
SOCIETY NEWS

THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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MILLFIELD HOUSE ARTS CENTRE

A lot of criticism is often directed against the Local Authority for many of its actions and it is therefore pleasant to be able to place on record our congratulations to the Council of the London Borough of Enfield for their work in converting Millfield House into a very fine Arts Centre. Practically all the internal decoration has been completed and there are now several rooms, large and small, where plays can be rehearsed, music recitals given, places for study groups to meet, lectures given by history societies, etc. The room in which we meet, to the right of the main entrance, although we wish it was a little larger, lends itself well for use as a lecture room. An added attraction to the meetings at Millfield House is that refreshments in the form of tea and coffee are available and a bar will be opened shortly.

Until further notice, articles and items of news for the Bulletin should be sent to G. R. Gillam 23 Merton Road, Enfield, Middx. Telephone 367 0263 (Not as shown on the current programme card!).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

You are reminded (for the last time) that subscriptions for 1981 became due on 1st January. Therefore, if you have not already done so, will you please send them to the Hon. Membership Secretary, Mrs G. Ivens, 120 Hedge Lane, N13. The current rates are £1.50 for adults and 75p for juniors.

MIDDLESEX RECORDS

In the 1979 Annual Report we mentioned the closure of the Middlesex Record Office and the transference of the records to a warehouse in Whitechapel. Many societies, including our own, protested at this unhappy situation. However, since then arrangements have been made to open a new repository complete with search rooms in Clerkenwell. The move has yet to be completed and we will keep you informed of progress. In the meantime, our congratulations to Councillor Cyril Taylor, Chairman of the Professional and General Services Committee of the GLC who was the prime mover in finding new accommodation.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All Meetings will be held in Millfield House Arts Centre, Silver Street, Edmonton at 8.00 pm. Trains from Enfield Town to Silver Street station. Buses 231 and 217 from Enfield to the Cambridge Roundabout. Buses 34 and 102 from Southgate to the entrance of Millfield House in Silver Street. For further details please telephone 886 1375.

25th March, Wednesday

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Followed
by a review of the year's work.

22nd April, Wednesday

EXCAVATION AND RECONSTRUCTION
OF HOLY TRINITY PRIORY, ALDGATE
J. Schofield

Excavations during 1979 on the east side of Mitre Street by John Schofield revealed the foundations of the west range of the cloisters of Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, founded in 1108. Three main phases were noted; a building of 12th century date on the west side of the cloister with burials nearby, some of the burials were in mortar cists and were associated with new building to the south and east; and a third phase of later internal modifications. The second and third phases of the priory, based on a detailed plan of 1592, suggest that the second phase foundations were the west end of the conventual church which probably included a tower.

This lecture will not only give an account of the excavation of the medieval buildings but will also show the reconstruction work taking place on the site.

20th May, Wednesday

LEATHER WORKING IN ROMAN TIMES
Dr I Anthony

Immense quantities of leather were required by the Roman Army not only for footwear but also for uniforms, equipment, harness and tents. Excavations at Catterick have revealed evidence of a depot where leather was processed and made into military equipment between 80 and 120 AD. The large amounts of bones suggest that it was delivered on the hoof and the cattle no doubt formed part of the taxation imposed on the local tribes. There must have been many more centres of production, not only for the army but also to meet the needs of the civilian population. Other large deposits of cattle bones at Silchester and Leicester point to tanning as a local industry where it would be required for footwear

and clothing, workmen's aprons and it was probably used to make jugs and buckets as well as more delicate items such as the famous 'bikini' found in London. Leather was a necessity of civilised life but little is known about its production in Roman times. The subject of the Preidential Address is therefore even more welcome to us.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

FILM SHOW - THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ISRAEL Several members of the Jewish Research Group of the Edmonton Hundred Historical Society accepted our invitation to attend the film show on Wednesday 8th October. The first film was 'Scrolls from the Son of a Star' and told the story of the revolt of Bar Kochba against the Roman occupation forces. The revolt was doomed from the start and ended with starvation and death for the survivors in the caves where they had taken refuge. Cameras recorded the uncovering of the sad remains of these people by Israeli archaeologists. This was followed by 'Massada' which showed some of the main features of the site revealed in recent years by archaeologists. The remains of the camps of the beseiging Roman army and the enormous rampart constructed by the Roman soldiers to enable them to capture the fortress were very impressive. However, the film had suffered some damage at the beginning and was disappointingly short as the Director had not allowed enough time in which to tell the story in proper detail. Finally there was a short length of film made in 1953, described by the Chairman as a piece of whimsy, which showed him digging on the site of a Roman kiln at Fotters Bar. The film had been made by a local resident and was recently discovered by Brian Warren who kindly obtained permission for it to be shown.

G.R.C.

THE INNER SECRETS OF WESTMINSTER PALACE AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS John Neal had an attentive audience when he gave his lecture on Wednesday 12th November. He traced the history of our seat of government from its origin on Thorney Island. He showed how the present House of Commons owes its layout to the influence of St Stephens Chapel in which meetings were first held. A layout still reflected it its stalls and cross benches. In 1833 a fire destroyed most of the buildings and the present Houses of Parliament were constructed between 1840 and 1867 to a design by Sir Charles Barry. The various traditions and rituals of the Houses were explained; why the Speaker struggles before taking the Chair; the use of the term 'going through on the nod', from the tall hats worn at the time and the low arches of the voting lobbies; Black Rod ritual at the opening of Parliament, and many more hallowed traditions. Some very fine colour slides were used to show the splendour of Westminster Hall where so many famous trials took place. Guy Fawkes, Fisher, Moore and others were tried there and many were later beheaded in Old Palace Yard. Other illustrations showed the

detailed and elaborate architecture and decoration in the robing rooms and other parts of the building.

The lecture was a veritable feast of information and all the members present were agreed that we should ask John Neal, who is an official guide, to conduct us on a visit to Westminster during 1981.

C.R.G.

ENFIELD AT WAR 1914 - 1918 It was singularly appropriate that the Chairman, Geoffrey Gillam, should give the opening lecture at our new venue, Millfield House, on Wednesday 3rd December. The evening was a great success and we hope that in 1981 members will equally enjoy the monthly meetings at Millfield. Geoffrey has already given a lecture to the Society on the Second World War - so beginning with the last and ending with the first - he has made a regressive step into the past. There was a wealth of detail and evidence of careful research in this lecture on how the First World War effected the people of Enfield. Geoffrey traced the story through from the beginning of mobilisation, when the people around the bandstand on Chase Green cheered the outbreak of hostilities. With accompanying slides, the speaker helped to recapture that patriotic jingoistic fervour in favour of war. Anti-German feeling was manifest in attacks on shops with foreign sounding names in Enfield and Edmonton. The present North Middlesex Hospital was opened up to take the wounded - 32,000 were admitted to this military hospital. Conscription was eventually introduced to keep up the supply of cannon fodder in France. The numbers of men drawn to the front meant that many occupations were carried on by women and contemporary newspapers recorded this strange phenomena. As the war progressed rationing was introduced with long queues forming outside food shops. The bombing of London and its environs left the people of Enfield bemused and unprepared for air raids. Some bombs were dropped in the area and the shooting down of an airship in Cuffley offered a dramatic display for the local people. The peace of November 11th 1918 brought the end of the war. Many families in Enfield had paid the price of patriotism. The public celebrations and the building of monuments to the dead marked the joy and sorrow of the First World War. Geoffrey Gillam recreated the atmosphere and mood of the British people during 1914 - 1918 and gave an excellent lecture.

Sylvia Collicott

TIMBER FRAMED HOUSES IN SCOTLAND In November 1980 I was asked to go
GREEN ROAD, ENFIELD and look at a house in Scotland Green
Road, Enfield, which was being
demolished. So I got out the map and set off. When I found the house,
it turned out to be two timber framed structures, one of which had been
badly damaged by fire, and the other was boarded up. From the outside I
felt sure they were very old and had been built onto and extended over the
centuries on all sides...that chimney seemed to be made of Tudor or
similar bricks...but the front appeared to be Victorian. Also the wall at

pack of the burnt out house appeared to be Tudor in style. So I required two old bricks for later examination. There is a path to the rear of the boarded-up house so I did another tour of that side but found nothing to be sure about, even though I got the feeling that it was old. The Irishman in charge of the demolition would not let me look inside the other house because the floors were not safe...The roof leaked and rot had set in...I thought that it reeked of 'demolition by neglect', which I am afraid is happening to Brecon House too.

Audrey Robinson

The earliest building on the site was a timber framed structure but the present evidence is insufficient to be categorical about a Tudor date. We had previously made contact with the owners of the property who had promised to let us have access to the building. Unfortunately, this did not happen and, in the event, we were even unable to take any photographs! The moral of this story is that we need more members to act as observers for the Society.

G.R.G.

W.W.II AIR RAID SHELTER At the invitation of Mr Murray, the caretaker
ENFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL of Enfield Lower Grammar School, John Stevens
and I recently went to look at a Second World
War air raid shelter in the school grounds. It is about 50 feet long,
the walls are reinforced with sheets of angled steel and it has a concrete
roof and cement floor. Built partly underground, the upper half is
covered with a mound of earth, except for the concrete slab which forms
the roof. The entrance, at the eastern end, is by means of a sloping
ramp with concrete walls and is at an angle to the main structure. A
wooden door has since been added to provide security for the cricket
nets, old school desks and other items stored within. At the far
(western)end is a metal ladder which, like the walls, is now very rusty
and gave access to a trap in the roof where escape could be made if the
main entrance was blocked.

The shelter has survived because of its unobtrusive position on the
edge of the playing fields and its value for storage purposes. There was
a recent proposal to demolish the shelter and to replace it with a
cricket stand but I understand that for reasons of economy it has now been
decided to build the stand on top. This unique survival (I know of no
other communal type of shelter which has survived elsewhere in the
Borough) will therefore be preserved as part of the local archaeological
record.

While we were there, Mr Murray pointed out the site of a wardens post
which had stood to the left of the school entrance in Parsonage Lane.
Part of the concrete floor and some brickwork can still be seen and this
too was recorded.

I am grateful to Mr Murray for kindly allowing access to the shelter.

G.R.G.

NO. 58 SILVER STREET, ENFIELD Extensive alterations were recently
carried out at 58 Silver Street, Enfield,
when it was converted into offices. It is a three storeyed building with
a grey slate roof and was built in the early years of the 19th century.

some time between 1806 and 1820(1)

Audrey Robinson visited the site while the alterations were in progress and observed a brick well close to one wall of the house. Audrey managed to obtain a brick from the top of the well and its dimensions do suggest a Tudor date but it is impossible to accurately date the well from the evidence of one brick.

(1) Information from Graham Dalling.

G.R.G.

A PAIR OF BOOTS Regular attenders at the monthly meetings will know little Wendy Hards who lives at 8 Chase Green Avenue, Enfield and who comes with me. Well, on 11th November her father had occasion to look under the floorboards of their sitting room and found a very old pair of boots or shoes...rather small, so possibly ladies... real soft leather and originally hand stitched. Wendy could not get to the next meeting so she sent them along with me.

Audrey Robinson

They are a pair of ladies ankle boots, made of leather with hand stitched uppers and nailed soles and heels. There are six brass eyelets on each side for lacing the boots across the foot and the top half of each boot was fastened together by passing the laces around brass hooks, three on each side, after which they could be tied off. The house in which the boots were found was built in the 1880's (1) and, apart from their obvious style, the presence of wood shavings inside the boots show they must have been left there when the house was built. The boots will be put on display at a future meeting after which they will be passed to the Friends of Enfield Museums to be added to the local collection.

(1) Information from David Pam.

G.R.G.

ANCIENT EGYPT COMES TO ENFIELD Alan Cole very kindly donated a wooden hand from an Egyptian burial to the Society. It is an interesting object and it is hoped to put it on display at a future meeting. Alan also provided the following note about the hand:

"It was excavated in 1963 in Thebes by a French sponsored dig whilst I was at the Sorbonne. It is crudely fashioned, apparently from an earlier coffin to judge from the peg hole. It is early Ptolomeic at the transition between mummification and the period when traditional burial rites were phased out. In view of this the body was badly decomposed and there was evidence of a violent death, possibly by a wild animal, when the hand was lost. It was a woman about 30, a peasant, hence the poor burial and the cheap mummification process applied."

G.R.G.

ESSEX FEET OF FINES The documents from which the extracts below are
A LOCAL HISTORY SOURCE taken belong to a class of triplicate records called Final Concords or fines. Their form remained unchanged from 1195 until 1833 and the Essex series survive

in unbroken succession. They provide the best illustration we have of medieval conveyancing and are a major source for manorial and local history. They provide information on individuals, families and estates not found elsewhere and show the wide geographical distribution of land holdings at various social levels. In addition they can contribute to the ecclesiastical history of a parish by giving the names of owners of the advowson and of unrecorded incumbents. As far as Enfield is concerned they supply names of landholders in the area who may not be recorded in our own sources and indicate the extent to which local people sought land outside.

At first the Fines were related to real litigation but after the 14th century they recorded fictitious suits brought to the Court of Common Pleas. The completed agreement was engrossed in the form of an indenture of three parts, two of which were given to the two parties in the suit while the third part, or foot of the document was cut off along an indented line (hence indenture) and retained by the Court.

1. 1237 Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Essex and Hereford received from Gilbert de Gos, 8 acres in Enfield.
2. 1243 Richard le Chamberleng of Enfield claimed the church of Little Tholeshunte.
3. 1343 William and Richard de Enefeld to pay homage and services to John de Deoeden for their terements in Fobbying.
4. 1344 Richard de Enefeld and Emma his wife received from John Baud, clerk 1 messuage 2 caracutes of land, 20 acres of meadow, 10 acres of pasture and £6 rent in High Laver and Matching.
5. 1348 John de Enefeld and Margaret his wife received from Thomas de Beverle 1 messuage, 29 acres of land and 1 acre of meadow in Chelmasford, Mulskam and Spryngfeld. To pass to their son Francis.
6. 1385 Hugh, Earl of Stafford and Richard de Stafford chivaler and John de Frerynham received from William and Margaret Burcestre land in Edmonton and other parts of Middlesex totalling 1/6 of a messuage, 110 acres of land and 20 acres of meadow.
7. 1389 Maud de Enefeld of Laver granted to Ralph de Tyle and Alice his wife and John his son the Manor of Bobbingworth and the advowson of the church.