

EPSOM IN 1912

The wheel of time has gone round once more, and we enter again upon that season of the year when it is customary to review the doings of the past twelve months. At the close of another year, it affords us considerable pleasure to find that on the whole, the interests of the town have been kept well in sight by the local authority. Unquestionably the position at the present time is one of steady, cautious and economical progress. The progressive character of the Epsom of today is writ large in the growing development of the town and its environs and the consequent steady increase that is taking place in the rateable value.

ROADS

During the year the council proceeded with the long delayed work of widening Hook Road from the Epileptic Colony to the Isolation Hospital. A strip of land was given up by the London County Council and the road was widened to a uniform width of 36-ft. a grass verge and gravel path being place on the north side. The improvement included the provision of two public lamps, and will undoubtedly be a great convenience to the many people working at the Epileptic Colony and coming from West Ewell into Epsom. After some controversy the Council accepted the contribution of £1,300 from the Surrey County Council towards the maintenance of the main road. In order to earn this sum it will be necessary to treat the whole length of the main road in a new fashion. Part of it will be laid in tar macadam and part paved with wood blocks. This will be the first time an experiment with the latter road surface has been attempted in Epsom. A small piece of Treadwell Road has been widened, thanks to the generosity of the owner of a new stable being erected there, and another small improvement has been sanctioned at the Burgh Heath Road entrance to the rifle butts alley.

Negotiations have also been concluded for the purchase of the necessary land for the improvement of the dangerous crossing where Downside joins Worple Road. During the year the frontagers of Woodcote Park Road proceeded against the Council in the High Court seeking to compel the local authority to proceed with works under the Private Streets Works Act. After much argument by counsel, the Court found for the Urban Council and the whole question was commenced de novo. Certain frontagers still objecting to the provisional apportionment; the case was heard before the Epsom Justices, who made certain alterationa, after which the plans were approved.

SEWERAGE

The storm which caused such discomfort in the town on Derby Day, 1911, led the Council to consider the advisability of constructing a relief sewer capable of dealing with such inundations. Mr. S.R. Lowcock was engaged as Consulting Engineer, and certain portions of the scheme submitted by him were approved and adopted in the latter part of the year. This included the laying of a new sewer in West-street to take both foul and storm water, the construction of a new storm water sewer in East-street draining the district from the co-operative hall to Hook-road and the construction of a new storm water outfall sewer from the sewage farm to the town in the High Street where the sewers from Church Street, Station Road and High Street meet. This matter awaits the sanction of the Local Government Board, an inquiry not yet having been held. Notice was also received that about the middle of the year 1915 the asylum to be constructed upon the remainder of the Long Grove estate will be sending sewage for treatment at the farm. This may involve considerable additional capital expenditure at the farm and the Surveyor's department have the matter in hand. Complaints were freely

made during the summer months as to the smells arising from the sewers in the town. After considerable discussion the Council instructed the Surveyor to prepare plans showing the existing means of ventilating the drainage system of the town, and it is understood that upon the receipt of this report, some efforts will be made to remove the grounds of annoyance expressed by the complainants.

RECREATION GROUND

At the end of March the new pavilion on the recreation ground was opened by Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Aston. The building proved a great convenience during the summer months and undoubtedly is a most valuable addition to this popular pleasure resort. The work was carried out by Mr. Moxham, of Epsom, from plans prepared by the Surveyor. Earlier in the year the Superintendent's lodge, designed by Mr. J. Hatchard Smith (Vice Chairman of the Council), and also built by Mr. Moxham, was occupied. An additional bowling green was opened early in the season, and this most recent addition to the sports provided at the ground proved quite as attractive as during the previous season. The tennis courts on the ground are being levelled and re-made during the present winter.

WATER DEPARTMENT

The discussions which took place during 1911 as to the necessity of enlarging the plant, reservoirs and mains of the water undertaking have been continued during 1912. So far, although various reports have been published, no definite action has been taken by the Council. Early in December this year, three reports from the Consulting Engineer and the Electrical Engineer dealing with the advisability of utilising electricity as the energy for pumping were submitted and after a prolonged discussion, the Council decided to adopt electricity on somewhat peculiar terms. Instead of paying the

electricity department so much per unit supplied to the works for power purposes, it was decided that the electricity department should take full financial responsibility for the running of the waterworks, and should receive in return the sum of 3-3/4d per 1,000 gallons pumped. These were the figures upon which the water was pumped during the financial year ended March 31st last. The question of the works necessary for supplying the new asylum with water still remains under discussion.

ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT

With the commencement of the current financial year, this department reduced the charge made for public lighting 10s. per lamp per annum. An inquiry was held during the year into the application of the Council for loans for the purpose of erecting and installing a diesel oil engine of 200 k.w. capacity, and for extending the mains of the undertaking into the adjoining parish of Ewell. Although opposed by the Gas Company, this application was granted by the Local Government Board and the new engine is now in course of construction at the works. Electricity was supplied to consumers in the parish of Ewell during the latter part of October.

ADMINISTRATION

An important economy was affected during the last months of the year in the administration charges of the town. After having discharged his office for some 29 years, the Assistant Overseer, Mr. Charles Williams, resigned on the ground of ill-health. The Council had acquired the right of appointing his successor and steps were taken to comply with the necessary formalities for carrying on the duties of collecting the poor rate. At a special meeting the Council appointed its Accountant (Mr. C.J. Batchelor) and its Rate Collector (Mr. Tom Oliver) Joint Assistant Overseers, the former to do all the clerical work connected with the

making of the poor rate and the revision of the voters and jury lists, and the latter to perform the duties of Poor Rate Collector. The Council also decided to adopt the consecutive system of rate demand notes. This will enable the rate demand to be prepared in the Accountant's office, leaving the Collector's department with the sole duty of effecting the collection. The net financial result to the town will be a saving of some £400 per annum the late Assistant Overseer during the financial year 1912 having received the sum of £570 in salary, whereas the increase made in the salaries of the officials who have taken his place total £150. The net saving to the general district rate will be considerable, because the total cost of collection is now to be allocated between the two rates, so that a considerable portion of money hitherto borne by the general district rate will now be defrayed by the poor rate.

CHURCH LIFE

Church life in Epsom during the past twelve months has been one of steady and satisfactory progress. Nothing startling has been witnessed to mar the serenity of the town in that respect, the Vicar of Epsom, at the Parish Church and the Rev. H.A. Bowles and his co-workers at Christ Church and St. Barnabas Church, all working their hardest to keep things moving. In March, the Vicar of Christ Church went away on account of his health, and after some weeks absence returned fit and well to carry on the work of the two parishes under his care. The debt on the building fund at St. Barnabas was cleared off by means of a sale of work at the Shrubbery, South Street, the small debt of £17 odd remaining being defrayed through the generosity of the Rev. E.W. Northey, J.P. In December the much delayed confirmation was held at Christ Church when the Bishop of Guildford conducted the ceremony, which was a very impressive one. In May, the

annual Diocesan Festival was held at Leatherhead, being attended by practically all the local clergy and a number of laymen. The Parish Church Dedication Festival was celebrated in November when the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Talbot) received a hearty welcome from the church workers of the parish and preached at the church the following day. In February, Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's tabernacle, London, paid a visit to the Epsom Baptist Church and preached two sermons to crowded congregations.

GUARDIANS AND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Under the guidance of Mr. & Mrs. J.T. WHITE (Master and Matron), the inmates at the Epsom Workhouse have been well looked after during the year, all receiving the utmost care and attention. In March, Mr. Harry Tugwell, Relieving Officer for the Sutton district, resigned his post, and Mr. E. H. Cotterill, of Warrington, was appointed his successor. At the Guardians' election in April there was only one contest in Epsom, when the Rev. H.A. Bowless defeated Mr. A.J. Wapling by 86 votes. At the end of July the annual cricket match between the Guardians and Rural District Council and the Union Council was played on the recreation ground and ended in a win for the former bodies. Two Guardians died during the year, Mr. A.D. Cox, representing Cuddington; and Mr. John Seear, of Cheam. Their places were filled by Capt. Pennethorne and Mr. P.C. Kerr respectively.

LOCAL SOCIETIES

The numerous societies in the town have all had a wonderful year. The Epsom Literary Society, who are again fortunate in having Sir E. F. Coates, M.P., as their President, provided attractive evenings for their members and friends; and Mr. C.J.M. Shaw, the new secretary, is to be congratulated on the result of his efforts. The Epsom Oratorio Society gave one or

two oratorios in the latter part of the year, and there is no doubt that this new organisation has come to stay. The periodical concerts held by the Epsom Angling Society still proved very popular during the winter months. The R.S.P.C.A. again had a successful time of it under the secretaryship of Miss Winifred Barnes, several cases having been brought before the notice of the local magistrates. Insp. Moth, the newly appointed representative of the society at Epsom, took up his residence in the town during the year. Under the joint secretaryship of Messrs. J.W. Potter and A. Fenwick Smith the Horticultural Society came out with a good record at their annual meeting, this being brought about by a very successful flower show in August. Mr. Potter retired from the position of secretary, and Mr. Fenwick Smith was appointed in his stead.

SPORT

As usual Epsom held its own in the realm of sport. The Derby last June was won by Mr. W. Raphael's "Tagalie," which failed to keep up its reputation in later races. There was no repetition of the fearful storm of the previous year, although the weather did not keep fine the whole of the meeting. The Epsom Cricket Club had an excellent season and the same might be said of the other cricket clubs in the town. The Epsom Rifle Club, with Sir Thos. Bucknill as President, kept up its reputation in the shooting line, and all the other sporting organisations had a good record. The Epsom Harriers held their annual sports on Whit Monday; other special features during the summer being the Epsom College Sports and the Horton Asylum Fete. In the early part of January, some trouble arose in the town owing to the closing of the gallops on the Downs to trainers. This was only done temporary, however, and after a time all the fuss made simmered down and the gallops assumed their normal state once more.

OBITUARY

The icy hand of death has been very busy in the town since the beginning of the year. In January, Mr. Amos Everitt, a Croydon man, was killed at Ashted Railway Station; whilst the following month, the death took place of Mr. Robert Waiting, a former Epsom trainer at Holmwood. Early in March, a gloom fell over the town on hearing the news of the death of Mr. Wm. Keswick, of Eastwick Park, a gentleman who for many years had represented the division in the Conservative interest in Parliament. Later in the month Mr. J.W. Hislop, a former Vicar's warden at the Parish Church when the Rev. J. Samuel was the incumbent, passed away. This was followed in May by the death of Gunner David Carson, a Crimean veteran; and Frank Andrews, a Walworth dealer, was found killed on the line at Wheeler's Lane. In June, Charles Barnes of Church Road, was crushed to death whilst working at Cheam Railway station. Mr. "Jim" Adams, a former Epsom trainer, died in August; and the following month, the Rev. C.H.S. de Wesselow passed away; whilst later in the year, we have to record the death of Mr. John Seear, of Cheam, a well-known Guardian of the Poor at Epsom and the two tragedies at Long Grove Asylum one where a coloured patient beat another one to death with a broom and the other where a patient hung himself.

GENERAL TOPICS

There were many things happening in Epsom during the year just ended which might be classed under this heading. Early in the year the Epsom Ratepayers' Association was formed, and the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company abolished second class carriages on their suburban lines. The Epsom Operatic Society gave a successful performance of "The Mikado," and the Medico-Psychological Association held

their annual meeting at Long Grove Asylum. In February an explanatory meeting was held in the Lecture Hall on the Insurance Act; and Mr. H. Skilton and Mr. Geo. Edwards were prosecuted at the Petty Sessions for selling milk deficient in fat, both cases being dismissed. Later in the year Solly Abrahams, a London wood carver, was sent to prison for eight months with hard labour for stealing a cheque belonging to Mr. F.W. Essex, a local grocer. Mr. W. Keswick, M.P. retired in March (his sad death occurring soon afterwards), and his son, Mr. Henry Keswick, was returned to Parliament unopposed in his stead. Mr. E.O. Breedon, a postman, was the recipient of a presentation from his colleagues on his retirement after 40 year's service. In May, the annual May Day Festival was held at the Council Schools and the automatic telephone was inaugurated at the Epsom Exchange; the Epsom Gas Company amalgamated with the Wandsworth and Wimbledon Companies; and the Ewell Old Boys held their annual re-union. Alexandra Day was celebrated locally in June and the same month, the Veteran Reserves held a parade at Hookfield, the residence of M. H. Braithwaite, J.P. July saw another wet day for the Epsom Rose Show, but amends were made by the Horticultural Society on Bank Holiday, when a very successful flower show was held. Other matters occurring during the latter part of the year were the binding over of an Epsom servant girl for stealing articles from a Croydon store; a betting raid on the Railway Inn, when heavy fines were inflicted; a National Service League meeting at the Public Hall; and the visit of the Whitefield's Male Voice Choir of 60 voices to the Brotherhood concert. Several marriages were solemnised, the most important being Mr. B.B. Lowther and Miss K.C.R. Atkins, Mr. G.H. Grellier and Miss V.M. Hamley, Mr. T.S. Foster and Miss W.M. Eggar, Mr. Stephen Batten and Miss E.R. Room, Mr.

O.H. Wells and Miss C.W. Brougham, Mr. N. F. Wells and Miss M.C. Wallroth, Mr. F.J. Kent and Miss H.C. Matthews, Mr. C. H. Bill and Miss B. de la Bere.