

Horley Local History Society

NEWS

January 2009

A Happy New Year to you all.

Meetings Calendar

The Society meets at Strawson Hall, 156 Albert Road, Horley, Surrey, at 7:30pm for 8:00 unless stated below.

Monday 26 January 2009 "Part 2 of her interesting life in showbiz" by Diana Keevil

Monday 23 February 2009 AGM followed by the "Future of Strawson Hall" by Doug Kilborn, then a trawl through the Society's archives.

Wednesday 11 March 2009 AGM of Horley Local History Centre followed by a talk on the "Aviation History around Horley" by Brian Buss, to be held in Horley Library, 7 for 7.30 pm.

Monday 23 March 2009 "Ashdown Forest" by Christopher Rudd

Earlier Excavations

The last Newsletter reported on the initial assessments of the archaeological work undertaken on the housing development to the NE of the town. Back in 1965 a similar investigation was carried out when plans were made for the housing development at Court Lodge.

The site was where the Manor House of Sutton once stood where various Horley courts were held. It had a moat around, or close to it and parts of the banks can still be seen today. Excavations took place in 1965, 1966 and 1967. Post holes and foundations were found at different levels and Dr Gerry Moss detailed the findings in a note dated December 1967.

He concluded that the earliest manor house probably dated from just after the Norman Conquest. Also at a later stage a moat was constructed and further buildings erected possibly a new house in the 16 C (when perhaps the Abbot of Chertsey lost the property due to the Reformation)

The earliest pottery remains were thought to be early 12 C but finer 14 & 15 C French continental pottery was also found, as were metal buttons and a brooch. The post medieval finds reflected how the site declined when it became a leased farm.

A large 120 ft long barn was built or re-built in the 16 C and the farmhouse survived until 1847 when it was replaced. The barn was demolished in 1966 and the farm house in June 1967.

The History of Cinemas in Horley

In the February 2005 Newsletter, Brian Buss included an item on this subject. Since then he has gathered more information with the help of Ian Sargent and written a brief history of our former 3 cinemas. A copy will be placed shortly in our archives and one in the library. One of the main findings concern the date when the Massetts Road cinema opened. Evidence has come to light that it was around 1915, far earlier than originally thought. Furthermore, it was then named the Cinema Theatre before it became the New Pavilion Cinema in 1926 (although it has 1925 on its façade) until the Regent cinema opened in 1935 in Victoria Road. Also, the Biodrome behind the Constitutional Club opened in 1912 and not 1913. The Regent's Christie organ is still being played today by its private owner in Norfolk.

From the Archives

At the beginning of WW2 a young lady named Elizabeth Matthias lived in “Sun Cottage” on the north side of Silverlea Gardens and was about 14 years of age. Until she moved to Leicester on 22 September 1940 she kept a diary of all the dates and times when the air raid siren sounded the alert and the all-clear. She also wrote down what she saw and heard during a raid.

During this period, she listed some 64 alerts. While there is insufficient space to list them all here, 2 are given below to illustrate how detailed was her diary for such a young person.

25 August 1940. Alert 12.15pm to 1.30pm. Near gunfire and planes heard previous to sounding of siren. Planes circling around and distant heavy gunfire.

14 September 1940. Alert 7pm to 9.45pm. At 8pm great torpedo (sic) the other side of bottom hedge & high explosive 100 yards away in York Lodge. We live in between them. All ceilings in & roof off. Also doors and sheds in. Only 5 casualties but 370 houses damaged.

The Boundary of the Manor of Horley

On the 25th day of September 1811 an Act of Parliament was passed for the enclosing of lands in the Parish of Horley in the County of Surrey. The Bounds of this Manor were set out and ascertained by John Tramper and Thomas Crawley, two appointed commissioners, in a document that should be read in association with the map prepared in 1812.

This document describes exactly where the bounds existed at that date. A copy is held in our archives and by the History Centre in Horley library.

The Scout Hut in Michael Crescent

The Town Council recently requested views as what should be done with this building now that it is no longer in use. The Society proposed that it be rebuilt to house a Horley museum and archive centre run by the Society for the community. All our archives could then be housed in one central venue on a site that has its own historical background.

Horley Fire Brigade Rules and Regulations

A Horley resident whose father was a member of the local Fire Brigade, recently donated a handwritten document dated 1 May 1891 that set down the Rules and Regulations for the Brigade. It contained the signatures of those who joined the Brigade up to 1910.

As this is the original document, a copy has been taken to hold in the Society’s archives and the original deposited with the Surrey History Centre at Woking.

Strawson Glasshouses

Several catalogues and photos of the products once made by this company in Charlesfield Road have recently been given to the Society. One dated February 1935 was issued by the Seed Department, The Army & Navy Stores Ltd, 105 Victoria St, London, SW1, containing just Strawson Greenhouses. The cost of a 12’ x 8’ span-roof greenhouse for the amateur was £18, carriage paid within 100 miles of London. When a good weekly wage at that time was around £2, they could be considered quite expensive.

Flying Daily at Horley in December 1924

The item below has just come to light to show that you could take a flight from Horley well before Gatwick was opened in 1930 and Redhill in 1934. It is interesting to imagine what the condition of the ground was like at that time of the year.

The flying ground shown was to the east of the Balcombe Road between the Kings Head and Silverlea Gardens. The photo of the crash shown on page 22 in the Society's "Accidents & Disasters" book had most likely taken off from that ground, or had tried to.

HORLEY ADVERTISER, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1924.	
<p style="text-align: center;">FLYING</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From Sat., Dec. 20th To Mon., Dec. 29th, DAILY at HORLEY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From The Balcombe Estate, On BALCOMBE ROAD.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FLIGHTS from Per 5/- Passenger.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By the SURREY FLYING SERVICES, Air Port of London, CROYDON ADMISSION TO FIELD 6s.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FLYING AT HORLEY.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF FLYING GROUND.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Surrey Flying Services.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These Horley residents who on ground of some circumstance or other were unable to grasp the opportunity of the greater third of an aeroplane. But about their own age will see with pleasure the announcement in an advertising column in this issue that they will have another chance during the first days beginning Saturday December 20th. The chance to buy in, get instruction, and the flight will be from the Balcombe Estate on Balcombe Road. The admission to the field 6s.</p>
<p>HOTELS. and kindly leaving from the majority of employees. It is not unknown, and feet, that with in many respects from the point of view of...</p>	<p>QUEST JOTTINGS.</p> <p>HORLEY.</p> <p>CHESTERMAN DAY COLLECTIONS.—The collection on Christmas Day at...</p>

Horley Market

The Society holds very little about the history of this site that was once behind the Kings Head off the Smallfield Road. It is known that buildings stood on the same site in the same place from an 1820 map when the owner then, the Rev W J Jolliffe, placed an eviction order on the tenants in the 3 Brighton Place cottages. (Where the 9 houses of Kings Terrace stand today. It is possible that the one on the corner in 1820 became part of the present day public house.)

In the County Post for 9 December 1960 it states that the Market buildings are being pulled down to make way for modern buildings (presumably part of today's Windmill Close) It also said that it originally belonged to Messrs Baker & Baker (auctioneers, surveyors & estate agents then on the corner of Victoria & Massetts Roads) and was opened as a market about 1914. Upon the death of Mr George Baker in 1952 it was purchased by Messrs Wood, Son & Gardner of Crawley who carried on the business until it was finally sold and closed in June 1959.

For Model Rail way Enthusiasts

Wessex Wagons will be launching in 2009 an 00 gauge scale model of one of Horley's once well known coal merchant's wagons used by William Whitmore & Sons who ran their business in Victoria Road from 1883 until 1954. David Hall recently received from Wessex, a photo of a wagon taken some time ago with Whitmore's name of Horley resplendent on its side, who wished

to seek further information. Obviously he responded positively and who knows perhaps a note on this family can be expected in the near future from David.

B. B,

This newsletter is published by the Horley Local History Society.
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