

## WEAG 60<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries

### 2018 - WEAG's 60th Anniversary

For our 60th anniversary our good friends at Copped Hall kindly allowed us the use of one of their ground floor rooms during their Apple Day, on 26th August, for our celebration. We laid on a number of demonstrations and displays, including surveying equipment, our magnetometer and some of the results from it, the wet sieving kit together with some of the materials it produces, displays of pottery and glass, together with numerous photographs of our work at Copped Hall and elsewhere.



*The view across the displays for the WEAG 60th anniversary, with pottery remains in the rear centre, dried samples from the wet sieving on the left, a selection of photographs in the foreground and archaeological equipment on the right.*

*Some of the visitors looking at the selection of photographs of WEAG activities, both at Copped Hall and elsewhere. On the wall in the background is the 'timeline' display showing details of the history of Copped Hall.*



*The display of pottery and glass fragments that we have found at Copped Hall, and on the right is an example of a typical archaeologists kit of tools.*

*The display of cleaned pottery and glass fragments that we have found in the digs at Copped Hall. In the background is the wet sieving equipment.*



*Examples of materials that have been processed through the wet sieve on the table in the foreground, with the wet sieve equipment just beyond the table (it looks like an oil drum with gloves on the rim).*

*The 60th anniversary cake displayed on the table of photographs for visitors to see.*



*The celebration cake made specially for the 60th anniversary of WEAG - typical archaeologist, head down in a trench surrounded by equipment and finds.*

*The 60th anniversary cake being cut by a representative group of WEAG members who were on site during the Apple Day.*



*The remains of the cake among the photographs after it had been cut up to be enjoyed by visitors to the display room.*

## **2008 - WEAG's 50th Anniversary**

The celebration for WEAG's 50th anniversary was held in March at the Woodford County High School (where we currently hold our meetings). It was attended by the president of WEAG, Harvey Sheldon, and the Mayoress of Redbridge, Joyce Ryan.

**The press release for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is presented at the end.**

*Harvey Sheldon, president of WEAG, cuts the cake with an archaeologist's trowel, watched by the Mayoress of Redbridge, Joyce Ryan.*







*Gill Burn, Chairman of WEAG, showing a skull to the Mayoress and a colleague. The skull was part of a display of bones at the anniversary meeting.*

*The celebration cake for the 50th anniversary - front view.*



*View looking down on the cake showing the WEAG logo on the top with archaeological items arranged on it.*

*Right and below are the sides of the cake, showing the ends of the 'wall' along the back, together with some modelled finds and tools.*



**There follows the press release for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

March 8 2008

### STILL DIGGING AT FIFTY

This year marks the Golden Jubilee of the West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG) and this local amateur society is still very involved in archaeological activity.

The inaugural meeting of WEAG was held on April 22, 1958 at the Passmore Edwards Museum, Stratford E15 (now the Stratford Campus of the University of East London) and according to the register was attended by a mixture of local students, teachers, bank managers, engineers, librarians, civil servants and housewives!

At this meeting various areas of activity were outlined, including excavation and recording of domestic buildings, urgent rescue operations and field surveys of Roman roads. No previous archaeological experience would be necessary to join the society and there would be no age limits. The geographic area to be covered was defined by the 161 Ordnance Survey 1 " map. Particular attention was to be paid to the publication of results of excavations and to date WEAG has been meticulous in this respect.

Kenneth Marshall, then Curator of the Passmore Edwards Museum, was elected Chairman and Ernest Rudge, then Principal of West Ham College, was elected Hon. Secretary. Ernest Rudge was to be a generous benefactor to WEAG and each year in May, the free Rudge Memorial Lecture is held in his honour.

The group got off to a good start and by 1960 it was excavating a prehistoric site in Epping Forest, a Bronze Age barrow at Billericay, an Iron Age camp at Wallbury and Fryering Roman road. Meetings continued at the Stratford Museum and a course of lectures was organised for beginners.

By 1966 WEAG was digging in Temple Fields, Harlow and this proved to be one of the most important excavations on the site of a Romano-British temple in the county, outside of Colchester. Other excavations have included a Roman villa and bath complex at Abridge, a Roman settlement at Havering, Stratford Langthorne Abbey, Wanstead Park and sites along the proposed routes of the M11 and M25.

For several seasons the group has been excavating at Copped Hall, near Epping where it has uncovered the foundations of part of the Elizabethan Manor House, demolished in the mid-eighteenth century. Mary Tudor lived here and it is claimed that Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' had its first performance at wedding festivities held here in 1594. Together with the Copped Hall Trust Archaeological Project, WEAG has organised several training courses at the site for people with little or no previous archaeological experience.

More recently WEAG has been actively involved with the Wanstead Parklands Community Project on a local Heritage Initiative 'Wanstead Park Revealed' aimed at raising awareness of the park and its history among local people. Using non-invasive techniques such as magnetometry and resistivity testing, the group hopes to get a better idea of what archaeology may be in the ground and where the elusive Roman villa may be situated.

WEAG currently has around 140 members. This year's programme includes a series of illustrated lectures on subjects as diverse as 'Made in Africa - Human Origins' and 'Egypt and Canaan'. The 2008 Rudge, Memorial Lecture on May 12 is on 'The Archaeology of the Olympics Site', in the summer it will be digging again at Copped Hall and in August it will be organising a Field School there for experienced excavators together with the Copped Hall Trust.

All in all, a busy fiftieth year!

End.