



Horley Local History Society

NEWS Letter

June 2017

The Venue

The Society meets at the Methodist Hall, Victoria Road, Horley, Surrey, every 4th Thursday in the month at 7:30pm for 8:00 unless otherwise stated below.

Parking is available at the rear.

Please note some changes to meeting dates below have been made at speaker's requests.

Meetings Calendar

Thursday 22 June 2017 A History of Tennis in Horley.

By David Sharratt

Thursday 27 July 2017 A talk on the History of St Bart's Church. Assemble there at 7 for 7.30pm.

Thursday 7 September 2017 The History of the Brighton & Balcombe Roads through Horley.

By Alan Read

Sat 9 September 2017 Heritage Walk. Details to be announced later

Thursday 26 October 2017 Horley on Maps through the ages.

Thursday 23 November 2017 Sanger's Circus/Horley.

By Cora McLaren

Thursday 14 December 2017 A Horley Christmas Evening.

Please note that we meet at 7pm at St Batholomew's Church on Thur 27 July

Remembering the Dam Busters talk

Jim Barnes who was a member of 617 Squadron gave a very interesting talk for the April meeting about how the spinning bomb was designed by Barnes Wallis and used to breach the dams by members of that Squadron. He explained the techniques employed, how it was delivered by the modified Lancaster bombers and the results of the raid. He also covered the earthquake bomb designed by Barnes Wallis called the Tallboy and how it was deployed. The memorials to him and 617 Squadron that still exist in Lincolnshire were also covered.

Jim requested that any payment for his talk should be given to St Catherine's Hospice. With this and a collection, a cheque for £200 was sent.

Introducing young persons to history

HLHS members invited the 6th Horley Cub Pack to an evening in the library recently and requested the Cubs to place well-known photos of places in Horley on a large-scale map of our area as if it was a game. Their keenness and questions afterwards were most interesting and encouraging.

More History of Gatwick Airport

Today the Airport is within Sussex, but prior to 1974 it was within the Dorking & Horley Rural District Council area. So its history during WW2 was/is still of interest to the Society.

Just before the start of WW2, two companies came to the airport. *Airwork* was one and *Southern Aircraft* was the other. While many different RAF Squadrons used the airfield throughout the war, these two companies remained and grew in size maintaining and repairing a huge number of various types of RAF aircraft. While *Airwork's* history has been covered in Keith McClosKey's book of that name in 2012, *Southern Aircraft's* history has not until now.

A book *Southern Aircraft (Gatwick) Ltd* has recently been published by Peter Amos & Brian Buss covering the period 1939-1962 and is available from Brian (01293 782231) or via www.air-britain.co.uk postage free. At £16.95

It covers the history of the company and its founder J E Coxon, all the aircraft the firm handled with their details and photos of the majority of the various types.

Guiding Evacuees

On 1st of September 1939 the Horley Guides were asked to meet the first batch of evacuees due to arrive at 1.40 pm. They were divided into pairs and given a flag with a number on it. The pairs were then spaced evenly down the slope from the station and 50

children were grouped behind each pair of guides to then be led to the school in Lumley Road.

The guides said it was sad to see tiny children carrying large parcels while larger children carried much smaller parcels. By the time the first group reached the town end of Lumley Road many children were very tired so had to rest awhile. Just then Mr Warne came along with his pony and trap and offered to take all the parcels to the school.

After being led into the school hall where they were examined by the nurse and the doctor they were each given a tin of Nestles milk, ½lb of biscuits, a bar of chocolate and a tin of corned beef. Many of the children hadn't had lunch so were taken to the infant school (in Albert Rd) to be given it.

The next day (Sunday) some 45 mothers and children arrived at the station and were taken in cars to the school while the guides pushed the prams and push-chairs on their own to the school.

So the guides finished their first wartime job of national importance. (From *The Venture*)

Strawson Hall

Start date for the re-build is expected this month.

The Smallfield Hospital

A brief summary of its history:-

1940 Government commissioned Haymills of Wembley to build a 200 bed hospital in Broadbridge Lane Smallfield for expected civilian casualties from the London Blitz, but it was never used for that purpose.

1941 RAMC took it over and increased beds to 400.

1942 Hospital released to No 14 Canadian General Military Hospital (later to become No 12) Wounded from Dieppe raid on 19th August that year were treated. Also wounded aircrew from RAF & USAAF aircraft landed at Gatwick, Redhill & Horne from operations during the rest of WW2 were treated. Also some from Luftwaffe aircrew and D-Day wounded.

1949 Became part of Redhill County Hospital, then the NHS. Many local residents used its facilities.

1983 Hospital closed (with its 190 beds) and all services transferred to the new East Surrey Hospital at Earlswood (Part of this hospital was built on the site of the WW2 Redhill by-pass road constructed by the Canadians, hence its address *Canada Avenue*).

1992 Site redeveloped for housing and streets given Canadian province and city names in memory of its use as a WW2 hospital by and for the Canadians based in and around this area.

An Important Book with Your Help

Your Committee is **very** concerned that the Society still does not have a concise, up to date publication on the *History of Horley*. While many members have in the past written and produced documents on different historical subjects (see the Publications section of our website www.horleyhistory.org.uk), these have not been collated to provide an overall history of our town, neither are they adequate in number to meet such needs. It has therefore produced an outline of what such a publication might contain and this is set out below for your interest and for your comments.

- Location, geology, waterways, etc
- Early known history, Saxon place names, etc
- First settlements, around the Church, Mill, Horley Row areas, etc
- Agriculture, farming, land ownership etc
- Religious development
- Tracks, roads, tolls, coaches, etc
- Railway and its impact
- Village growth where and when
- Public Houses, Clubs, Organisations, etc
- Schools
- Boer War, WW1 & WW2
- Post WW2 growth, traffic, Gatwick A/P, M23 & M25
- Political, local, borough & county
- Local Churches
- The future?

Your Committee would really appreciate **ANY** comments, additions or amendments to the above and **just as important** whether any recipient would wish to consider providing assistance in any form to work towards its publication. The Committee realises that it is far too late to rely on one person to undertake this task now but perhaps with your support, in say searching for documents or even preparing draft text for consideration by others, the overall timescale could be reduced. Society members who have published books single handed have often spent between 4 to 6 years to do so. It would with more willing hands like to be able to reduce the task well below these figures.

We realise that many may be reticent to even consider this undertaking but be assured you will be alongside others who have trod this path several times and will be with you to guide, help and encourage in all that you wish to undertake.

In this way you could be gaining experience at no cost whatsoever to become really involved in helping to record your local history yourself.

If you are interested, or just wish to come along to talk about it, then please contact our website (www.horleyhistory.org.uk) and we will be pleased to reply to you.

Condolences to David Hall, (A past HLHS Chairman) **for the loss of his wife Barbara**

Many of us will recall Barbara as the hardworking councillor, nurse and health visitor in and around Horley over many years, visiting mums and schools, always with a helping hand and a cheery word.