

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

NEWSLETTER No - 129- AUTUMN 2011

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY

Hookfield

If you leave Epsom on West Hill immediately after the railway bridge is Wheelers Lane and this road runs alongside the railway for some distance. It was formerly known as 'Summersgate'. West Hill was Clay Hill and the area bounded by these roads and Stamford Green is known locally as Hookfield. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries part of the area had been called 'Hook's two acres', 'Hook's Close' or simply 'Hookes'.

The first house at Hookfield was a 17th century mansion built for London merchants and a photograph taken in 1858 shows it just before it was demolished. On 24th May 1700 the property had been transferred to John Ward and William Bucknall, a trustee. John Ward had married Mary, Bucknall's daughter, in 1684. John Ward was knighted in 1714, was Lord Mayor of London in 1718 and he died in 1726.

During his lifetime John Ward had demolished whatever existed on the site and had 'at his like costs erect one substantial capital brick messuage tenement or mansion house and converted two closes of pasture ground into garden ground or orcharding and some part thereof into a wilderness and made several canals or fishponds on the said garden grounds'. Mary lived on for another ten years and on her death the property passed to John Ward, junior, an East India Director, who owned his own property Squerries Court, Westerham, Kent. The estate was sold to Sir Randolph Knipe in 1727 for £2500. Sir Randolph, an eminent 'Turkey Merchant', was found 'drown'd and naked in one of his own fishponds near Epsom' just one year later. It may have been an accident but there were rumours that he had come under suspicion of fraud and had taken his own life. On his death the estate passed to his relict Dame Sarah Knipe. Their only son Edward bought an estate Water Newton in Huntingdonshire and eventually the two estates passed to Edward Knipe, junior (born 1744). Edward Knipe appears to have been a Steward involved in the original article of agreement for Epsom races in 1778. He married Caroline Western at Bath in 1794. There were no children and Edward died in 1825 aged 81. He, as with many members of the family, was



The first Hookfield House

buried at St Martin's and Caroline who died in Bath in 1837 age 68 was also interred there. The Knipe tablet in St Martin's records many of their names and dates of death.

Edward had provided, in his will, life interest in the estate to his widow Caroline and the intention had been of course that the estate should pass to his son or the son of his brother Samuel but there being no male heir the entire estate passed to their cousin Rev. Randolph Richard Knipe for his life and then to his son. The tithe award for 1843 shows Rev. Knipe as owner and John Winstanley the occupier of Hookfield Grove. Rev. R.R. Knipe having become Lord of the Manor of Water Newton resigned as Rector of that Parish in favour of his son Randolph in 1846 and he sold Hookfield during 1858 before dying at Bath in 1859 age 86. The waters of Bath were good for him.

C.J.Swete wrote in his handbook of Epsom (1860):-Lastly we would mention the demesne of Hookfield Grove, the residence of James Levick, Esq on Clay Hill. The house, which is a noble building, stands in an extensive park whose beautiful home views it commands at the north west side. The ranges of glass and a beautiful conservatory render it, with its own architectural advantages a most conspicuous object. It stands on the site of the mansion which Toland speaks of, when he says 'Sir J.Wards is a noble palace on Clay Hill'. The house which Mr Levick removed to make way for the present building was inhabited by the family of Knipe, of whom many curious traditions are handed down. It is said that they were remarkable for the luxury of their living'

I am indebted to Epsom and Ewell History Explorer and Brian Bouchard for the information contained in this report which I will conclude in the next Newsletter.

In my history of Worple Road part two I referred to the author George Gissing (1857-1903) who for some time lived in Worple Road in a house now lived in by one of our members. I must admit that I had not heard of him and I was therefore surprised to read in the Observer that he was one of the favourite British authors chosen by American readers on a web-site. Strangely Austen, Dickens, Shakespeare and other well known authors did not feature in the list.

I hope you enjoy what remains of the summer and look forward to meeting many of you at our Buffet Supper.

Harry Corben, Chairman

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Drummond Gardens, Christ Church Mount: Last time I said that the latest application – for a single house on the north-east corner of the grounds – had been refused and appealed. It is now pleasing to report that the Appeal has been dismissed. The Inspector said that the proposed dwelling would certainly not enhance the natural or built environment of the Borough and would have an adverse impact upon both the character and appearance of the site itself and the wider surrounding area. He concluded that the proposals would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality and on highway safety, convenience and amenity in relating to parking provision. Just what the residents and ourselves have been saying for some time!

3-4 Pitt Road: You will remember that the Appeal against refusal of three 5 bedroom houses on the corner of Rosebery Avenue was dismissed. Inevitably a revised proposal has been made. A number of alterations have been made in response to the Inspector's criticisms. There are now three 4 bedroom houses; two large gables have been removed; as have basement rooms with light wells. The appearance is simplified, even to the extent that the flank wall to Rosebery Avenue – therefore facing towards Church Street – is boringly blank with 5 small windows. We have said the design still fails to be satisfactory for this corner site.

McCarthy and Stone, Waterloo Road: This application for 32 retirement apartments went to the June Planning Committee. There was little serious discussion about the design or

appearance of the building. According to Policies in the Core Strategy residential developments of 15 or more dwellings should include at least 40% as affordable. It was agreed this would not be appropriate here and a financial contribution was therefore called for. The report stated that the appropriate amount would be over £1.5m. The developer's viability study showed that the scheme could not afford more than £79,000 for all contributions including this one. This caused a long debate following which the application was refused for lack of provision for affordable housing. So social planning led to the decision rather than town planning. This is bound to come back after further negotiations.

Epsom Station: A number of small matters come forward as detailed design proceeds and we have recently made some comments on the signs and lighting for the Travelodge Hotel, which we thought excessive. I have seen recent comments reporting that the programme is on schedule and the main structure will be completed by next summer; fitting out will still be under way at the time of the following Derby race meeting.

Cedar Lodge Stables, Headley Road. Planning permission had been given in 1983 for a house for staff at the stables, and a condition limited the use to that purpose. The stables are now finding it difficult to pay and permission was sought to remove all use conditions. We objected to release of any conditions until a definite proposal for future use was put forward.

Ashley Road bunkers: These interesting underground structures are on the right hand side of Ashley Road going up from the Town, just past the footpath leading across to Chalk Lane. A web search (Google Ashley Road Bunkers, Epsom) tells me they were commissioned by Surrey County Council in 1937 as air raid shelters. An application has been made for storage use with construction of a reception area and car parking. We have said that any permitted development must be below ground level and the trees and woodland appearance must be unaffected. On balance, however, our view was that as this is Green Belt and all development is inappropriate by definition, we could see little justification for the proposal.

And finally...The Comrades Club, The Parade: A new application has just come in. There is a new team of architects and planners but it is still for a Travelodge budget hotel and new accommodation for the Club. Travelodge tell me they want this as well as the Station and demand is such that they would take more space if it were available. As with all revisions after dismissal of an Appeal, there are improvements, but we are still studying the details and may well conclude that the building is still too large for this site.

Alan Baker

CONSERVATION

There have not been many significant applications affecting listed buildings or conservation areas since the last newsletter, with one possible exception. This was an application for what is known as a "scoping opinion" as to whether or not an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required in relation to the application to build four houses at Lavandou Stables. The application, which includes the demolition and rebuilding of about 100 feet listed boundary wall, was turned down and is the subject of an appeal. The report accompanying the scoping opinion request concluded that an EIA is not required, giving among the reasons that '*the demolition isof a very limited and small scale character*' (100 feet of an 8 feet high wall is 'limited'?). It continued: '*the demolition works to.....dismantle the length of boundary wall will be temporary in nature and local to the immediate site*' and '*The works..... (are) in a developed area of Epsom outside any defined area of environmental sensitivity*'. Hmm – can any demolition work be temporary? And is a

listed wall in a Conservation Area not an '*area of environmental sensitivity*'? We were happy to write a fairly long and explicit letter about this one. Perhaps some of the misapprehensions may be ascribed to the fact that the report originated from an office in Manchester.

We are moving forward a little slowly with plans for an award scheme but hope to present some concrete ideas in the next Newsletter. Regrettably EEHAS has declined our invitation to join with us in this.

The grandly named 'Street Furniture for Epsom Town Centre Task Group', on which ECS is represented, continues to meet regularly and will be putting forward proposals later in the year. It is hoped as part of this to do a little 'de-cluttering' of the Town Centre, and to ensure design consistency with an emphasis on Epsom as the home of the Derby. The owners of the racecourse have indicated that they will provide sponsorship to support this.

Rob Austen.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF)

The next stage in the production of the LDF is now open for consultation and we, along with other interested parties, have been invited to participate. The document is the very important Housing Site Allocations proposals, consisting of some twenty proposed sites within the Borough with potential for housing during the next fifteen to twenty years. We have been asked to give our opinion as to the type of housing most appropriate for each site. Over the next few weeks your committee will be considering the proposals and will then make our response to the council.

Malcolm Boyd

BLUE SKY DAY

Ouch! I have just been looking on the internet to find a neat description of what this means - several people have told me that they do not understand the phrase. Unfortunately, the first thing I came across was the results of a recent survey which reported that this is the most detested phrase in management jargon! It was closely followed by 'Thinking outside the box' and 'Singing from the same hymn sheet'. However, I soldiered on and the Wiktionary defines this as 'thinking as wide and clear as the blue sky' which is not far from what we want. So, for want of a better title, we will hold the Society's first Blue Sky Day on Saturday September 17th from 2.30 to 5.00 pm in Christ Church Hall. The idea is to give our members the opportunity to guide the Society's future activities, to identify priorities, and to provide some much needed feedback to the Committee so that we can reflect more fully our memberships concerns.

This is an important time for Epsom and the Society and we need and value your input and support. Please attend if you possibly can, but the hall is limited to about 100 so let us know as soon as possible if you would like to attend. There is a form at the end of the Newsletter to complete.

Robert Austen

DOWNNS

The Conservators meeting on 27.6.11 received the final accounts for 2010/11, subject to external audit. Considerable time was taken discussing a proposal from the Racecourse to flatten the ground alongside the Tattenham straight in order to make it easier and cheaper to provide marquees during the Derby meeting. If the proposal is accepted then refurbishment of the Downskeepers hut would also be undertaken. The conservators will have made a site visit on Friday 1st August prior to deciding whether to accept the proposal. Not all Councillors felt it a good financial deal for the Borough, but Rupert Trevelyan said it was this or nothing. The Conservators will have undertaken their tour of the Downs on 25th July. Concerns were

raised on behalf of trainers about the possible effect on the Downs of non racing events which have a large attendance. Fortunately the Race for Life had good weather, but had it been a day later, the ground could have been badly churned up by vehicles. The Derby Festival meeting was very successful and the Racecourse had over 100 positive emails. Noise from generators was curbed at 10pm after complaints from local residents in Downswood.

Angela Clifford

TRAINERS' OPEN DAY Sunday 28th August 10.00am till 1.00pm.

Many trainers' yards will be open on this morning including the Durdans Stables in Chalk Lane. This is an opportunity to see the many changes in The Durdans Stables since it came under new family ownership. Parking will be available at the Grandstand with shuttle buses operating between yards. There will be no parking at The Durdans Stables and there will be a small admission charge towards housing for stable lads.

Malcolm Boyd.

CIVIC PRIDE

On 22nd October we will be holding our annual stall and display in the Ashley Centre and we invite any member to come and support us there. This is one of the important ways that we recruit new members and allows us to maintain our membership numbers. This year we will be highlighting those aspects that give us pride in our town and conversely aspects that offer less satisfaction.

Malcolm Boyd

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 10th, 11th September

A reminder that some historically important properties in Epsom & Ewell will be open for visitors on this weekend. Some properties in Church Street, Epsom will be open on Saturday afternoon with tea available at St Martin's Church. Full particulars of properties open in the Borough can be obtained from Jeremy Harte, Bourne Hall Museum; telephone 0208 394 1734.

SOCIETY WEBSITE

It may be of interest to members that our website has been fully updated as a result of our change of name. Many of our published documents can be viewed including certain key letters sent to the planning officer. We are also working on a new logo for future publications and correspondence. Please note that our website is now www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk.

Hon Secretary

EVENTS AND TALKS

Ian West's Walk About around 'The Warren' on Sunday 26th June 2011

The weather was perfect when over 40 members and friends met Ian outside 102 Beaconsfield Road, Langley Vale, sometimes called The Studio House, to start the walk. This listed property was built in the late 1890's and has features often associated with 'Colonial' Houses. We were fortunate that the son of a former owner of the property is a member of the society and provided copies of some internal photographs taken in the 1950s. While we were looking at the house the present owners brought out copies of the original plans for our viewing. More time was spent at the house than expected. We then moved on to look at one of the 'City Posts' which were erected after 1861 to identify the point on the roads to London where tax would have to be paid on coal being taken into the City of London.



The Studio House with Ian West and members

These posts were approximately 16 miles from London and several more can be seen in the Borough.

We moved further on to look at the 'Warreners Cottage' and the wall surrounding Lord Baltimore's Hare Warren which was built about 1720. The hares lived within the enclosure. When hare coursing was to take place traps in the wall were opened and a hare was driven out onto the Downs. When the hare had gone a certain distance the dogs were released and betting took place on which dog would catch the hare. Later in the 18th Century a house was built within the walls and two later gate piers which were viewed by those who walked the remains of the walls. Members were surprised at the UPVC replacement windows in the listed Warreners Cottage and the ever deteriorating condition of the walls especially the south-west one.

A big 'Thank You' to Ian for leading this walk and once again giving us such an enjoyable and interesting afternoon. Civic Voice, the National Society, declared 25th June (the day prior to Ian's Walk About) the annual Civic Day. One of the things they suggested that local societies such as ours could do to promote civic awareness was to organise conducted walks. We are well ahead in this respect, as Ian has been doing his walks regularly for over 25 years!



VISIT TO ARUNDEL CASTLE

The 45 members and friends who visited Arundel Castle on Tuesday 14th June enjoyed a splendid day.

The castle dominates the landscape standing in 40 hilly acres and is the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk, the Howard family. Priceless works of art - furniture, armour, paintings (Van Dykes, Reynolds, Gainsboroughs) glass, china, tapestries, heraldry - are housed in an amazing, ancient castle stronghold including a Keep, Inner Gatehouse, Barbican and the Fitzalan Chapel, yet it

retains a lived-in, family feeling. The long, picture gallery and the library are especially memorable.

The highlight for me was visiting the walled garden, the Collector Earl's garden, which was opened on 2007 and boasts fine, wooden architectural structures with swathes of flowers and a wild-flower meadow. The last time I visited, it was a car park.

We had coffee and biscuits in the ground-floor castle restaurant on arrival and then two guides took us on separate routes to explore the main castle before it was open to the public. Later there were guides in all the rooms to provide knowledgeable information.

The restaurant had a varied menu, but many of us took picnics and basked in the sunshine. The golf buggies were very useful for members who could not walk far, the stewards called the drivers up on their mobiles and "hey presto" they escorted people about within the grounds and back to the entrance to catch the coach.



Sheila Wadsworth

BUFFET SUPPER

We look forward to receiving your applications for the Buffet Supper on Friday 14th October at St. Joseph's Hall, St. Margaret's Drive. We welcome you and your friends for an excellent evening 7.30 to 10.15 p.m. at a cost of £18 per person with scrumptious supper from The Food Studio and musical entertainment from The Downsmen.

For application see later.

Sheila Wadsworth

TALK Thursday 3rd November 2011 at 8pm in Myers Studio, Epsom Playhouse.

Professor Paul Coyle, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Creative Arts (UCA) has agreed to give a talk entitled 'Epsom Town and the University of Creative Arts'. UCA has campuses in Epsom, Farnham, Canterbury, Maidstone and Rochester. The Epsom buildings are a very familiar sight, situated off Ashley Road, in central Epsom. It will be very interesting to hear about the work of UCA. The tickets are £4.00 each (the cost of hire of Myers Studio has gone up considerably since our talks started and so we have had to increase the ticket price to avoid a loss) Please apply on the form below.
Negotiations are in hand for more talks in the New Year. **Joy Furness**

APPLICATION FOR TALK on Thursday 3rd November 2011 at 8.00pm,
Myers Studio, Epsom Playhouse.

Name
Address
Phone Number.....
I would like..... tickets (£4 each) and enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to
Epsom Civic Society and a stamped addressed envelope. Please return to Joy Furness
37 Woodcote Hurst, Epsom KT187DS Tel 01372 722186

APPLICATION FOR BLUE SKY DAY on Saturday 17th September,
2.30 to 5pm at Christ Church Hall.

Name/s.....
Address.....
Phone Number.....
Please return to Malcolm Boyd, address below or send particulars to
info@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

APPLICATION FOR BUFFET SUPPER Friday 14th October, 7.30 to 10.15

Name.....
Address.....
Phone Number.....
I/we wish to apply for.... tickets. Members' friends are most welcome.
Tickets cost £18 each. Total cost £....
Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope and make cheques out to
Epsom Civic Society and send to Sheila Wadsworth, The Chestnuts, Farm Lane,
Ashted KT21 1LJ (01372-273517)