
SOCIETY NEWS



THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

11th June, Wednesday
THE SAXON SHORE

Civic Centre, Enfield, 8.00 p.m.
HARVEY SHELDON, B.Sc. F.S.A.

During the third century Saxon raids began to be made on the coasts of Britain. To cope with this problem, a chain of forts was built which extended from Portsmouth harbour to Brancaster in Norfolk on the edge of the Wash. The task of each garrison was to catch and to destroy the raiders as soon as possible after they had disembarked. Units of the Roman navy patrolled the offshore area of the south east coast and they and the forts, as well as inland garrisons were linked by means of an elaborate signalling system. A separate command was set up under a 'Comes'; Count of the Saxon Shore.

The lecture will be given by Harvey Sheldon, who is making a welcome return to Enfield for this purpose.

16th July, Wednesday
EXCAVATIONS ON MONASTIC SITES
IN WEST ESSEX

CIVIC CENTRE, ENFIELD 8.00 p.m.
Pat Wilkinson

In this country we possess a great many monastic sites, some are still very impressive with the walls standing to roof level. Others are indicated by only stumps of walls remaining above ground while others have completely disappeared. There were several monastic orders and the differences are often reflected in the layout and structural details of the buildings.

On this occasion, Miss P. Wilkinson will describe the excavations carried out on monastic sites in Essex, including Stratford (Cistercian), Langthorne, Waltham Abbey (Augustinian) and Barking (Benedictine).

11th July Wednesday
ACTIVITIES GROUP MEETING

Salisbury House, Bury Street, N.9.
8.00 p.m.
Recent Research on Enfield Palace

Ian Jones will describe his recent work on the history of Enfield Palace for the forthcoming research report on 'The Royal Palaces of Enfield'. There will also be reports on recent fieldwork and excavation and details of future plans.

LECTURE REPORTS

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CRETE

A lecture given by Ian Jones on Wednesday 9th January.

Situated in the South Aegean, the island of Crete, although possessing fertile plains conducive to stock breeding and the growing of crops, had few natural resources. The key to its success lay in its position in the Mediterranean, making it ideal for trade between the surrounding mainland countries. Although many of its material requirements had to be imported, it was able to export considerable amounts of agricultural produce.

During the second millennium B.C. the great Bronze Age civilisation, known as Minoan, reached its height. Many fine palaces were built; the best known of which is Knossos, made famous by the excavations of Sir Arthur Evans. Knossos grew into an enormous and complex structure with many 'modern' architectural features such as light wells and drainage systems. Several frescoes have survived and we were shown many of these decorative features. Of particular interest was the painting illustrating the controversial bull leaping, said to have been undertaken by acrobats or athletes as part of a religious rite.

The strength of the Cretan civilisation lay in its fleet and we were able to see some of the recently discovered wall paintings of warships of the period.

Two scripts are known. Minoan Linear A, which cannot be read, and Minoan B, which consists of inventories or lists of objects. No written literature appears to have existed.

The Minoan civilisation was destroyed in 1400 B.C. after which Crete became a Mediterranean backwater. Later on, it became a province of the Roman Empire, part of the Ottoman Empire and was eventually united with mainland Greece.

The lecture was well illustrated with slides, not only of the excavated remains and the reconstruction work of Sir Arthur Evans, but also with some imaginative drawings to show how Knossos and other palaces looked in their heyday. Other slides showed some of the excavated villas and farms as well as the remains of the various occupations from Roman times to the present day.

BRIDEWELL, LONDON

A LOST TUDOR PALACE

A lecture by Derek Gadd on Wednesday 13th February.

In 1512 fires destroyed the old Palace of Westminster and the Royal apartments in the Tower, leaving Henry VIII without a residence in the City. To remedy this defect, Bridewell Palace was constructed. Built between 1515 and 1523, the palace was laid out around two main courtyards with separate apartments for the King and others for the Queen.

The documentary and cartographic evidence is limited but enough has survived for the speaker to be able to show us a plan of the building and give a description of it by people who recorded their stay at the Palace.

In 1553 the palace was given to the City as a workhouse. When it was eventually demolished in 1863 it had served as hospital, prison, house of correction and warehouse.

An opportunity to examine part of the site came in 1978 when an area overlying the foundations was cleared prior to redevelopment.

The palace had been built on river silt and reclaimed land and the foundational technique was in consequence extremely elaborate. The principal courtyard and surrounding walls were revealed as well as remains of the Long Gallery, the Grand Staircase and other rooms. Unfortunately all the rooms had been demolished to below the original floor level but sufficient brickwork remained to record the plan and to supplement our knowledge of this lost palace of London.

MEDIEVAL POTS AND POTTERS IN AND AROUND LONDON

The lecture on Wednesday 23rd April was well attended when Clive Orton spoke about the work of the London Museum in assembling a collection of dated medieval pottery. The object is to convert the long stratigraphical sequences of medieval pottery found during recent excavations in London into groups of identified and dated sherds which can be used for comparative purposes by archaeologists. A great deal of material has been recovered from London, especially the large deposits associated with waterfront structures, such as Trig Lane, which can be dated by dendrochronology and radio carbon.

When the timbers of the waterfronts had been erected, contemporary rubbish was used as backing material. New Fresh Wharf, the dock at Baynards Castle, Seal House and other sites have all produced many sherds. So far, about 200 fabrics have been identified and added to the collection in the Museum which has room for 1700 specimens.

We were shown examples of various groups of cooking pots, storage jars, jugs etc., in use between the early 12th century and 1500. The lecturer reminded us that leather jugs, wooden platters and metal utensils were also in use and often influenced the shape and design of pottery forms. The development and occurrence of pottery types in London were described and the point was made that little work had been done in examining the function of many pots. Medieval recipes often describe the pots to be used in preparing and cooking certain dishes and would repay further study.

The eventual and, it must be confessed, ideal aim would be to relate each sherd found to its own kiln. While this may not be possible in all cases, a great deal of progress has been made.

Archaeological excavations have so far revealed no evidence of London kilns and the main areas of pottery production seem to have been from areas south and west of the City. However, this could be due to the lack of exploration in other areas and the picture may change during the next few years. Nevertheless, there already exists a reliable body of data based on firm evidence which is proving to be of great value to the archaeologist in helping to date pottery found in and around London. G.R.G.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The following Officers and Committee were elected at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26th March. President - Dr. I. Anthony, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

Vice Presidents - Mrs. J. Adams, D.B. Denny M.A., Miss I.W. Drayton, J. Finlay, D.I.P.A., F.Inst., P.A., F.J. Gregory, B.E.M., J.D. Sykes, M.A. Dr. J.P.C. Kent, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

Chairman - Geoffrey Gillam. Vice-Chairman - Sylvia Collicott, B.A., P.G.C.F.

General Secretary - Irene Jordan. Treasurer - Ian Jones, B.A., A.M.A. Membership Secretary - Gwen Ivens. Meetings Secretary - John Coleman. Editor - Graham Deal. Auditor - Arthur Hall, F.S.A. Committee Members - Roger Edington, Simon Wood (Junior Representative).

Trustees - Arthur Hall and Lionel Fereday.

It was agreed that the annual subscription should be increased to £1.50 for adult members and 75p for junior members. The following amendments to the Constitution are therefore necessary - Para. 4, clause b, line 1, delete £1.00 and insert £1.50. Para. 4, clause b, line 2, delete 50p and insert 75p. Para 4, clause c, line 3, delete £1.00 and 50p and insert £1.50 and 75p respectively.

After the business part of the meeting, details of their respective excavations as described in the Annual Report were given, with the aid of colour slides, by Richard Coxshall and John Ivens. Geoffrey Gillam followed with an illustrated talk on 'The Changing Face of Enfield' to show the area affected by the Enfield Town Redevelopment Plan, before, during and after excavation.

APPOINTMENTS The following appointments were made at the Committee meeting on Tuesday 1st April; Librarian - Susan Wright. Projectionist - Roger Edington. Director of Emergency Excavations - John Ivens. Development Information Officer - Chris Mulvey. Representative to Council for British Archaeology - Lionel Fereday and Geoffrey Gillam. Representative to Enfield Arts Council - Graham Deal and Geoffrey Gillam. Representative to London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, Borough Secretaries Liaison Scheme - John Ivens. Representative to Enfield Conservation Advisory Group - Lionel Fereday. An interesting display of photographs of the cottages and barn on the farm site on Cecil Road, Enfield was arranged by John Coleman.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND METAL DETECTORS

There must be few people who are not aware of the problems posed to our archaeological heritage by the widely available and easily operated metal detector. These machines had their origin in the wartime mine detector which lacked the refinements of their modern counterpart and were also rather cumbersome. I well remember a war surplus mine detector being tried out on an excavation at Canterbury in the late 1940s. It picked up tin cans, bicycle frames and other metal objects over a very wide area but was found to have little value to the archaeologist.

The modern versions are ideal for locating coins and other objects dropped by holiday makers on the beaches of seaside resorts, but their indiscriminate use elsewhere, has resulted in irreparable damage being done to many archaeological sites where, having obtained a 'reading' the user has hacked his way through several stratified layers destroying historical evidence in the process. The reward is often only a few coins or pieces of ironwork, which in themselves have little intrinsic value. Of course, there are responsible users and the 6th century church plate recovered from a plough furrow a few years ago and more recently, the 9th century Irish silver from a bog are two cases where the operators of metal detectors reported their discoveries to museum authorities.

There have always been treasure seekers who dig into archaeological sites to see what objects they can find. Typical of these was the 19th century squire who provided his guests with an afternoon's entertainment by instructing two or three labourers to open up a burial mound on his estate, from which was recovered the inevitable urn, which for a time graced the library shelf before being broken and thrown away. My favourite character was the gentleman, again in the 19th century, who settled himself on a burial mound and having arranged a voluminous cloak around his person, proceeded to dig under the cover of its folds!

However, such cases were relatively few in number and when we consider the hundreds (thousands?) of metal detectors which are around, the problem assumes alarming proportions. This has led to the STOP (Stop Taking our Past) campaign by the Council for British Archaeology. A copy of the information sheet issued by the C.B.A. can be seen on the notice board at Society meetings.

Many solutions have been proposed but no matter how many laws are passed it will never be overcome, but there will have to be legislation to deal with the problem, either in the form of new laws or preferably by the reinforcement of existing ones. All detectors should be licensed and permission to use them must be obtained from the owner of the land. The law must be clear enough for magistrates to be able to impose a heavy fine on all transgressors. There is no doubt that the problem will lessen with the inevitable decline in popularity of metal detectors. Nevertheless, continued publicity in the form of leaflets and newsletters to county and local authorities as well as to individual farmers and other landowners is needed over a long period of time.

Contact must also be established and maintained with the members of the various metal detectors users clubs. A metal detector can be a useful research tool in the hands of an operator trained in the basic technique of archaeology and it is hoped that some sort of rapport between members of local archaeological societies and users of metal detectors will eventually emerge. G.R.Gillam.

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY (OR WHAT YOU WILL) To begin with, I must say that I started my New Year Resolutions early this year, actually I started in December, by taking a twice weekly walk around Enfield Town 'looking in holes' to see if anything had come to light. Then I 'phoned either John Ivens or Geoffrey Gillam with the information. No pretending to any real knowledge and not fancying going down the holes, I simply shout 'help'.

From this I decided to look carefully at the shops to see which ones obviously 'belonged together'. This usually means they were built at much the same time, belong to a plan and were built on an 'old plot of land'. Soon I began to see that they corresponded with the 1754 Tithe Map of Enfield. I then began to look for traces of old boundaries, little remnants of walls or old hedges. Looking up the passage between Waterlows (the stationers) and the wine shop, on the north side of Church Street, I spied a very interesting wall ... Tudor, or very near, type of bricks. Being Sunday and no one around, further investigation was possible. The end of the wall is six feet high and there is a canopy on top and it is fourteen inches thick. It forms the eastern wall of a storeroom which is, of course, kept locked. Beyond that it can be traced as far as the Grammar School wall. Here is a very dilapidated 19th century building with my wall forming the east side, very much repaired but still recognisable and still six feet high plus canopy. There had been a building of some sort built on to the wall on the east side behind this 19th century one. There are two buttresses visible which seem to indicate that the wall belonged to the owner of the land on the east side.

I consulted Whitakers History of Enfield and found that in his day this wall formed the west wall of Burleigh House, a mystery house which we have not yet traced in any of our surveys. Whittaker writes, "At the northwest corner of the garden are traces of a much older building, the entrance to a souterrain leading south, but never explored in recent memory, has lately been filled in". There is certainly a building on that site on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map and also on the 1754 Tithe Map, and now there is a car park. In 1516, the land to the west of the wall belonged to Wm. Cordell Tylemaker, by 1686 it belonged to Robert Wrangle and by 1697 to Thomas Howard. Not that this information helps much, the cottage on the site was probably let and the people of Enfield seem to have spent much of their time exchanging houses according to the Court Barons.

When there was a hole in the pavement in front of the Post Office, I saw parts of an old wall under the pavement, probably Tudor, but they were covered over too quickly for Geoffrey Gillam to see. I was very puzzled by this brickwork as there was no house on this site in 1868 nor in 1754 ... All of which brings me to the point of may I appeal to others to look in all holes in Enfield, you never know what may turn up. Also may I appeal to someone to look at the sets of shops in the other parts of Enfield and see if they can fit them against the 1754 map. Audrey Robinson.

I have looked at Audrey's wall and note that the bricks closely resemble those used in the construction of the stokehole excavated in Palace Gardens and which were considered to be re-used material from part of the nearby Palace buildings (Society News June 1978). However, unlike the stokehole, the brickwork of the wall is laid in Regular English Bond; alternating courses of all headers and all stretchers. By the Tudor period this style of bricklaying had become the usual practice. It is hoped to carry out more research in an attempt to pinpoint more accurately the date of construction of the wall.
G.R. Gillam.

OPEN DAYS, FORTY HALL MUSEUM The Society held Open Days on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th April when the workrooms at Forty Hall Museum were opened to the general public. Visitors were able to see some of the items recovered from local excavations which had been put on display for the occasion. In another room of the museum John Ivens gave a talk on "Recent Excavations in Enfield" and Ian Jones spoke about "The History of Elsynges Palace". We are grateful to the museum authorities for giving permission to hold the Open Days and for providing a room in which to give the talks. It is hoped to repeat the venture later this year.

HISTORY AND CONSERVATION WEEKEND 18th & 19th OCTOBER The History and Conservation Sub-Committee of the Enfield Arts Council, formed from the Literature, Local History and Other Arts Group, has held three meetings since it was formed earlier this year and there have been many useful exchanges of ideas between the societies concerned.

The formation of this Sub-Committee and the subsequent bringing together of all interested parties means an early start has been made in planning the History and Conservation Weekend (note the new title) for 1980. This event will be held at Millfield House, Silver Street, Edmonton on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th October from 2.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. each day. Lectures will be given every hour on the hour between 3.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. and details of the speakers and their subjects will appear in the September bulletin. Millfield House has been chosen because of the extra space available, not only in the lecture room but also for the displays and exhibitions by participating societies.

OBITUARY It is with regret that we record the death of Miss V. Hilling who had been a member of the Society since the first meeting in 1956. She took a keen interest in our activities, especially the excavation work and was a contributor to the excavation appeal fund during the dig at Lincoln Road.

Congratulations! Phillip and Kate.

EXCAVATIONS AND SITE WATCHING During the past few months, members of the Activity Group have been engaged in observation and recording of an assortment of archaeological material around the borough, some important and some not so important, but all worthy of report, as it is only by recording odd finds that over a long period what cannot be understood at this stage, may with time, become quite obvious. Perhaps this dossier may urge more of our readers to be aware of the part they can play in this important field and armed with a camera get themselves involved.

M.25 Motorway The construction of this road across the northern end of the borough at Forty Hill has been kept under observation and fortunately very little archaeological material has, it would seem, have been destroyed. Fieldwalking has produced an assortment of clay pipes, pottery and tile of 18th/19th century a few abraded sherds of medieval and roman pottery in the area of Bulls Cross Ride, and near Slowmans Farm, a fragment of Jurassic Limestone, containing fossilised bye value shells. As reported in Bulletin No.74, excavation for traces of Ermine Street, the Roman Road, were made without success then, but in September this year, a further chance will become available when part of Bulls Cross Ride is to be cut through by the motorway. The contractors reported to us a few weeks ago that when a drainage trench was cut across this road, they found traces of what they called 'bumper sandstone' about the size of large tennis balls, lying at a depth of 40 cms, below the modern road surface. This is very interesting as 'sandstone' is not available naturally in Enfield and may represent some form of road metalling or make up. Whether or not this is of Roman or later we cannot say, but hopefully in September this could be answered. (Our thanks to Mr. Pilkington of McAlpine's for this information).

Enfield Town Thanks to Audrey Robinson who observed cable laying trenches in Sydney Road and Church Street, it has been possible to trace two sections of Tudor brickwork. Substantial walling was found under the footway outside Pearson's entrance, and what may be part of a boundary wall was found in Sydney Road, some 10 metres north of Palace Gardens. It is uncertain at this stage what this brickwork represents in relationship to the Tudor Palace, but further trenches are to be opened by contractors in the future which may add further understanding. It is generally agreed however, that it is not brickwork of the actual Palace, but more likely outbuildings, associated with it.