



## Queer Types at the Derby

By Jeremy Harte

Frank Buckland (1826–80) was a scientist in the Victorian mould. Ichthyology was his real specialism, and nowadays he would be at a desk job in some sub-ministry for fisheries, but the Victorians liked their scientists larger than life and so he felt at liberty to haul a nine-foot sturgeon up to his lodgings or dine on porpoise head and sea-slug, writing it all up for an amused readership in his *Curiosities of Natural History*. His interests extended beyond the animal kingdom, and the third volume of *Curiosities* has a lively account of meeting some Maori who were touring London followed (pp71–80) by a chapter on ‘Wandering Mountebanks’. And this is where we come in, for the mountebanks were on Epsom Downs.



Buckland is at the Derby one day, standing on a drag coach with some companions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards. (This would probably fix the date at 1863, the last year of his appointment as surgeon to the Guards). Suddenly they jump at the sound of a braying donkey, only louder and more discordant than any real donkey. It comes from a man with a peculiar knack of imitation and an ambition of getting pennies, either to repeat the noise or to go away and stop making it.

‘Then a pale-looking man, with his hair cut quite short, and clad in a tight-fitting jersey, which seemed quite wet through, deposited by the door of the drag a washing-tub nearly half full of water. I could not imagine what he was going to do, till he threw into the tub a small coin, meant as a decoy for other contributions, and, pulling his short hair, said, “American diver, if you please, sir”. By dint of practice, he had acquired skill in fishing up coins with his lips; a performance not interesting to see, and anything but conducive to the longevity of the diver, whose head was sometimes submerged a painfully long time’.

There follow:

- 1) A coal-miner crippled in a pit explosion, or at any rate a man who claims to have been disabled that way, and exhibits a scale model of the mine by way of proof.
- 2) A man with an electric shock machine, penny a shock.
- 3) A monkey who fires a pistol, and then draws his sword for a fencing match with his master. The monkey is getting old, and does not wave his sword as freely as he used to.
- 4) The fire-eater, or Celebrated Living Salamander, who mixes tow and resin on a plate, puts a match to them, and then cuts up and eats the mixture, puffing out flames as he does so.
- 5) The card-engraver’s man, who wanders silently through the crowd wearing a long smock festooned with examples of the printer’s art by way of advertising his master.
- 6) A performer on a strange instrument made by stretching piano wires on a triangular board and striking them with two sticks. From the description, this would be a home-made cimbalom, but Buckland does not seem to have recognised it as such.

Then comes the stone-cracker. This is a very simple act: a man stops by the coach (perhaps word has got around the course that there is a curious gent there, who pays to see anything new) and fixes his board on the ground. He pulls a stone out the bag, puts it on the board, and cracks it with one sharp blow of his fist. Buckland is fascinated. He checks the stones, which are real enough – pulls out a bit of granite, which the man obligingly splits – then watches again as the act goes on; he can’t see exactly how it is done but realises it is skill, not force. Karate was barely known in Japan in the 1860s, let alone rural Surrey, so the stone-cracker seems to have invented his own tradition.



Now a space is cleared in the crowd, by the simple method of swinging round a ball on a rope, and into this improvised arena steps the Infant Hercules. His wife brings him a flattened cup and a heavy metal ball; he ties the cup onto his forehead, lobs up the ball, and then crack! catches it in the cup. Hercules staggers a bit under the impact, but is ready for his next trick. Two cannonballs (they are real cast iron ones, he hands them round) are balanced on his arms; he rolls them like a juggler and they run up to his ear, round his neck and down again, jump off his elbows, and are danced on his feet. The cap is passed around and after a few contortionists' tricks to keep the crowd going, he announces that he will do the needle stunt.

'He placed a bare needle, point uppermost, in the turf of the race-course, and then drew it out again by causing the point of the needle just to enter the skin of his eyelid, his body all the time being in the abnormal posture of the Zawnee for which Z stands in the child's pictorial alphabet. Being invited to see that there was no deception, I satisfied myself on that point, and afterwards asked the man how he could possibly practise

so dangerous an experiment. He told me that he had performed this needle-trick nearly twelve years, and that he learned it from a Dutchman. I warned him of the danger should he slip. "He knew that", he said; but "he had a wife and a family to support".

And that was Frank Buckland's Derby. It is recognisably the same festival as chronicled by Dickens and Thackeray, the one drawn by Doré and Frith; the central scene in Frith's *Derby Day*, where the acrobat's hungry child is distracted from his stunts by a nearby picnic, is not far removed from Buckland's observation of the Infant Hercules risking his sight a dozen times a day to feed 'his pale, half-starved-looking wife'. But whereas Frith is merely sentimental, Buckland's account has a genuine touch of outrage. He doesn't forget that he is a medical man, as well as a punter; he can see what these people are doing to themselves to make a few coppers, even though, Victorian society being what it is, there isn't much he can do about it.

The Victorians were great collectors. They collected fossils and exotics, ferns and butterflies, and sometimes they collected people, too – the more eccentric the individual, the better. But precisely because these people *were* individuals, a source like Buckland's 'Wandering Mountebanks' can tell more about what it was like to provide the human services behind the great panorama of Derby Day than any amount of statistics. And besides, some of those people may have been our ancestors.

#### Source

Buckland, Francis, *Curiosities of Natural History* (Richard Bentley, London, 1891 ed).

Painting: *Derby Day*, 1863 by Alfred Hunt

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## "I'm pleased to advise you that the plaque has been reinstated ..."

By Clive Gilbert and Hazel Ballan



The brass Great War memorial plaque naming three members of the Epsom Methodist congregation, which had been on the wall of the Methodist Church for some 85 years, was removed around 2005 at the time the church underwent renovation. For several years the plaque was not available to be viewed at the church as it had been given to Bourne Hall museum for 'safe-keeping'.

Recently however, many were outraged that a unique piece of our National Heritage should be treated in such an offhand way, and as a result of appeals from the public and local newspaper coverage, the plaque was reinstated in February 2012 and can now be viewed again at the church. The plaque has not just been screwed back on the wall but has been mounted on a substantial wooden backing.

The picture (previous page) shows Hazel Ballan standing at the rear of the church next to the reinstated plaque. She is holding copies of the web page entries for each of the soldiers. As the information desk at the church was closed when we visited, the write-ups were offered to the lady working in the attached Christian bookshop. We were however surprised to learn that the leased bookshop is not actually part of the Methodist Church and is run independently of the church.

*Ed. Clive has referred us to the comment alongside a picture of a headstone on the excellent 'Long Long Trail' website [www.1914-1918.net/london](http://www.1914-1918.net/london). The headstone is for Private Selling Daniel Smith who is one of the three people listed on the Methodist church plaque that Clive has campaigned to have reinstated. The caption underneath this picture reads:*

*"Each battalion of the Londons had its own badge. This is the badge of the 23rd Battalion as depicted on a CWGC grave headstone. Image courtesy of the excellent Epsom and Ewell history website, with my thanks,"*



*Private Smith joined up on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1914, age 23, and was killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1915. For more details please see [www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WarMemorialsSurnamesS.html#SmithSD](http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WarMemorialsSurnamesS.html#SmithSD).*

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## Epsom and Ewell in The Great War

By Clive Gilbert

August 4<sup>th</sup> 2014 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the 'War to end all Wars'. The people of Epsom and Ewell rallied to the cause and helped their country in its hour of need. They not only sent men to fight and die, and women to nurse but contributed in other ways, providing billeting for many soldiers and Belgian refugees, hospital beds for thousands of wounded and a convalescent camp at Woodcote Park run by the Canadians.

What would life have been like during that era, with many of the local men away and thousands of strangers roaming the town? Were there munitions factories in the Borough? Did the Women's Land Army work in the town? How did the fear of Zeppelin raids affect the people? And then, of course, came the shrines and memorials to those who perished.

It has been proposed that the LHC undertake a project to produce a series of display panels on the theme of 'Epsom and Ewell in The Great War'. This will require equipment and materials to produce and print the displays and there is also the possibility of a book on what we discover. This will require funds and it has been proposed that lottery funding be applied.



If anyone feels they would like to be involved, and research a particulate aspect in order to produce a panel, please let Clive Gilbert know.

*Ed.- Your History Centre Needs You.*

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## "Tell me, is it possible we've met before?"

By Hazel Ballan

Several years ago I added a postscript to an article I had written on the Reverend Edward John Hockley [www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/RevEJHockly.html](http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/RevEJHockly.html). At the time I remarked on the amazing connections and coincidences that I had encountered during my family genealogy and web site researches over the last eight years. I now have another tale to add to them.

Back in 1979, in a new home, I was eight months pregnant with our first child and knew no one in the area. Six weeks after our son's birth, feeling very lonely, I was surprised to hear the doorbell ring and to find a young Welsh mum and baby on the doorstep. Our health visitor had asked E if she would mind contacting me when she was next visiting the baby clinic, as I didn't know where it was or how to get there. Our friendship grew and, as we added other new mums to our circle, we ended up with regular Friday coffee mornings.

As I have said, my own family genealogy research started back in 2004, several years after meeting E and her husband A. I knew from my paternal aunt's sketchy research back in the early 80's that my family had worked as blacksmiths in Addington Surrey since 1766. The graveyard of St Mary the Blessed Virgin contains the remains of most of my ancestors and our Coppin surname is littered throughout the parish records.

On a subsequent visit in 2006, I happened to see the name 'Cullingham' on another headstone just inside the gate. I mentioned this to E at our next coffee morning, as it is her married surname. E told me that she and A had met in Wales when he was visiting his maternal grandmother who lived in the same village as her, and that his paternal grandparents, mother, his four sisters and he use to live in the house next door to where she and A had been living when we first met. She also knew that his grandfather use to be a jockey and had won races up at Epsom Downs. Beyond that she couldn't tell me anymore and, at the time, I didn't pursue it.

As A has a 'Big Birthday' this year, I decided originally, as a special birthday present, to find out more about his racing granddad. Well, as you might have

Name	Date	Other Details
Elizabeth Coppin	Nov 5 1844	13 days after 12 month old Elizabeth Coppin
George Cullingham	Nov 12 1844	
James Cullingham	Nov 13 1844	

guessed, my research just kept going, taking me back through the years via Epsom, Wales, Wiltshire, London, Kent and, after a lot of twists and turns involving false names and first cousins marrying, arrived back to Addington in Surrey. It was here in 1833 that A's 3x great grandparents James and Mary Cullingham's youngest daughter (A's 2nd great grand aunt) was baptised.

Addington's population in 1841 was 304 (22 Coppin, 4 Cullingham) and the census shows that the Coppin and Cullingham families lived within 5 houses of each other. The parish records have shown that not only did the Coppin and Cullingham families live

together in the same village, they died and were buried around the same time too, with their surnames often being on the same pages, as shown above, when James Cullingham was buried on 5 November 1844, 13 days after 12 month old Elizabeth Coppin.

So, I ask the question again "Tell me, is it possible we've met before?"

## How dependent we've become.

By Hazel Ballan

Recently, having decided to change my Internet provider, I found myself facing a self-inflicted 7-10 days of being in an Internet free zone. Until then I had not realised how reliant (and possibly addicted) to the computer world I had become. Not only was I unable to do any genealogy research from the comfort of my home but also even the smallest of tasks became pragmatic.

For example, to contact the Ed. of this newsletter, it would normally just be a quick email. As I did not have his phone number, or his address in order to phone BT Enquiries (does that service even still exist??), a phone call to another friend to get Ed.'s number was needed. After a ten-minute chat with said friend, which was very pleasant, I managed to contact the Ed.'s wife who told me Ed. was out walking the dog but was due back within minutes. Another very pleasant ten minutes passed while Ed's wife and I chatted about this and that before he arrived home. In all, 42 pleasant minutes had gone by before I knew it. With hindsight, I wish now that the last phone directory had not been recycled as soon as it had arrived.

Further into that week, instead of tapping into Google Earth, I found myself dusting off the A-Z book in order to confirm my way to a new housing estate as Shirley, aka 'Tom-Tom', was with Hubby.



My instant email and Facebook contact with family and friends suddenly became non-existent, and not being able to see in the corner of my pc screen that they were alive and well, and had all arrived safely to work each morning as they logged in, was also disconcerting.

Most of all I missed the wonderful hours I normally spend “playing” with my granddaughter in Australia courtesy of the web cam.

On the plus side I enjoyed my almost daily visits to the library (when it was open), texting (possible repetitive strain in my finger now) and rediscovered the joy of writing letters with my trusty fountain pen (biros are just not the same) while watching daytime telly !

Strangely, I also found myself reaching for my newly dusted reference books and 34-year-old dictionary that had been lurking next to the A-Z.....Ahh, Spell Checker, how I missed you!

*P.S. A few days into this inflicted week, a friend came to my rescue and lent me his Dongle which gave me Internet access – not sure if he took pity on me, needed research/proofreading or whether he was just fed up hearing my laments – but many thanks again Peter!*



*P.P.S. I started this piece in pen and ink mode but didn't get round to finishing and posting it. Instead, I emailed it to the Ed.*

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## Miscellanea from Volunteers

### Career Change, Anyone? – by Gillian Alford

Would you like to be a **pictaciarus**? If you said, "That's cobblers", you'd be correct! However, if you're skilled with your hands it might be the thing for you, unless you'd prefer to be a **tranqueter**. That's a hoop-maker. Or if you're more of a craftsman, you could be a **philosophical instrument maker**. No that doesn't mean that if you get it wrong, you just shrug your shoulders and say, "Ah, that's life". It means you are skilled enough to make scientific instruments.

You might like to be a **vidulator** - sounds a bit more professional than a fiddler, doesn't it? That might be indoors or outdoors, but if you feel you're an outdoor type, you could become a **Peterman** (yes, you've guessed it, a fisherman on a boat), or a **mansionarius** if you have a strong back for the lugubrious job of grave-digging. You could be a **malender**, which, although it suggests something bad, like a malefactor, is in fact just a farmer.

But I've saved the best till last. How about being a **kolinsky furrier**? Sorry, if that sounds as if you deal with posh people, I must disabuse you - it's a dealer in rat skin! And finally.... there may be those who get entirely the wrong impression of this job because of more modern connotations: however, a **knocker-up** is just the chap who goes round calling the factory workers in time for their shift.



We might think the problems of modern society are peculiar to the times we live in, but clearly, luring gullible people to pay for passage to England on false promises, is not quite so modern as we think.

### A Sad, but Fully Detailed, Ending - by Gillian Alford

Despite this poor man's sad end, his is the kind of record we would like for our ancestors, in the sense that instead of pondering where he disappeared to, the entire circumstances are reported for us:

4 October 1833  
Combe Florey, Somerset  
Entry in the Parish Register.

No. 104 A man unknown, Suicide, afterward found out to be J. Jeans, Curry Rival, by Thos. Lethbridge, Minister of Ash Priors.

(at the bottom of the page)

NB. No.104 was found dead in a field near the Poor House, his throat cut and the knife firmly grasped in his hand, there was in his pocket 6/6 and a piece of chalk. He wore a truss, appeared to be between 30 and 40 and

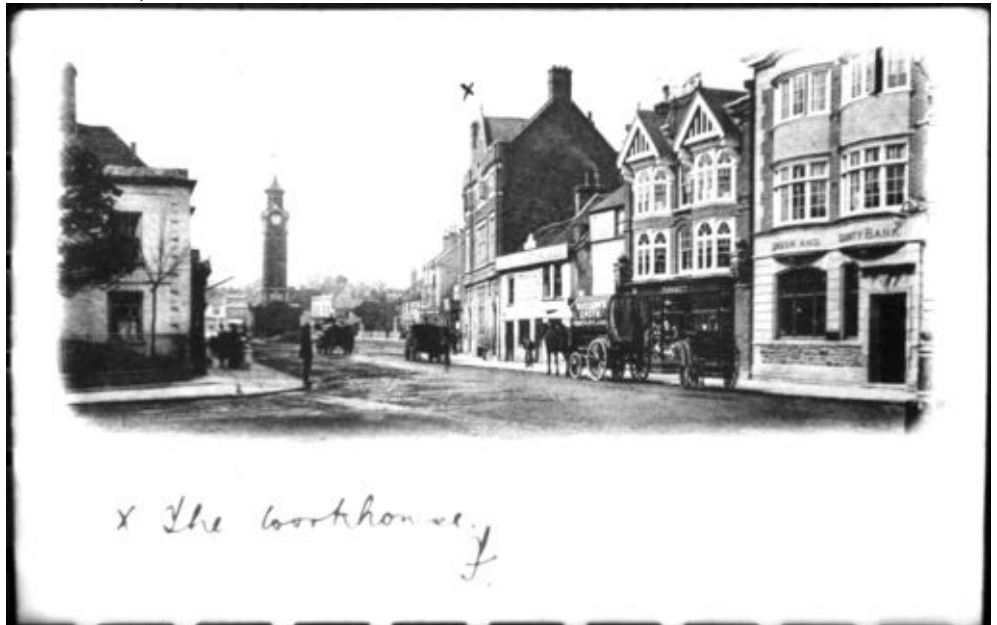
was seemingly an artisan: his linen was clean but not marked. He was wholly unknown and was buried near the belfry door. There seems to be no doubt but that he had destroyed himself. S. Smith, Rector.

NB. This man was afterwards claimed and turned out to be J. Jeans of the parish of Curry Rival, a carpenter; he had been deranged by a fever. S.S.

### A Cautionary Tale - by Angela Clifford

Having little to do one Saturday, we went off to an Antiques and Collectables fair and I was browsing through old photographs when I saw one of 1902, titled EPSOM.

I was amazed and intrigued to see an X over what I thought was the Post Office and a handwritten note - **The Workhouse**. Even more intriguing as I was pretty sure the Workhouse was in Dorking Road. Without more ado, I shelled out my cash thinking I had discovered some annexe of which no records existed!



Fool. At home and examining the card more closely, I realised the addressee worked at

Tunbridge Wells Post Office - the word Staff was written on the front - so the sender was obviously writing tongue very much in cheek. Next time I must remember not to get so carried away.

### Twenty Guineas Reward - by Angela Clifford

Whereas the Parish Church of Epsom was on the Night of 31st of last Month broken into and robbed, the Minister and Churchwardens hereby offer a reward of TWENTY GUINEAS to any Person or Persons who can and will make any Discoveries that may lead on(sic) the Detection and Conviction of such atrocious Offender or Offenders.



NB. The Articles taken are (? a or 6) Surplices, a square Looking Glass with a narrow mahogany Frame about a foot(?) in height; two Cushion Covers of spotted Linen; four Brass Sockets of a Chandelier with eight Pegs(?) belonging to the same  
Jonathan Boucher, Minister; John Thomas, Churchwarden; John Marter, Churchwarden.

From The Times Digital Archive. 1792. Article CS16912167.



### Recognition by The Jed Eye - from Clive Gilbert

The Jed Eye is a newsletter produced by Jedburgh & District in the Scottish Borders. In January 2012, their newsletter featured an article about an unsung hero of The Great War, Lance Corporal Adam Hogg, who was killed at Valenciennes in November 1918, only 23 years old.

The Jed Eye gave a page and a half of their newsletter to their local hero because the story had been "*pieced together and published more than 90 years after his death in a French military hospital*". It's a complicated story involving emigration to Canada, returning to fight in the 1914-18 war, being wounded and recovering at the Woodcote Canadian Hospital, returning to the front and finally dying in the last month of the war.

The Jed Eye acknowledge that the full story was researched and written by Clive Gilbert form the Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre and that the full story can be "found on the Centre's impressive website" in five parts at [www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/HoggAdam1.html](http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/HoggAdam1.html).

## Delusions of Grandeur or a Royal Secret - *from Glenda Charman*

We are always interested in interesting finds in BMDs and census returns. Glenda came across the following marriage certificate during her research.

A grand name for our Hawker. Did his wife-to-be address him as King or Bill or even King Billy?

9 1/2 - Marriage solemnized at J. Simons' Church  
of Bethel Green.

1	2	3	4	5
When Married	Name and Residence	Age	Condition	Rank or Post
May 1st 1821	King William Storer	26	Single	Hawker
	Some Name Bill	26	Single	Hawker

## Where else in the World is there an Epsom?

If you remember, in the January newsletter we listed seven other towns called Epsom and two named Ewell from around the world. We decided to do some digging on one of these towns – Epsom, New Hampshire, USA.

### Brief Early Historical Look at Epsom, NH

Epsom was granted to the taxpayers of Rye, New Castle and Greenland in 1727 by the Governor of Massachusetts, before New Hampshire became an independent province. Epsom was named for Epsom, England, home of the Earl of Derby, whose horse racing 'derby' at Epsom Downs was famous. Epsom, England was also known for its mineral springs, the source of Epsom salts.

It wasn't until the land was surveyed that the first 20 men drew the first 20 fifty acre lots - Seavey, Goss, Berry, Locke, Dowst, Berry, Wallace, Chapman, Foss, Weeks and Marden, to name a few. These were referred to as the "home-lots." On the 9th of November, the town which had been divided into 4 equal ranges of a mile each in length, and after making a list of the proprietors of the 3 towns (totaling 143) met to draw their several lots. More names: Haines, Tarleton, Rand, Philbrook, Perkins, Dowst, Parker, Cate, Sherburne, Hill, Brackett, Morrill Amazeen, Clark...etc.

Money for hiring a minister began in 1742, but the first minister, Rev. John Tuck, did not arrive until August 1761. In April 1764, a vote was taken to build a meetinghouse. By 1766 it was in use, but Rev. Tuck's stay was to be rather short-lived. A dispute developed between he and some of the town's folk and he was dismissed and the meetinghouse shut up in 1774. Rev. Benjamin Thurston was in Epsom, 1779, but it was not until 1784 when a full time clergyman returned - Rev. Ebenezer Hazeltine. As much as he was beloved during his tenure, which ended 1813 with his death, his congregation never exceeded the number that Rev. Tuck had. Also of note is the fact that much of the church records of Rev. Tuck have made their way to the NH Archives. None of Rev. Hazeltine's records have survived or been found to this day. This leaves a very large amount of vital statistics for the town of Epsom missing.



Rev. Jonathan Curtis succeeded the Congregational cause in 1814. By this time the town began to faction into other religious societies, fighting over the use of the meetinghouse, and this of course did nothing to help the record keeping of the times. Rev. Curtis remained until 1825, but by then there were the Free-Will Baptists, and not long after the Christian Society. In 1845 the Congregationalists had a new building, and in 1861, the Baptists had their second church. The keeping of records, here, as in other towns, were kept rather haphazardly by the town, no longer being a church function. The town no longer supported any particular church.

There undoubtedly were settlers here before the drawing of the lots, Charles McCoy being the most well known, and he and his family are a story all to themselves. The town did not get off to a fast start due to the Indian Wars, in fact, by the French War of 1745-49, there may have been as few as five families still remaining. In 1761, there were still less than 50 families, but they went about and constructed their meetinghouse, hired a minister. In

1783, permission was given to the town to sell at auction "common land" in the southwestern part of the town; these lots were still 100 acres but were half as long. More familiar names arrive - McClary, Sanborn, Bickford, McGaffey, to name a few.

By 1800 the town became one of the most important in the Suncook Valley, being in a significant location between the coast and the capital in Concord. The first toll road was established in the State toll road appeared in Epsom, and there were several well known taverns to accommodate the many people traveling through town, including one run by one of the earliest families, the McClary's. Lumber and grist mills could be found on the Suncook and Little Suncook Rivers, and small factories and general stores appeared, several lasting into the middle of this century.

A difficulty in tracing information, besides the lack of church and town records, is that from its beginnings until 1824, Epsom was part of Rockingham County, then switching to the new Merrimack County. Town records were not very well kept until mandated by the State around 1887, when vital statistics began to appear in annual town reports. Just before 1800, several families removed to start new homes in Stanstead, Canada, and a small exodus to the larger mill towns of Lowell and Lynn, Massachusetts occurred around 1820.

Epsom's population peaked after the Civil War, and was not to have a significant growth in population again until the 1950's.

Epsom is located in Merrimack County, in the Concord metro area and includes the village of Gossville. The population, at the time of the 2000 census, was 4,021.

Source: [www.geocities.com/Vienna/Opera/7158/history.html](http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Opera/7158/history.html)

*Photo - Silver and Hall General Store circa 1890. The G.A.R. Hall (second story) was originally the Epsom Baptist Church.*

*Ed. It would be interesting to find out from where these early settlers originated. Did they come from Epsom?*

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## New Additions to the Website

[www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/](http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/)

Since the last newsletter in January 2012, webmaster Peter Reed, has added a wealth of new information and pages to the website covering some 30 different subjects including:

- The West Street School log book 1862-1898
- Chairpersons of the Epsom Bench of Magistrates 1870-1984
- Local newspapers in Epsom and Ewell since 1856
- The Grandstand War Hospital
- The Telephone Service in Epsom from its introduction in 1893 to the Present, written by John Liffen, the Curator of Communications, at the Science Museum.
- and some twelve new family histories.

In addition, a number of pages were revised and added to, including:

- Tudor Rentals in Epsom and Ewell in 1549
- Woodcote Park
- The Durdans.



Wall telephone set 1912.  
*Image courtesy of [BT Heritage](http://www.bt-heritage.com/).*

Rather than list these new and amended pages here, it is probably easier to look at the 'What's New' page at [www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WhatsNew.html](http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WhatsNew.html) and enjoy browsing.

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## A well attended AGM

More than fifty people attended our AGM on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April at Ewell Library. As well as volunteers we were delighted to welcome a substantial number of visitors. The draw was an illuminating, informative and entertaining talk on 'The History of Epsom Cemetery' by Harry Walker, Assistant Superintendent at the cemetery. It's always interesting to note how many of us are intrigued by funerals and how they can often lead to amusing tales. Harry's talk was no exception as evidenced by the number of questions from the audience. Thank you Harry and thank you Hazel for arranging the talk. (*A digest of the talk, prepared by Angela Clifford, is attached as an appendix to this newsletter – page 11*).



## History Centre Committee

There will be separate minutes of the AGM circulated to volunteers. However, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank Peggy Bedwell, who has been Treasurer for the Centre for the past decade and has ensured we are fiscally sound. We also want to thank Mr. Marogna who has annually examined the accounts and deemed them correct. Both decided to stand down at the AGM.

In their place, Clive Gilbert has offered to take the Treasurer's role and was unanimously elected and Linda Laker has agreed to be the new examiner. We thank them both.

The rest of the committee offered to continue and put themselves forward for re-election, which the volunteers approved. It was also agreed that we continue, as now, without a permanent chairman. For the record, the committee is as follows:

Hazel Ballan, Meg Bower, Linda Clark, Angela Clifford (Minutes Secretary), Clive Gilbert (Treasurer), Carol Hill (Project Co-ordinator), Ian Parker (Publicity) and Peter Reed (Webmaster).

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## Some Surrey Heritage Events this Summer

As advised by Surrey History Centre

### The Making of Spielberg's *War Horse*:

Behind the scenes with military consultant Andrew Robertshaw  
Saturday 26 May, 2.30 - 3.30pm at Surrey History Centre



Find out what happened behind the scenes on Steven Spielberg's film, *War Horse*. Andrew Robertshaw was the film's chief historical consultant. He gave advice on numerous issues such as props, costume, armoury, badges and even the colour of First World War German smoke which, apparently, differs from the colour of English smoke. He was also asked to undertake a small acting role and can be seen in the recruiting scene filmed in Castle Combe and leading the attack out of the trenches, for which he spent three muddy weeks at Wisley.

Tickets £10 adults, £5 children £25 family ticket. Booking is essential. Places are limited. To book please call 01483 518737 or email [shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk)

### Military Ancestry Roadshow

Featuring Andy Robertshaw and other experts.

Saturday 9 June 2012, 12.30pm - 4pm at Surrey History Centre

Do you have medals, uniforms or photos from your family's military past? Our panel of experts will help you identify them and discover the truth about your family's military history.

Free event. No valuations given



### Researching your First World War Ancestor

A talk by military historians, Andy Robertshaw and Steve Roberts

Saturday 9 June 2012, 11am - 12pm at Surrey History Centre

As part of the military ancestry roadshow come along and listen to the experts advice on how to research First World War family history.

Tickets £5.00



### Romany Day

Saturday 30 June 10am - 5pm at the Rural Life Centre

Peek inside a painted caravan and enjoy vibrant gypsy music with a selection of traditional dishes cooked on the campfire. Family activities including make a peg doll and a museum trail. Try your hand at Romany crafts as well as learning about the heritage and history of Gypsies in Surrey.

Prices: Adults £8.50: Over 60s/Concessions £ 7.50:

Children (5 - 16) £6: Family £26 (2 adults + their children under 16)

Rural Life Centre, Reeds Road, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 2DL. Tel: 01252 795571

## BBC Event - Great British Story

Saturday 30 June 10am – 12pm at Surrey History Centre

### Archive Conservation at the Surrey History Centre with Jeff Dowse, Conservator, Surrey Heritage 10am-10.45am

In his talk expert Conservator Jeff Dowse will take you behind the scenes of the County Archive to show you in detail the work involved in cleaning, stabilizing, treating and presenting the documents for public use.

### Settlement sites and sacred offerings: prehistoric and later archaeology in the Thames Valley near Chertsey with Phil Jones, Senior Archaeologist, Surrey County Archaeological Unit 11am-11.45am

Discover more about the only Iron Age shield in Europe made entirely of bronze, which was found near Chertsey in this talk by archaeologist Phil Jones.

Further details with booking information will be available soon from the BBC's Things to do website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo>

## Surrey History Centre's Annual Film Day

Lights, Camera, Action!!

Surrey Celebrates: Jubilees and Coronations on Film

Saturday 7 July 2012, 11am –12pm at Surrey History Centre

The ever-enthusiastic Dr Frank Gray, director of Screen Archive South East, will treat us to a visual history of how the region celebrated past coronations and jubilees. Films featured will include Queen Victoria's Diamond jubilee of 1897, festivities for the jubilee of George V in Walton on Thames and district as recorded by the cinema manager Clifford Spain in 1935, and Coronation celebrations in Horley in 1953.

Ticket price is £5 and includes tea & coffee. Booking is essential. Places are limited. To book please call 01483 518737 or email [shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk)

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## Have You Got News for Me?

We hope you've enjoyed reading this newsletter. Thanks to all those who provided information, anecdotes stories and pictures – Angela, Clive, Glenda, Gillian, Hazel, Jeremy and Peter. But to keep the momentum going we need more, so I make no apologies in repeating this message, as it seems to encourage more people to contribute material.

I'm sure many more of you have experiences, contacts with enquirers or local or family history information that would interest us all, so let's have them - you can see from this current issue, we like gossip and comments as much as more serious subjects.

So, please don't be shy. If you have any

- reports on visits to various sites or centres
- 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 be in September 2012, so you have plenty of time to think of something.

*IRP May 2012*

# History of Epsom Cemetery

A talk at the AGM 2012 by Harry Walker

*Hazel Ballan introduced our speaker Mr Harry Walker, Assistant Superintendent of Epsom Cemetery. The following is a summary of Harry's talk, with thanks to Angela Clifford who made the notes.*

Using a Parliamentary Act of 1853, the Burial Board - which was established in 1869 - was able to close the old cemetery near St Martin's Church by reason of health concerns and open a new one, providing that records of the delineation of consecrated and unconsecrated ground were maintained. At that time, only Anglican Ministers were allowed to conduct burials in consecrated ground. Non-Conformists and Roman Catholics were allowed burial in consecrated ground but only an Anglican Minister could officiate. From 1880 onwards, regardless of denomination, other Ministers were allowed to conduct burial services.

Population growth, through the opening of the Union Workhouse in 1838 covering a large area (previously every Parish from Cobham to Carshalton had its own) and the coming of the railways in 1847 and 1859 necessitated a new cemetery. The only unconsecrated ground in Epsom was at the Chapel in Prospect Place, although some headstones at the URC in Church Road suggest there may have been another site. The Workhouse advertised for equipment, services and someone to make good, substantial elm coffins.

Original negotiations with John Briscoe to buy land in Dorking Road fell through and in 1870 the Burial Board bought 5 acres in Ashley Road from the trustees of Alexander Wood. This was actually a much better site for several reasons. The water table is lower, the solid chalk means sides of the graves do not have to be shored up and the site has views across the Downs.

Original specification was for one thousand feet of boundary wall four feet tall and two Chapels - Anglican and Non Conformist, but the latter fell in to disuse and was taken down in 1882. William Young's 1870 design was accepted and contracts exchanged. Six thousand tons of Kentish Ragstone was supposedly hauled by horse and cart from the station in Upper High Street to construct the cemetery.

The first burial took place on 15th June 1871 - that of Mrs Henry Dorling - and the second on 31st October, so maybe Mr Dorling had the vault built before the cemetery was finished.

54% of the burials in the first year were of children under 10. Initially graves were not bought, families had use of a grave for 14 years for as many members as they needed, then ownership reverted to the Burial Board. Most were never bought, as many were paupers' graves which had three to four bodies in them. These are in an area along the Downs Road boundary.

The first Roman Catholic burial was in May 1873 and the first modern Roman Catholic Mass in 1879 was held in a cottage as there was no Roman Catholic Church. In 1861 Father Tonsall, the first priest, bought land in Heathcote Road - site of the first St Joseph's Church. It is quite possible some Roman Catholic patients from the hospital cluster are buried in the Ashley Road cemetery, not Horton cemetery. Many Irish and Italian staff came to work in the hospitals increasing the need for Roman Catholic burials. These decreased in number after 1965 when the edict against cremation was removed.

The original Burial Board could not have anticipated the huge increase in burials necessitated by the building of the hospital cluster later in the 19th Century.

In 1907 there were 5 Workhouse Union burials, in 1915, fifteen.

Epsom Cemetery has a separate section for Imperial War graves - 180 from World War I, far more than most Cemeteries and chiefly Canadian forces. Some Canadians have individual graves but British Forces personnel are buried up to 12 in one grave. By the end of the war, too many Canadians had died to continue giving them individual graves. This can be upsetting for those seeking a loved ones final resting place. In 1922 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) took over section K on the cemetery map.

When horse-drawn hearses were used, there was a morgue in the grounds - people were much more involved with arrangements.

In 1923 an extra 5 acres was bought from Lord Rosebery and lawn graves are now used and are more economical of space. The opening of Randall's Park Crematorium at Leatherhead in 1961 led to a further decline in burial numbers.

As would be expected, costs of graves have escalated. In 1871 a grave cost £1/11/6d, now it is £1,320. A burial was 5/=-, now it is £655. For financial reasons, Church Cemeteries are now closing.

*Questions were invited from the audience and we learned that:*

- Public graves hold up to 30 babies, many of them stillborn. Their deaths are recorded and from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012, in co-operation with SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Deaths Society), a memorial garden for commemorative tablets will be available.
- It is not known for sure where Burial Board funds came from. The Local Authority now owns cemeteries.
- Apparently, illogical numbering of plots in Epsom Cemetery is partly due to the curvature of the early layout in some areas, which was thought to be more attractive.
- It used to take many weeks to hand dig a grave twenty feet deep. Has to be eleven feet deep for four bodies as by law there must be three feet of earth above the coffin.
- To manually dig a grave 11 feet deep by 2 feet 6 inches wide takes 1 week. With a digger it is much quicker.
- If a person dies with no funds for a funeral the householder where the death occurred is legally responsible for the funeral. If the death occurs in a hospital, the hospital is responsible. Should a Coroner establish that no funds are available then the Local Council pays. Burial expenses take legal precedence for payment from any estate.
- At present (April 2012) there are a few hundred spaces left but there is another field in the Southern side of the Cemetery for future use.
- Non-residents are charged more to be buried.

*Harry was thanked most warmly for a most interesting talk and presented with a pleasant libation.*