

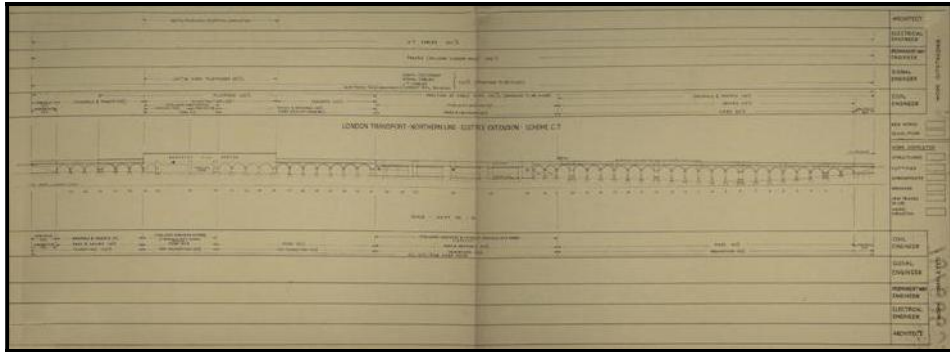
# Elstree & Borehamwood Museum

## Friends Newsletter

### May 2022 : Issue Number 25



## OFF THE RAILS - The Line That Never Was

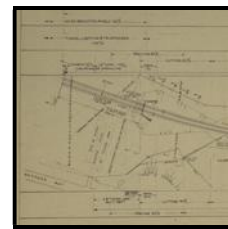


Brockley Hill Station

Our latest exhibition has quickly become one of the most successful we have created. With over 2000 visitors since we opened at the end of January, Tony DeSwarte's magnificent model has been intriguing everyone with an interest in The Line That Never Was. We have had visitors from all over the country and quite a few from abroad. Many of the comments in our Visitor's Book wish the Tube line had been built - 'if only' is a repeating sentiment.

Just after we opened we were offered a set of plans that have not seen the light of day for 80 or so years. A private collector heard about the Exhibition and told us he had the original drawings and plans that were made by the engineers working on the line in the late 1930s. When it was decided to cease all work upon the outbreak of war in September 1939, the engineers drew up detailed plans to show exactly what had been constructed ('work completed' on the plans), and what still had to be done ('work outstanding') to continue the Elstree Extension. They also showed the materials and equipment that remained on the site, or were being stored elsewhere, and so

everything was ready to commence work after the war.



Elstree Tunnel Entrance

The draughtsmen used their original architectural plans so we can see exactly what Brockley Hill Station with its fine arches would have looked like, and the huge size of the Depot at Aldenham with its many tracks for the sheds and sidings is revealed. Of course similar drawings appear in Tony Beard's book *By Tube Beyond Edgware* which were taken from the Transport Museum's archives. However the size and detail of these newly-emerged plans reveal much more.

Although their arrival and photographing took place after we had opened, Dave Armitage found a perfect spot for these large drawings in the foyer at 96 Shenley Road. Make sure you have a good look next time you are visiting us.

## 'Ewhurst Manor'



**Ewhurst Manor in the Sixties**

One of the Museum's main photo files is called 'Named Houses'. There you will find folders for Allum Hall and Edgwarebury House and many more. But you won't find 'Ewhurst Manor' listed anywhere in the Museum. In fact you have to search to find the couple of photos we do have, located under 'Whitehouse Avenue'. Whether this is because the house has become forgotten and slipped under the radar, or because it became 'notorious' and unmentionable in the Sixties is an interesting point to explore.

Ewhurst Manor was certainly not hidden away in reality. It was not deep in the countryside - it was in fact located just up Furzehill Road, a stone's throw from Shenley Road. True it had a small entrance with a white gate running off Furzehill Road, but the owners in the 1950s and 60s, Alec and Doris Clifford, were to invite many people to their house for a variety of activities.

When exactly it was built on the former Whitehouse Farm is unknown, and it lay alongside the 'White House' itself. Originally known as Rectory Farm (and owned by the church), it consisted of 200 acres, but death duties and declining income meant that most was sold off during the 19th and 20th Centuries. The White House was probably the remains of the original farm buildings, and the Manor was built in the 1870s after the railways came to the area. The Manor was a large three storey double-fronted property with a smaller 'cottage' attached with 3 or 4 acres. Officially it was located at 37 Furzehill Road and the Cliffords lived there from 1958 to 1970 when it was sold and demolished along with the White House. It seems the name 'Ewhurst Manor' may have been invented by the Cliffords so as not to draw too much attention to the house. But Derek Allen, our resident photographer, remembers visiting the house in the mid-50s when his pilot friend, Jimmy Lovegrove, rented the cottage.





**The Cottage by Derek Allen, 1956**



Jimmy Lovegrove by Derek Allen

By the late 50s the Manor had become the base for what was known as 'glamour' photography. The 1964 US magazine *Hi Life* explains : "This all began quite by chance. Mrs Clifford's husband, a sweater manufacturer, was having some advertising photos made and invited the photographer taking them to use the house as a site. The lensman accepted and was so impressed, he asked to use the manor several times thereafter. It wasn't long before word of Ewhurst spread locally, and the Cliffords were flooded with calls from cameramen requesting location privileges. As a result, Mrs Clifford came up with the idea of charging a reasonable fee and opened the house to all cameramen".



**Location of Ewhurst Manor**



**Doris Clifford in the garden**

With its three acres of gardens and grounds, tended by Mrs Clifford herself, there were plenty of backdrops, ponds and private locations for revealing photography. And it became a mecca for film makers too. The most famous of these was George Harrison Marks, who was one of England's best known nudist film creators. The fame of the location spread far and wide and American glamour photographers such as Earl Leaf and Irv Carsten used it for their work. Some of Marks' 8mm movie shorts shot at Ewhurst included *Nightmare at Elm Manor* (1963), *Photo Session* (1963) and *Visit from Venus* (1964). Further research, dear reader, may be undertaken on YouTube where 'Elm Manor' is plainly Ewhurst itself, and there are many interior shots in the film revealing the pleasant aspects of a 50s house.



**Doris Clifford with tea and biscuits**

Doris Clifford was a great supporter of her customers, providing tea and biscuits, and as Derek has confirmed maintaining a spotlessly clean main house at all times. In the mid to late 60s it was used by ITC as the location for a number of their series including *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)*, *Gideon's Way*, and *The Champions*. So far ITC seems to have been the only mainstream film company to have used the Manor as a location, but because of its proximity to the main studios will surely be identified in other films and TV series. It's only been identified as a location in the last 10 years.

But in 1970 the good times came to an end and I suspect the Cliffords were made a generous offer to sell up. Ewhurst Manor was demolished along with the White House, and another housing estate created around Whitehouse Avenue. This road runs parallel to the front of the Manor and through its pond. It seems the current houses in the area were not built in the 70s, but are later constructions. Because there is no road named 'Ewhurst', or any other indications in the area, adds further evidence to the idea that 'Ewhurst Manor' was made up by the final owners to cover their embarrassment, or ours.



**Famous 'Glamour Model' Anne Austen covering her embarrassment outside The Manor**

Walking around the area now there is no hint of 'glamour', just a few very tall trees that would have been in the grounds of 'Ewhurst Manor'.

Thanks to the website *Randall and Hopkirk (Declassified)* who located the Manor ([www.randallandhopkirk.culttv.uk](http://www.randallandhopkirk.culttv.uk)), to Ruth Stratton who located the website, and to Wikipedia for general locations. And of course to Derek for the photo and info.



**Early shot of the Manor**

### **Brenda's Note**

Thank you to those Friends who have renewed their membership for the current year. The closing date for receiving subscriptions is 31st August after which those who have not renewed will no longer receive Newsletters or invites to Friends events.

**DON'T FORGET THE NEXT  
REMINISCENCE MEETING, *Going  
Down The Village*, ON MONDAY 13th  
JUNE at 96 SHENLEY ROAD at  
10.30am**

### **Elstree & Borehamwood Museum**

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FB : [www.facebook.com/EBWmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/EBWmuseum)

Twitter : [@EBWMuseumHerts](https://twitter.com/EBWMuseumHerts)

Instagram :

<https://www.instagram.com/ebwm2007/>

Trip Advisor : <https://goo.gl/RTbKQi>

Open : Tues, Wed & Thurs : 12pm - 6pm

Sat : 10am-3pm

Supported by : Hertsmere Borough Council

Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council

The Heritage Lottery Fund

Registered charity No 1157770

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