

# Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

NEWSLETTER No -137- AUTUMN 2013

## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY

### Epsom's Grandstands

During the television broadcast of the Derby reference was made to the Prince's Pavilion built in 1784 but altered and enlarged in 1879 and pictures were shown of what is believed to be the oldest 'grandstand' in the world still in situ. More about that later but I am starting with information gleaned from Peter Reed's article for The Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeological Society. The first 'permanent' grandstand was built in time for the 1830 Derby but grew from what was first suggested as a relatively small stand costing £5,000 to something built by the Epsom Grand Stand Association for 5000 spectators with four refreshment rooms and a 108ft long salon. One thousand £20 shares were issued to cover the cost.

This Grandstand continued in use into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and in 1914 it was decided to enlarge it by building a New Luncheon Annexe behind it and with a bridge connecting them. There were four floors in a building 180ft long and 32ft deep. The Times in April 1914 reported that it had rooms for stewards, ambulance cases and doctors. Water was obtained from a well 360 ft deep and an underground fire tank held 36,000 gallons. The new building was, of course, in time for the Great War and was taken into use as a hospital with 100 beds staffed and equipped by private subscription. Thousands of pounds were raised in Epsom and Ewell including one cheque for £1,500.

In June 1926 work began on a new stand and it was planned that it would be completed in time for the Derby in 1927. The relatively new dining room block was incorporated into what was to become the largest race stand in the world costing £150,000 and capable of holding 20,000 people. There was to be a Club Stand 150ft by 60ft high, a Grand Stand 330ft long and 70ft high and an East Stand 210ft by 40ft high consisting of the luncheon and refreshment rooms. This was how things were to remain until the Queen's Stand was opened in 1992 and then the Duchess of Cornwall Stand was opened in 2009. Some of us from the Civic Society were invited to the 'topping out' ceremony when a number of items were buried on the top floor.

Now I will return to the oldest building on the Downs. The original Regency Stand was built in 1784 and was used by the Prince of Wales - later George IV - when the Prince won the Derby with 'Sir Thomas' in 1788. The military used the building as their Officers' Mess during WWII and in 1979, as a part of the celebration for Derby 200, it was extensively refurbished so that its continued use links together more than 22 decades of history. This building can best be seen from the Downs near the Rubbing House.

Some of this information has been taken from The Michael Church Racing Books on the internet.

We hope you enjoy what is left of the summer and look forward to seeing many of you at the Buffet Supper on Friday 11th October.

Harry Corben, Chairman



## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

*Lintons Lane Centre:* In our comments on this application for a development of 85 housing units we thought housing use to be entirely appropriate but we criticised the layout which, at the officers' suggestion, follows the pattern of the adjoining Victorian terraces. We also said that a reduction in density and in the height of the 4 storey flats, the removal of front garden parking and the safeguarding of future access from the south – to avoid traffic through Lintons Lane – would be desirable. In the event the application was approved unanimously by the July Planning Committee.

*The Old Court House, Ashley Road:* We had suggested that approval to the conversion for housing use of the space reserved for a doctors' surgery should not be given unless it was certain that funding for the surgery would not be granted by the new NHS Surrey Downs Commissioning Group. We have no information about the funding, but an appeal has been made by the developer on the grounds of non decision of the planning application. Hopefully the funding background can be resolved quickly.

*Pickard House, Upper High Street:* The latest scheme for refurbishing this building as flats was considered by the July Planning Committee. We had reservations about the materials, particularly the colours, and it was clear that there was confusion between the drawings and the projections shown to the Committee. In the end the application was approved subject to a condition that external materials should be submitted for approval in order to exercise control over type and colour of materials in the interests of visual amenity and character. A formal way of saying that our point was recognised but the result remains to be seen.

*Haddad House, 91 East Street:* A full application was made for 8 new flats on the site of this small office building near Kiln Lane. A previous outline application was refused on grounds of bulk and the need to keep employment use. We still thought the second reason inappropriate on this site, but thought the design far too large and deep bearing in mind the size and shape of the site. It has been refused on these grounds, and we think something about half the size is as much as the site could stand.

*13, Ashley Road:* A particularly, to my mind, unfortunate contemporary design was suggested in an application for a new block of 3 storey flats on this site, now a traditional 2 storey house between the Methodist Church and Ashley Court. We made appropriate remarks about size, volume, height, design, parking and proximity to a major traffic island. A slightly improved design was recommended for approval by the July Planning Committee but it was refused on a vote of 10:1.

*Epsom Racecourse Saddling Boxes:* During the racing season a row of temporary saddling boxes is placed fronting the pre-parade ring and backing onto Ashley Road opposite the Derby Stables. They are not very handsome and are only partly screened by a hedge. During the high winds earlier this year they were badly damaged and have received emergency repairs. A planning application has been made to replace them with permanent saddling boxes in the same position. They are an essential element of the racecourse and this location is apparently necessary but their visual aspect was seen as an important feature of their design. They would be an improvement on the temporary boxes but we commented on their colour, the need to ensure good weathering quality and the desirability of a suitably high hedge to screen the boxes from the road.

*Cedar Lodge, Headley Road:* A long-going problem. Cedar Lodge is within the Green Belt and had permission in 1983 for racing stables with a house strictly for use in connection with the stables. The stables have become uneconomic and permission has been given for wider equestrian use but still without marketing success. Their future has been discussed between owner, agent and planners and application made for additional commercial use of existing buildings as storage and small business units. We find this totally unacceptable – a mini industrial estate within the Green Belt. The agent's idea of mothballing until the market improves cannot be opposed but the improvement may never happen and the decision is merely put off. This is a good example of strict limitation being overtaken by the lack of demand and leaving an almost impossible problem.

*Epsom Social Club, Horton Lane:* This is the unused derelict single storey NHS Social Club in a Green Belt field at the corner of Horton Lane and West Park Road. The proposal is to demolish the building and erect a new two and a half storey building on the same footprint for use as a care home. It would be designed to be similar to the adjoining nursery. It would, by definition, be an inappropriate building in the Green Belt and very special reasons must be demonstrated before

permission could be granted. The field is enclosed, poorly maintained and not open to the public and little harm would be done to the Green Belt. Objections have, however, been made in relation to the Nursery which would suffer from noise, overlooking and general disturbance.

2, *Oak Leaf Close*: Another case giving an example of a not uncommon situation. The houses in Oak Leaf Close were built, in face of some opposition, near two 125-150 year old oak trees. The house in question is believed to have been built satisfactorily on pile foundations. More recently a garage was built in front on ordinary foundations. The tree roots are claimed to have caused damage to the garage and application has been made to have the trees felled. We have strongly opposed this as the presence of the trees was quite obvious when the garage was built. These are valuable trees subject to a protection order which should be enforced

**Alan Baker.**

## **CONSERVATION**

The Society's Architecture Panel continues to be of great use and I generally refer any potentially contentious applications to it before writing on your behalf. I would still like another couple of members to join the panel - the only qualification is access to the internet so that the application can be looked at on line. Speaking as something of a technophobe I can honestly say that this is really quite easy.

The Panel is important in strengthening and underlining the Society's impartiality, although membership of the Society probably implies some sort of bias – I expect we are generally rather conservative in our taste in architecture. However, having half a dozen people looking at an application will help to ensure that, if there is any bias, it is kept within reasonable bounds. In addition, we have had one or two members resign in the past because the Society did, or did not, object to a particular application. This is very regrettable, but we have always made the point that we are an independent organisation and do not act as an advocate for individual members. The Panel helps to maintain this impartiality and gives the Society's voice a degree of authority.

We are seeing more and more applications for residential developments or conversions of existing commercial premises to residential use. The Government is doing a lot to push this forward, by making the process simpler, in the face of a perceived housing shortage, and in many cases these changes make a lot of sense. There is little merit in office blocks remaining empty for years. However, this can cause concern because in certain circumstances, where Permitted Development Rights apply, only neighbours have a right of objection, and only if they do so can the Council become involved, and the Society has no voice in such cases.

There is also a worrying trend towards greater and greater housing density. One recent proposal is a particularly egregious example and will, I fear, result in tightly packed, tiny houses with minute gardens in a sea of parked cars – with, as far as I could see, absolutely no space for those wretched wheelie bins.

On a more cheerful note, the Council's excellent design note on Shop Front Design was instrumental in a poor design (to which we had objected - twice) being rejected following a planning appeal. Subsequently, a revised design was agreed and the business concerned will be coming to Epsom. Yes, I am referring to Metro Bank – but would I be wrong to ask if we need another bank and will it really have any impact in making the town more attractive to retailers?

Another fortunate outcome was an appeal decision to dismiss an application for a new house in a garden in a conservation area. Access arrangements had been cleared with the Highway Authority and the Fire Service, and the garden in question was very large and well able to accommodate the proposed building. However, the appeal was dismissed not only on the grounds of the design of the house (on which we had based the Society's objection) but also, and more importantly, because the proposal was contrary to the Council's policies in connection with conservation areas. These cases are fundamental in underlining the strength and value of the Council's policies and providing precedents in similar cases in future.

**Robert Austen**

## **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

The Borough Council has published a consultation draft paper explaining the purpose of a CIL and how it would operate. A CIL allows local authorities to raise funds from new local developments to pay for local infrastructure projects that are not site specific. The compulsory charge is non-negotiable, is paid by the developer and is based on the floor area of the proposed development. Residential developments and convenience retail will provide the major part of the revenue obtained, but the level of the charge will be set so that it is not detrimental to development.

The Society's planning sub committee held a long discussion about the proposals and a list of our comments were returned to the council. Most of the comments relate either to the relationship between EEBC, the collecting authority, and Surrey County Council which allocates money for infrastructure projects or to how the CIL will be apportioned and spent. **Malcolm Boyd**

## **POSSIBLE CIVIC AWARENESS PROJECTS for PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

There were several blue sky working groups who looked at possible ways the Civic Society could widen its activities. One of these considered developing a scheme to reward local primary schools undertaking a civic awareness project as part of the national curriculum. It was recognised that schools have many demands on them and it would not be right to suggest additional activities but to provide a reward for work with civic relevance.

As we wanted all pupils to be good citizens this would not be competitive between pupils or schools. Schools could put forward their own ideas for relevant work.

The next issues were what form the reward would take, which could be

1. Certificates or badges for the pupils
2. A cash award for the school to be used for equipment etc.

If there are teachers in the local primary schools who have views on how a scheme like this could work we would like to hear from them. Primary Schools were suggested on the principle of "get them young" but we would be interested in any thoughts or suggestions on the ideas above and whether or not secondary schools should be included.

For feed back please email AnnAli [aemhali@outlook.com](mailto:aemhali@outlook.com) or phone 01372 721611

## **THE DOWNS.**

The Derby meeting was extremely successful thanks in part to the good weather. I feel the levelling of the ground east of the Grandstand meant that the temporary marquees were far less intrusive than when scaffolding had to be erected first. Negative comments from several people about the amount of advertising during the Derby meeting have been passed to the Conservators. Temporary advertising is permitted and much of it was on temporary structures, so was considered acceptable.

The Racecourse has applied for planning permission for 21 permanent saddling boxes to replace the temporary ones at present erected for the duration of the racing season. The trainers say the new ones would meet expectations at a course of this importance. We have not objected but have asked the Planning Committee to require the Racecourse to screen them from the road with a hedge. A planning application has also been submitted for replacement of the Downskeepers Hut (13/00196/FUL) which was slightly damaged during the Derby meeting.

I attended the Consultative Committee Downs Tour on Tuesday August 6th and pointed out our concern which was shared by College Ward Residents Association. We observed that in several places the shrubs and trees have been cut down along the edge of the Downs backing Rosebery Road. This not only spoils the view from the Downs, but plants on the Downs are protected under the 1984 Act.

Representatives from the horse riders raised their concerns about conditions of several areas of their tracks and some confusing signage. Notes were made and a report will go to the Conservators. Marketing of Downs House is ongoing. **Angela Clifford**

## **DEATH OF FOUNDER MEMBER**

We report (belatedly and with sincere apologies) the death last year of Brian Fender, one of our founder members and Honorary Secretary. Brian was an architect with a passion for the protection and conservation of buildings of heritage value. He was a Guest of Honour at our 50th Anniversary dinner in 2009 and gave an amusing address. **Malcolm Boyd**

## OCCASIONAL ROAD REPS AND DISTRIBUTERS

I am pleased to say that 6 people responded to my request for occasional Road Reps and Distributers. This is much appreciated; it makes the Distribution that much easier having extra people to call on.

**Ishbel Kenward – Membership Sec.**

## IMPORTANT DIARY DATES

*Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November.* An open committee meeting of the Society at 7.30p.m. in the lower lounge of Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road. This is an opportunity for members to meet the committee, to bring ideas and to tell us what we are doing right (and wrong!).

Please confirm attendance with Malcolm Boyd 01372 723325

*Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November:* our annual display stand in the Ashley Centre

Do come along to see what we are trying to achieve for Epsom. Committee members will be manning the Exhibition and will be happy to see members as well as hopefully gain new recruits.

*Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September:* the Epsom & Ewell Fun Day where we will be represented and where last year we recruited eleven new members. <http://www.epsomfunday.net/>

*Saturday and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September* Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to places that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. This is an event available to everyone, free of charge and on your doorstep.

### SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

#### **Ebbisham House**

30 Church Street Epsom Surrey KT17 4NL

10 – 12.30 a.m. Saturday 14th September

- 2nd building up from Ye Olde King's Head which is directly opposite St. Martin's Church.
- Ground floor accessible, stairs to 2nd & 3rd floors.

*18<sup>th</sup> century property in what was Epsom's most fashionable district, dating from the glamorous days of Epsom Spa.*

#### **United Reformed Church**

Church Street, Epsom KT17 4PW

10 – 12.30 a.m. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September

- Next door to Epsom Club, opposite Ambulance station.
- Disabled access at back.
- Limited parking.
- Refreshments
- Toilet available

*Learn the history of the Churches on this site. 50th Anniv. of this Church Building*

#### **Durdans Riding School**

Chalk Lane, Epsom. KT18 7AX

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday 14th September

Off Chalk Lane, access from Woodcote Road

*Lord Rosebery, the racing Prime Minister, came to the Durdans in 1874 and began breeding horses for the Derby. In 1881 he had this indoor riding school designed for them by George Devey, pioneer of the English vernacular style. Grade 2 listed. Unfortunately, no public parking available.*

#### **Fitznells House**

Chessington Road, Ewell KT17 1TF

9 a.m. – 1p.m. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September

Turn off Chessington Road (B2200) opp Bourne Hall Health Centre

*In a quiet setting by the village millstream, this was built by Sir John Iwardeby in 1540 with solar (now attractively restored); afterwards given a three-gabled front, and later made into a farmhouse.*



**Old Church Tower**

Church Street, Ewell KT17 2AY

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September

Corner of Church St, opp Ewell Castle

*Lovingly restored, this 15th century tower of flint and Reigate stone survives from the medieval parish church. It is set in a peaceful ancient graveyard, with many curious monuments.***Watch House**

Church Street, Ewell KT17 1SB

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September

Just off High Street corner

*Find out exactly what village justice meant in the 18th century. This primitive lock-up has one section for the local ne'er-do-wells and another for the village fire engine.***Nonsuch Mansion House**

Cheam Road SM3 8AP

Service wing 2 – 5 p.m. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> SeptemberService wing and house 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>

Off Cheam Rd/Ewell Rd A232 at Cheam Gate on corner, park and walk 200 yds

*See what life was like below stairs in this mansion designed by Jeffrey Wyatt in 1802. Rooms open include the kitchen, sculleries, pastry and game larders, and the wet and dry laundries. Exhibition of rare stained glass from over 400 years.***SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER****St Martin's Church, Church Street, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 4PX**2 – 5 p.m. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September

- Bell Tower will be open – possibility of 'have-a-go-sessions' and hand bells to ring
- Some parking
- Disabled access at side of Church from 2 Disabled parking spaces in Grove Road
- Restricted access to Tower
- Serving tea/coffee/cold drinks and biscuits
- Toilet available

*Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn worshipped here; the 15<sup>th</sup> century tower survives while the nave dates from 1824. The chancel was rebuilt 1902 in hopes (foiled!) that it would become Surrey's cathedral.*

Church Street opposite Old Kings Head pub

**Epsom Fire Station**

Church Street, opposite Worple Road Junction

2 – 3 p.m. Sun 15<sup>th</sup> September*£21,000 to build in 1937. People will be able to see original features including tiled flooring, sliding poles, some appliance bay doors. What is really interesting is old writing on the walls in the "outside store" from many years ago, please ask a staff member on the day. (Subject to emergency call out)***Nonsuch Mansion House (See above)****Rectory Barn**

Church Street Ewell KT17 2AQ

1 – 5 pm. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September

Opp churchyard

*Holman Hunt and the other pre-Raphaelite artists were frequent guests at Rectory Farm; this weather-boarded 18th century barn survives from the buildings they knew.***St. Mary's Church**

Ewell, London Road. KT17 2AY

12 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September

London Road (A24) on Church Street corner

*Built by Henry Clutton in 1848 and retaining the mediaeval screen and brasses from its predecessor, with many wall monuments. An elaborate pulpit and reredos witness the generosity of Victorian parishioners.*

Organised by Epsom Civic Society and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. Our thanks to Jeremy Harte, Ishbel Kenward and Philip Buckman for their photographs.

Check [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) for up-to-date information before the 14<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> September weekend

### **IAN WEST WALK**

Local Historian and good friend of the Epsom Civic Society Ian West conducted a party of some 40 members round West Hill on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June. His detailed knowledge of the West Hill area, its history and its buildings including Hookfield and The Meadway made for a most interesting afternoon. Thank you Ian.

**Harry Corben**

### **THE BUFFET SUPPER AND THE WALLACE COLLECTION**

Do come to the Annual Buffet Supper on Friday 11th October, cost £19. It is a great way to meet other Civic Society members and their friends. There is a varied buffet menu served at your table by Studio Food, a drink as you arrive, and a musical entertainment. Arrive about 7.30 p.m. and depart 10.30 p.m. Any problems with transport please raise with Sheila Wadsworth - 01372-273517.

We still have some seats for the Christmas trip to The Wallace Collection. Booking will be open to non members in October. The cost will be £47 per person to cover Hardings coach and tip, restaurant and tip, and guide. Departure times are (A) 9.00 a.m. The Street, Ashted; (B) 9.15 a.m. Epsom Downs, Tattenham Corner behind the tea hut; or (C) 9.25 a.m. Methodist Church, Epsom.

**Sheila Wadsworth**

Application forms for both these events are on Page 8.

**BUFFET SUPPER - FRIDAY 11th October 2013**

MEMBER/S NAME/S .....

and FRIENDS .....

ADDRESS .....

TEL. NO .....

No.of TICKETS @£19 .....

TOTAL COST £ .....

Kindly indicate if you have any particular dietary requirements or need/have a wheelchair

YES/NO .....

Please return this application slip with your cheque made out to "Epsom Civic Society" and an s.a.e. to Sheila Wadsworth, The Chestnuts, Farm Lane, Ashted, KT21 1LJ (01372-273517)

**THE WALLACE COLLECTION - THURSDAY 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 - 50 SEATS**

MEMBER/S NAME/S.....

We can only take friends if seats are available after the end of OCTOBER

ADDRESS .....

TEL. NO .....

NO.of TICKETS @£47.....

TOTAL COST £ .....

Please circle where you wish to be collected: A            B            C

Kindly indicate if you have any particular dietary requirements or need/have a wheelchair

YES/NO .....

Please return this application slip with your cheque made out to "Epsom Civic Society" and an s.a.e. to Sheila Wadsworth, The Chestnuts, Farm Lane, Ashted, KT21 1LJ (01372-273517)

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