

dustries in Roman London. At Montague Close the massive medieval wall is almost certainly the east wall of the Chapter House of the Priory of St. Mary Overie, which the extant moulding on the north wall of the Harvard Chapel shows to be late 12th century in date when the apsidal chapel on the north transept was squared off⁵. From its position the burial is probably that of one of the Priors of St. Mary Overie⁶ and since it contained tiles with a plain glaze, presumably from the floor of the Chapter House, he was probably one of the later priors. It is hoped that future excavations in the area will produce more information about the domestic buildings of the Priory.

Important information was produced about the delftware industry of the area, but again it was most

5. *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; London 58ff.*

6. Gilyard Beer, *Abbeys* (1958) 28.

useful in showing the potential of the site for only the ends of the three possible superimposed delftware kilns were found but complete excavation may be possible in the near future. Even so, they show that the kilns are rectangular like the only other known example (Norfolk House, Lambeth) described in the last number. But here much more of the kilns survive than at Lambeth and show that at least one, and probably all three kilns had steps down to what is presumably the firebox, as in mid-18th century illustrations of French faience kilns. The dating of the kilns has not yet been worked out, but one of them is certainly late-17th century in date because there is a documentary reference to it in 1692. The original aim of the excavation was to test the area to see what archaeological potential it had, and they showed that it is probably one of the most important areas in London which is ever likely to be available for excavation.

London's Archaeological Societies — 4

NONSUCH AND EWELL ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY was formed in 1960 by a group of people who had taken part in the Nonsuch Palace dig—in fact the first impulse had been to call the organisation the Society of Nonsuch Diggers. Things have moved on since those days and the Society is now the archaeological, local history and amenity Society for Epsom, Ewell and Cheam and to some extent, in so far as they have no societies of their own for Banstead and Sutton. It has recently become a registered charity.

Although as with all societies it has had its ups and downs in the last ten years and the main work of the Society has always been carried on by a minority of the members, it has some solid achievements to its credit.

Epsom, Ewell and Cheam are all spring line villages—they lie on the Thanet bed exposure which lies between the London clay to the north and the chalk to the south. Ewell and Cheam's past is that of villages evolving from Saxon to Victorian times and then becoming engulfed in the suburban spread of the 1920s and 1930s although the villages centres have survived, a bit battered but recognizable still with quite a few old buildings. Epsom is a more interesting case since it underwent considerable expansion in late Stuart and Georgian times first as one of the earliest spa towns—its assembly rooms built in 1690 the earliest in the county still stand—and then as a commuter centre for city merchants and others e.g. Josiah Diston one of the first deputy governors of the Bank of England built his house at Woodcote Grove in Epsom. The Society's greatest task in Epsom is to persuade the local

planning authority to care about the fine heritage of Stuart and Georgian and early Victorian buildings in the town.

Ewell too has special problems; first there is the fact that its copious springs (from which the Hogsmill River rises) and the stream valley were attractive to Mesolithic man and as a result mesolithic flint finds are numerous; secondly, Stane Street runs in a short link alignment through Ewell and there was undoubtedly a late Iron Age settlement and a Romano-British town of some kind there.

The Society, with a current membership of 160, has always aimed to carry on activity at several levels—during most winters it has run monthly popular lectures on archaeological and historical subjects with both local and national speakers and during most summers at least two outings to places of historical and archaeological interest.

It has in most years since 1961 organised some excavation on local sites and done some recording of threatened buildings. It has both with the London Borough of Sutton Council in relation to Cheam, and the Epsom and Ewell Council in relation to Epsom and Ewell, sought to influence planning decisions in the direction of preservation of individual buildings and a general policy of conservation of the townscape.

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