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Stoneleigh history display attracts residents wanting to know more about their local area

Local residents visited Stoneleigh Library on Tuesday 14th March to see the Stoneleigh history display put together by Tim Bauckham and Carol Hill from the Epsom & Ewell Local and Family History Centre.

The exhibition traced the history of the area from the time it was farmland, using Tithe and Enclosure maps from the 19th century, which showed field names, some of which gave rise to names of local roads. Residents were able to trace the history of the land on which their house now stands.

Also on view were examples of original builders' advertising, giving prices of property, the values of which you wouldn't recognize except as a month's rent these days. There were advertisements from well-known shops, old photographs of local scenes, ordinance survey maps of the area and one member of the history centre brought along one of the original Stoneleigh station signs when it was part of Southern Railways.

Over 50 local residents came along on the opening day, as well as a number of local school children. Much fun was had trying to decide when the pictures of the shops on the Broadway were taken, with many an exclamation of "Oh, yes, I remember them!"

Visitors were offered a questionnaire to record their personal knowledge of Stoneleigh's early days and the Library staff had given out over 100 of these before the event had even opened. The exhibition was open throughout March and Jeni Humphries, Library Manager, estimates that around 1,500 people came to see the display.

Much of the exhibition display will be preserved for future use thanks to the kind sponsorship of local Estate Agents Browns, Robert Dean and Connor Prince of Stoneleigh and Greenfields of Ewell – who would have no problem selling houses if they were still £750 each!



Visit to London Maze on 18th March 2006

Volunteers who didn't go to London Maze this year missed a treat. It lived up to its reputation of providing variety and interest to all those concerned with historical matters.

Many of the stands there were from various family history societies, as well as the more well known institutions such as Society of Genealogists, Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), London Metropolitan Archives, all of whom were more than willing to attempt to answer any and all questions put to them.

Far from being a 'static' display, there were re-enactors of the 95th Regiment of Foot conducting military drill in the courtyard, a Victorian Music Hall demonstration by members of LMA and one of the

medical museums demonstrating how to cut off a volunteer's leg without anaesthetic in less than 30 seconds!

Not only was the picture gallery open to visitors, but they could also view the Roman Amphitheatre, which is now many feet below the current ground level. Guided walks around the City of London were available at a small extra cost, but the main event is free. All in all, a worthwhile day out.

Thanks to Bert Barnhurst for this report.

The next London Maze will be held in October 2007. See their website:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/leisure_heritage/libraries_archives_museums_galleries/london_maze/

BBC People's War – Demob Party

In recognition of the Centre's efforts in story gathering for the BBC People's War, Carol Hill and Bert Barnhurst were invited to the closing ceremony of this event at the British Library on 27 January this year.



Carol Hill, left, holding Bert Barnhurst's drink while he takes the photo of Eleanor Fell from the BBC, right, with another guest looking on.

This was a well-supported event with over 150 people, including BBC staff, when much detail was related both visually and aurally. During the course of the morning, we were advised that the final total of stories collected was 47,890 supported by 15,400 photographs. Apparently over 70% of the stories were input by volunteers in local centres around the country. Some 2,500 'partner centres' as they were called, such as ourselves, participated.

This website was to be closed for a few weeks to enable transfer to the British Library, which has undertaken to maintain it in the future, thus ensuring its availability on as wide a basis as possible for as long as possible.

The afternoon consisted of a think-in of small groups as to where a similar exercise could be improved upon in the future; having generated this army of volunteers the BBC were keen not to lose track of them for future events, but nothing is scheduled at present.

The Demob Party concluded with a champagne tea and Carol and Bert assure you that they thought of you all whilst toasting your health – or at least, so they say!

Report on 4th Annual General meeting

There was a good turnout for the 4th Annual General Meeting of the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre which was held on 24th April 2006 at 7.00 pm in Ewell Library, Bourne Hall.

Chairman, Bert Barnhurst presented his report for the year (see below) and Peggy Bedwell, Treasurer, provided an update on the Annual Accounts; both were approved by the AGM.

The AGM was followed by a fascinating talk by computer software expert and local history buff, Peter Tilley on 'Database design for improving Family History research' – see report below.

Chairman's Report: 2005-06

I think it only fair to say that the Centre has had a very successful year. In May 2005 we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in connection with Home Front Recall in the sum of £2400.00. This enabled us not only to purchase a number of new pieces of equipment but gave us the ability to fund various projects.

The World War II Street Party held in the Library was a great success with more than 200 visitors including three generations of the Swan family, Alan being the son of one of the victims of the Ruxley Lane air crash. Both the Centre and the Swans were on Southern Counties radio.

Once again we had a follow-up event for some local schools the next week, when re-enactor Tim Richardson again entertained them, together with Charles Peall from the Burma Star Association.

On 7th July, we took part in the BBC's story gathering day, when we took over part of Epsom Library for a change. Southern Counties radio was again on hand to interview the Mayor, Cllr. Jean Smith, who gave her own wartime story.

September saw us continue the World War II theme, when we visited Swail House and interviewed a number of residents including a lady of 104 years of age.

In October the Centre put on a display on Nelson and The Battle of Trafalgar, which was put together when it was realised that we had five local lads who fought at the battle.

The turn of the year brought a change in our opening hours when we discontinued Saturday mornings but opened on every Friday afternoon. January also saw the staging of a presentation for the 150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross, based on VCs born or buried in Epsom and those of the East and West Surrey Regiments.

On 27 January the BBC concluded their People's War event at which we were advised that the total number of stories was 47,890. There were times when I'm sure we felt we had done at least 47,000 of them!

In February came the return of the Herald of Spring at Bourne Hall. With its theme of Poetry, the Centre produced a display of poetry and pictures in keeping with the theme and showcasing the work of local poets.

Later in the month we had the return of "Who Do You Think You Are?" This year we were supported by two members of Surrey History Services from Woking and three 'volunteers' from East Surrey Family History Society. The effect of this was that over 240 enquiries were received and dealt with on the day.

March saw a presentation on 'The History of Stoneleigh' in Stoneleigh Library to coincide with the 5th anniversary of the opening of their Community Room. In her kind acknowledgement of the work needed to mount this display, Jeni Humphries stated that there were more than 1000 extra visits to the library this year than last – an estimated 1500 people must have seen the display.

We also were able to lend our Trafalgar Display to Epsom Library to enhance the display put on in conjunction with the commemoration of the news of the victory at Trafalgar.

During the course of the year, the Centre dealt with at least 576 enquiries and was open for 553 hours. I feel that this was a commendable effort on everybody's part and would like to thank you all accordingly. We may well have our work cut out to equal this next year, but I feel sure we can count on everyone to do their best.

Bert Barnhurst
Chairman

“Combining Indexes improves Family History Research,” says Peter Tilley

Following the AGM, we were very fortunate to have a talk by Peter Tilley, a very successful computer software wizard and a keen historian. Peter has developed a computer programme that enables data from various databases, indexes and other information to be linked to facilitate family research and enable people to create family tree structures.

The programme was originally created for Kingston University for the ‘The Kingston Life Cycles Database’. You can see how this works at:

http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RT/Archives+and+local+studies+near+Surrey?opendocument
and click on ‘Kingston Life Cycles’.

Peter's witty and fascinating talk demonstrated and illustrated that by linking census data, births/marriages/deaths indexes, parish records, and cemetery & burial records, it is possible to show significant family linkages, make research easier and create robust family trees. It is also possible to include probate and court records, newspaper articles, school logs, Poor and Workhouse records, trade directories and much more to further improve the data and flesh out family histories.

Peter is currently working on creating databases with volunteers from Leatherhead, Bookham, Fetcham and Ashted.

The really good news is that Peter has offered this programme to the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre *absolutely free* and has offered to advise on how to proceed. What we need to do is organise a group of volunteers to input the data. We'll be telling you more about this very soon.

Forthcoming Events and Activities

We apologise that dates for these events and activities had not been finalised when this newsletter went to press.

Timings will be confirmed and circulated as soon as they are known.

Nonsuch Palace – Atkins Virtual Reality Model: 19th June 2006

Nonsuch Palace was started by King Henry VIII in 1538 on a site previously occupied by the manor house, church and village of Cuddington, which was completely cleared. The structure of the palace was completed in 1541, but the famous external decorations took another 5 years. It is recorded that the total cost of the work up to the end of 1545 was £24,536, which was substantially more than Hampton Court which was building at the same period. Henry died in 1547 with the work still not quite finished.

The palace was bought and completed by the Earl of Arundel in 1556. Queen Elizabeth I regained the palace in 1592. In 1670, King Charles II gave the palace to Barbara Villiers, his ex-mistress who was created Baroness Nonsuch as well as Duchess of Cleveland. She had the palace demolished in 1682 and the parks were then broken up.

In the 21st Century, how do you produce a Virtual Reality (VR) model of a palace that was demolished in 1682? You have three paintings / drawings of different views of the palace, produced during its 144 years of existence, a floor plan from excavations conducted in the 1950s, and a few lumps of masonry; and little reliance can be placed in the pictures as true representations of the palace. The site is completely levelled. So when the Surrey History Centre wanted a VR model of the palace as the centrepiece of their exhibition, they turned to Atkins. The result is an impressive VR model.

The VR model has a fairly long history of its own. The work began about eight years ago for Bourne Hall Museum but came to a halt when funding became a challenge. But in 2004, a Surrey History Centre grant and donations from Atkins and two private sponsors enabled Atkins to complete the task.

We are very fortunate that, thanks to these generous sponsors and Ian Milford, Technical Director of Atkins, this unique virtual model will be unveiled to the public at the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre in Ewell Library from Monday, 19th June 2006 for several weeks.

My thanks to Epsom Town Pages for this brief history on Nonsuch and to Atkins for information on the VR display:
<http://www.epsom.townpage.co.uk/nonsuch.htm>
<http://www.atkinsglobal.com/aboutus/publications/features/nonsuchpalace/>

Battle of The Somme 90th Anniversary: July 2006

On the 1st July 1916 one of the most significant events of the First World War began – the Battle of the Somme – and it didn't end until 13th November!

In July 2006, there will be numerous events to celebrate the 90th anniversary of this awesome battle. The Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre will be among them, with plans to mount a display at Ewell Library to commemorate and remember this most terrible of all battles. Volunteer, Clive Gilbert, is producing the display and we will let you know the dates it can be seen as soon as they are finalised.



How are you getting on with “Who do You Think You Are”? – Autumn 2006

Following our very popular “Who Do You Think You Are?” day this last February, we will be organising another such event later this year, tying in once again with the BBC's programme schedule. We understand the BBC is proposing to run a new series in the autumn of 2006. Once we know the dates we will plan our own event around this.

Fancy Recording Tombstones?

We have all probably been frustrated by inaccurate records whilst pursuing our family history research. You also know how important cemeteries and churchyards can be in filling out the basic research. Unfortunately, many of the older tombstones are weathering away and becoming unreadable. So it is urgent that these important historical references are recorded for posterity.

Specifically, we are seeking assistance in recording the more interesting tombstones in the Ashley Road Cemetery. If you have some spare time could you please contact Carol Hill at the EELFHC and we can get a group together and start recording.

We're thinking of developing our own Website

At the recent AGM we were very fortunate to have Mr Peter Reed offer to produce our very own website for the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre. This is currently being discussed with staff from Surrey Libraries and the Surrey History Centre to agree on such matters as copyright materials and linking with other websites. Once agreement is, hopefully, reached we can begin to publicise ourselves on the Web and to let 'surfers' know what census, IGI, parish records, maps, photographs and other materials and information we hold to help them with their research. The first thing to do is decide how we wish to proceed with this and what we want the website to include. A small sub-committee has been proposed to do this. We'll keep you informed of progress.

Co-ordinated Database Project

As a result of the talk by Peter Tilley at the AGM, and his generous offer to let us have a free copy of his database programme, we will be setting up a project to produce our own co-ordinated database. This will require volunteers to input the data. Again, we will need to create a sub-committee to decide how best to proceed with this project and, again, we will keep you informed of progress.

Welcome to three New Volunteers

Please welcome three new volunteers to the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre - Mrs Anne Cheshire, Mrs Linda Clark and Mrs Maureen Dibsdall.

Anne is interested in family and local history. She prefers work behind the scenes and is happy to carry out basic computer work, photocopying, indexing and sorting documents etc. - could be a useful recruit for the 'Co-ordinated Database Project'? At present Anne is sorting, putting into date order and indexing, colour slides of Nonsuch Palace, the building and official opening of Bourne Hall, a selection of slides of Epsom scenes and paintings and also ceremonial scenes.

Linda is interested in both family and local history; she's currently researching her own family. Linda prefers to work behind the scenes doing research and computer work - another useful member for the 'Co-ordinated Database Project'?

Maureen is also interested in both family and local History; she has been helping her husband research his family history and has recently made a tentative start on her own. Maureen would like to help out particularly with any computer based projects [typing] and is willing to do behind the scenes work, but would also be prepared to assist on the front desk after familiarisation with the facilities available. Maureen has volunteered to assist on the Epsom Cemetery project.

We are delighted they have joined us and I know you will make them all feel very welcome.

Buried battles and Veterans' Voices

The Heritage Lottery Fund has just awarded a grant of nearly £48K to Surrey History Centre in Woking, in partnership with the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum and the National Archives, to capture the reminiscences of veterans of the regiment and its predecessors the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) and the East Surrey Regiment.

The project, which will start this summer, will record for posterity the experiences of veterans of the regiments who experienced some of the defining moments of the Second World War such as Dunkirk, the fall of Singapore, Montecassino and the D-Day Landings. It will also record the memories of soldiers involved in vital but less well-known post-war operations in Palestine, Malaya, Korea, Berlin and Northern Ireland. A 'virtual archive' of clips from the veterans' interviews, photographs and documents will be available on the Internet, along with a definitive catalogue of the great regimental archive, which dates back to the 1660s and currently occupies 45.5 linear metres in the History Centre's strong rooms.

It is anticipated that the whole project will run for 13 months and will conclude with a travelling exhibition. Through the Regimental Association, some veterans willing to have their experiences recorded have already been identified but volunteers are also needed to help catalogue photograph albums in the collection. Anyone interested should contact Mike Page on 01483-518756.



*Pte Johnson near Anzio, Italy, 1944
1/6th Battalion Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment*

Details of the regimental archive can be found on the History Centre website

www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice

and follow the link to 'Highlights of our Holdings' then the link to 'Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment'.

Enquiries relating to the Regimental archive should be sent to:

Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 6ND

Tel: 01483 518737 • Fax: 01483 518738 • E-mail: shs@surreycc.gov.uk

Ewell Library - New additions to the LFHC

The following publications on Local and Family History have been added to the library stock.

Class no:	Author/title	Format	Location	Notes
929.1072	ANNAL, David. Easy family history. National Archives, 2005, 1903365791.	Paperback	Lending copy	
820.8	BANERJEE, Jacqueline. Literary Surrey. J.O. Smith, 2005. 1873855508	Paperback	REF copy in stacks Lending copy	
942.23	BRANDON, Peter. The Kent and Sussex weald. Phillimore, 2003, 1860772412	Hardback	Lending copy	
728	BRECKON, Bill. Tracing the history of houses. Countryside Books, 2000. 1853066443	Paperback	Lending copy	
791.1	BROWN, Frances. Fairground strollers and showfolk. Ronda Books, 2001, 0952128217.	Hardback	REF copy in stacks Lending copies	
942.2	COLLYER, Graham. The Surrey village book. Countryside Books, 1998, 1853065498	Paperback	Lending copy REF copy in stacks	
942.2SUR	DAVISON, Mark. Surbiton memories and more tales of Tolworth and Berrylands. Mark Davison, 2004, 0954375912	Paperback	Lending copy REF copy in stacks	
E95 942.2EPS	ESSEN, Richard. Epsom and Ewell. Nonsuch, 2005, 1845881125	Paperback	REF copy in stacks Lending copies	Images of England series pocket edition
E94 920DAV	FITZHERBERT, Claudia. Emily Davison – the girl who gave her life for her cause. Short Books, 2004, 1904095666.	Paperback	REF copy in stacks Lending copy	Junior book.
929.3	FOWLER, Simon. Tracing your first World War ancestors. Countryside Books, 2003. 1853067911	Paperback	Lending copy	
591.5	GOLICZ, Roman. The Surrey puma: the natural and unnatural history of Britain's first alien big cat. Don Namor Press, 2005, 0954717244	Paperback	REF copy in stacks	
942.2HOR	HAINES, Susan. Horsham: a history. Phillimore, 2005. 186077332x.	Hardcopy	Lending copy	
929.3	HERRIDGE, D.M. Surrey probate inventories 1558-1603. Surrey Record Society, 2005. 0902978144.	Hardback	REF copy in stacks	Surrey Record Society vol. 39.
133.1	JANAWAY, John. Haunted places of Surrey. Countryside Books, 2005. 1853069329	Paperback	REF copy in stacks Lending copy	
929.3	MILLIGAN, Edward H. My ancestors were Quakers. Society of Genealogists, 2005, 18599514049.	Paperback	Lending copy	
478	MORRIS, Janet. A Latin glossary for family and local historians. Federation of Family History Socs., 2002, 0907099890.	Paperback	REF copy in LHC. Lending copy	
942	RICHARDSON, John. The local historian's encyclopedia. 3rd ed. Historical Pubns., 2003, 0948667834	Hardback	Lending copy	
629.2	RUSSELL, Tony. Out in front: the Lesley Bellamy story. MRP Publishing, 2004. 1899870695	Hardback	Lending copy	
942.2SHE	SHERE, GOMSHALL & PEASLAKE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY. Shere, Gomshall and Peaslake: a short history. S., G. & P. LHS, 2005. 0955062012	Paperback	Lending copy	
942.2SHE	SHERE, GOMSHALL & PEASLAKE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY. The Tillingbourne story. S, G & PLHS, 2003	Paperback	REF copy in stacks	
910.3	SMITH, Gavin. Surrey place-names. Heart of Albion, 2005, 1872883842.	Paperback	REF copy in stacks	
629.13	SMITH, Ron. British built aircraft: Greater London. Tempus, 2002, 0752427709	Paperback	Lending copy	
929.3	SPENCER, William. Army service records of the First World War. 3rd ed. Public Record Office, 2001, 1903365236.	Paperback	Lending copy	

942.2COB	TAYLOR, David. Cobham – a history. Phillimore, 2003. 1860772471.	Hardback	REF copy in stacks Lending copy	
310	HIGGS, Edward. Making sense of the census. 2nd ed. Inst. Of Historical Research, 2005, 1905165005.	Paperback	REF copy in LHC Lending copy	
913.42	HOWELL, Isca, ed. Prehistoric landscape to Roman villa: excavations at Beddington, Surrey, 1981-7. (MoLAS Monograph 26). Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005. 190199256x.	Paperback	Lending copy	

Notes:-

Lending copies either in Local History room or in rolling stacks.

Reference copy – location noted e.g. glass = glass cupboard, stacks = rolling stacks, F/S = fireproof store, map/lib = map cabinet in local history room, map/stack = map cabinet near stacks, fiche or film = microfiche/film filing cabinet

Have You got News for Us?

We hope you've enjoyed reading this newsletter. Thanks to all those who provided information and stories. But to keep the momentum going we need more. So if you have any

- reports on visits
- intriguing Information Requests
- forthcoming projects or events
- interesting facts about local history or genealogy
- new research documents the LFHC has received
- or just strange tales to tell

please let Ian know - supporting photographs and pictures, if available, would be most welcome. It will help make the newsletter more interesting for us all. The next publication date will probably be in September 2006, so you have stacks of time to think of something.

IRP
May 2006