

EPSOM & EWELL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY



THE FIRST 50 YEARS: 1960-2010

Lectures and Visits

Monthly Meetings

By 1968, monthly meetings were held in Pit house with an average attendance of between 15 and 20 members. After Pit House was closed other local halls were tried but eventually Glyn Hall became a regular venue. From 1971 Peggy Bedwell, EEHAS' current Chairman has had the job of arranging speakers. Conditions in the hall were a little spartan but by 1976 the Society had outgrown the space. Peggy remembers an occasion when extra chairs had to be fed in from the outside store through a side window because the back of the hall was so crowded. A larger hall was found at St. Mary's Church Hall where meetings have been held ever since. The convenience of this hall suits us very well. Long may it continue. In the early days Ina Godman was the projectionist and in about 1984 Charles Abdy took over, introducing some refinements to equipment such as the microphone and the 'next slide' light. As a result of a generous bequest by the late Doug West, the Society now boasts a digital projector which can be accessed from a laptop or USB stick.

In 1998 EEHAS contributed to the 150th anniversary celebrations of St. Mary's Church, Ewell when its July and August meetings were held in the church. Charles Abdy talked about the Victorian churches of Surrey, including St. Mary's and in August the members' meeting covered subjects connected with the church such as the windows, the bells, the old gravestones and a fascinating talk about the organ by the vicar which included a visit to the organ loft.



Society visit to Littlecote Roman villa 1987

Accounts of our meetings and visits have regularly appeared in our newsletters, at one time written by Jean West, and recently by Isobel Cross and others. They make an interesting record for non-attendees as well as an aide-memoire for those who were actually there.

The Society has held exhibitions in Bourne Hall from time to time, notably 'Our Local Past' in 1976 and 'History on your Doorstep' in 1982; and we contributed largely to the 'Nonsuch Festival Symposium' in 1988 arranged principally by Maurice Exwood to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the building of Nonsuch Palace. On 13th May 2000 we held a daylong 'Millennium Symposium' at Bourne Hall to cover 2000 years (and more) of the history of Epsom and Ewell. This attracted more than 200 people and was a very successful event.

Society Visits

Visits to places of historical and archaeological interest have also formed part of the EEHAS programme over the years - sometimes as a follow up to a talk, sometimes to other places. Typical examples of such visits are outings to St. Albans (town, abbey and Roman remains at Verulamium) Royal Holloway College, Fulham Palace, the Open Air Museum at Singleton and Horsley Towers. At one time, many of these visits were organised by member, the late Jean West; more recently there have been visits to Fulham Palace and visits to Bletchley Park and Fishbourne Roman Palace, ably organised by Chris and Gay Harris. As EEHAS is affiliated to the Surrey Archaeological Society, EEHAS members may also join its visits.

Other outings have taken the form of walks around interesting parts of Epsom and Ewell and visits to historic buildings, frequently led by Ian West.



Above- Society visit to the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) in 2003



View of St. Mary's Church Hall, our monthly meeting place, taken from the Church tower

As well as welcoming guest speakers the Society is fortunate in having members who are willing to share their knowledge on a wide range of topics. This enable the Society to pay those who require a fee and still keep the subscription low, or to offer exchange lectures with local societies.

A regular feature in recent years has been the Members' Evening, usually in August, when members are invited to volunteer short items on any subject of general interest, with or without slides.



Peggy Bedwell, Chairman of the Society in its 50th year, manning the buffet at a Christmas party

Lecture Topics

Meetings over the years have covered all kinds of subjects connected with archaeology and local history including churches, castles, bridges, windmills, pottery of all ages, geology, Roman town, Saxon towns, place names, historical and archaeological sites abroad, aerial photography, local industries, the Hanseatic League, Hanoverians, various aspects of the postal service, medieval markets, timber framed buildings etc, together with updates on Hatch Furlong from EEHAS' President, Jon Cotton.

Below- a walking tour of historical Ewell lead by Ian West



One of the many Christmas parties held in St. Mary's Church hall since the late 1970's