spoil heap.

Site Director and EAS President Prof Harvey Sheldon surveys his domain. Kneeling with the trowel is Bob Cowie of MoLAS, one of the tutors from the dig will be giving a lecture on royal and religious sites of west London in our programme for 2005. (Full details of next years' lecture programme will be included with the next Bulletin).



Over and around the remains of the church itself was evidence of garden features from the later history of the site as a stately home, and the environmental archaeology team also busied themselves with taking samples from natural Thames gravel deposits. The riverbank here is virtually the only spot in London which has not been built up by man, so was also of great interest to the environmentalists, although the precarious trip over the water meadows to the river itself seemed to have put off all but the most intrepid (I just didn't have time to go).

The course was very well run – even to the extent of successfully arranging all the classroom sessions for when it was raining in my week. It provided a good range of training, including ample digging time, plus sessions on surveying, recording, finds and environmental archaeology, which was flexible enough to be suitable both for complete beginners and those with some previous experience. The atmosphere engendered by both staff and students was friendly and easy-going. It is to be hoped Birkbeck return to Syon Park again – I can't wait to investigate the other precinct buildings, traces of which also came up during the Time Team dig.

Details of the full range of archaeology courses offered by Birkbeck, from weekend events to Diploma, BA and MA courses can be found at www.bbk.ac.uk or obtained on request from 020 7631 6627/6631.

Today Syon Park is the London home of the Duke of Northumberland (and has been since 1594). The Tudor house which replaced the abbey still stands,

concealed by a Robert Adam interior and 19th century Bath stone facing. The 1826 Great Conservatory is said to have inspired the design of the Crystal Palace. The gardens are open daily all year and the house about 3 days a week in season www.syonpark.co.uk Tel: 020 8560 0881

SOCIETY MATTERS EXTRA

LOTTERY BID

The EAS committee are currently trying to develop a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to pay for the creation of professional standard archives for all our backlog of Roman excavations and the production of an academic report on everything known about Roman Enfield; but also to fund a programme of displays, lectures, events and teaching / 'popular' information materials about Roman Enfield. This is a large job for a small committee who also run the society and organise all the excavations so we would be delighted if anyone else in the society felt that they could help us with developing the 'public outreach' part of the bid. Especially if you have any expertise in areas such as project or event management, fund raising, publicity or teaching and you could spare some time to help please contact Martin Dearne on 020 8807 7079 or at martin.dearne@tesco.net

Archaeology Day 2004

'Under Your Feet' at Forty Hall



A



B



C

A The excavation of one test pits in progress

B Chairman Dennis Hill and Val Munday from the Museum Service answering questions from the public

C Our EAS information tent attracted much interest

D Planning and drawing

E Taking levels



D



E

PASTFINDERS NEWS



News of the Excavation and Fieldwork Group

Archaeology Day 2004

Once again record numbers of people attended the Archaeology Day organised by the Enfield Museum Service at Forty Hall in July this year. The 'Under Your Feet' theme once again attracted young and old alike, the activities for younger children at the hall proved popular judging by the many smiling faces that I saw painting tiles in the quadrangle outside the hall.

LBC radio reported on the excavation of two test pits on the site of Elsyng Palace where a geophysics survey had indicated substantial structural remains. A team of experienced excavators volunteered to give up their time over the whole weekend and may I take this opportunity to thank each of them for their tireless enthusiasm. Sadly structural evidence of the Palace was not revealed due to the depth of the 17th century landscaping.

The excavation attracted a lot of interest from the public who also bought along an interesting selection of artefacts for identification. I was privileged to identify a fine silver groat found by a local detectorist who was amazed that it dated to the early 15th century! (One of Mike's own silver groat finds from Enfield graces the cover of this Bulletin – Ed.)

A young boy bought along a superb fossil of a trilobite, while Ian Jones and Geoffrey Gillam had great fun identifying many other finds that were bought along by members of the public.

The E.A.S. Marquee erected close by the excavation was a hive of activity on both days with youngsters helping out with pot washing while Richard the LBC reporter bubbled with enthusiasm and anticipation, and Caroline McKenna sold a good number of society publications.

Next year with permission from English Heritage it would be nice to perhaps open a larger trench over a

two week period which should enable us to dig deep enough to reach the Palace remains. A full report on the excavation by Dr Martin Dearne the site director will follow in a future bulletin. Without Martin's expertise it is doubtful whether this project would have got off, or rather into, the ground! Once again a big thank you to everyone who helped out and to Val and Jan of the museum service for making sure that everything went like clockwork although my comment that we should do it more often was not appreciated!

The Derby Road Sword

You may remember a young lad found a short sword in the back garden of his house in Derby Road Ponders End, which is currently on display in Forty Hall museum. The Imperial War museum believes the sword to have been modified and to have originated on the continent around the 1790s.

The boy's father, intrigued to know more about why such a find should be buried among his vegetables, invited the Pastfinders to take a closer look at the context in which it was found.

Study of early maps of the area shows that his garden was once within the grounds of 18th century Lincoln House, which coincidentally is contemporary with the date of the sword.

The sword had been found set vertically in the ground. It had apparently been pushed down into the subsoil through a post hole which was however filled by topsoil including 1970s or later rubbish, so it may have been an heirloom later consigned to some gardening role in quite recent times. We did though recover a piece of wood, possibly from its scabbard.

We weren't the only 'investigators' to be called in by the householders that day, so sharper-eyed members may already have spotted this story being reported in the Enfield Advertiser on 1 September.

Small finds on display

An exhibition of metal detected finds remains in the museum at Forty Hall during the summer months and a new display has been arranged at Ferny Hill Farm Tea rooms in Hadley Road.

MIKE DEWBREY

