



Horley Local History Society

NEWS Letter

JANUARY 2020

The Venue

The Society meets at the Methodist Hall, Victoria Road, Horley, Surrey, every 4th Thursday in the month at 7:30pm for 8:00pm unless otherwise stated below or on our website. Tea & Coffee are served and parking is available at the rear.

Meetings Calendar 2020

Thursday 23 January 2020 A Year in the Life of the Reigate Mayor. David Powell

Thursday 27 February 2020 Annual General Meeting....Followed by A Brief History of Smallfield Hospital. Brian Buss.

Thursday 26 March 2020 An Introduction to DNA for Amateur Genealogists. Doug Cox

Thursday 23 April 2020 A Box from Grandma's Loft. Henry Pelham

Thursday 28 May 2020 A Look at Two Horley Ladies. Eamonn Byrne

Thursday 25 June 2020 Gertrude Jekyll, Gardener & Craftswoman. Surrey History Centre.

Thursday 23 July 2020 A Visit to Gatwick Aviation Museum

Thursday 24 September 2020 A look back at The Battle of Britain in 1940. Doug Cox

Thursday 22 October 2020 A look at Old Horley photographs. John Chisholm

Thursday 26 November 2020 TBA

Thursday 17 December 2020 Christmas Party Quiz Night

Happy New Year

The Committee of HLHS would like to wish all our Members a very Happy New Year and we look forward to seeing you at each of the varied events we have planned for this year.

Our programme for 2020

Our programme for 2020 is set out on the left side of this page. The committee of HLHS hopes very much that you will find all of these talks interesting.

Note that Membership Subs become due from January. Please come to the January meeting prepared to pay if you are not prepaid for 2020.

100 years Ago

In Horley, the War Memorial Committee had been formed following a public meeting. Their principal aim was to find and acquire a suitable site for the village's War Memorial. Several sites had been considered but rejected for one reason or another and they were quite unable to move forward.

The Covenant of the League of Nations was signed on 28 June 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles, and it became effective together with the rest of the Treaty on 10 January 1920. The first meeting of the Council of the League took place in London on 16 January. Despite the fact that President Wilson of America was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in setting up the League, America never became a member. Although it later expanded to include 56 nations it was quite powerless to prevent the Second World War by which time Germany, Japan and Italy had already left.

The Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill, announced that conscription would be ended and a standing army of 220,000 volunteers would be established.

In America the Prohibition era was introduced which was to outlaw the sale of alcohol until 1933. In its wake came the growth of organised crime particularly in the form of the Mafia.

80 years ago - 1940

On the 1st January Britain called up 2,000,000 men aged 19-27 for military service and a few days later rationing was introduced for many items including petrol, bacon, butter and sugar. A wave of freezing cold weather caused the River Thames to freeze for the first time since 1888.

This was the period known as 'the phoney war'. Not much seemed to be happening. Few air raids had materialised, many people had ceased to carry gas masks when out and about and relatively few casualties had been sustained.

In Horley, the Park family was mourning the first of the local men who were lost. Stoker Bert Park of Albert Road thought he was a lucky man when illness forced him to miss the sailing of the aircraft carrier HMS Courageous and her subsequent sinking. He was wrong. When he recovered he was posted to HMS Royal Oak which was torpedoed in Scapa Flow in October 1939 and he was killed with 832 other men.



*Albert (Bert) Park and his wife Winnie
His cap band reads HMS Courageous.*

Albert Parks story continued long after his death. When the names of the WW2 dead were gathered to be added to those already on our War Memorial, Albert, known as Bert, was confused with another death of a B.A.Parkes. This name was, quite wrongly, put on our Memorial and it is still there. It was not until 1998 that the error was brought to the notice of Horley Town Council by Bert's daughter, Ivy, and the name of A.A.Park was eventually rightfully inscribed.

50 years Ago.....

Most of our members have a clear recollection of the events of early 1970 but, just to remind you.....

During the first few months of that year the age of majority was reduced from 21 to 18 years.

The half-crown ceased to be legal tender.

The National Westminster Bank began trading as a result of a merger between the Westminster Bank and the National Provincial Bank.

The first Jumbo Jet, the Boeing 747, came into service and landed at Heathrow.

Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith declared Rhodesia a republic breaking all ties with the British crown.

Martin Peters became the first British footballer to break the £200,000 transfer fee.

And the Prince of Wales joined the Royal Navy.

The Gatwick Racecourse Bandstand, Crawley.

This historic feature rescued from the Racetrack when Gatwick was developed has been re-sited in the Crawley Memorial Gardens since 2015. A plaque outlining its history has recently been added, thanks to Brian Buss who supplied Crawley Council with full details of the history of this fondly remembered local feature.



The bandstand in Crawley Memorial Gardens

Horley History Centre

Members may wish to be reminded that a nucleus of experienced HLHS members are present in Horley Library on Saturday mornings and Tuesday afternoons to assist members of the public with any questions which they may have on Local or Family related history matters. Why not pop in to see them occasionally and see the local history resources available in our new library.

12th Night the 5th of January

In the middle ages 12th Night was celebrated with great feasting. Often roles were reversed and masters would serve their servants. It also marked the end of Winter which had started on All Hallows Eve (31st October).

Huge meals included a special cake in which was hidden a hard pea. Whoever found this was crowned the King or Queen of Misrule and they ruled over the merriment of the night.

In English Cathedrals there was the custom of the 'Boy Bishop' where a boy from the Cathedral was elected as a Bishop on 6th December (St Nicholas's Day) and had the authority of a Bishop (except to perform Mass) until 28th December. King Henry VIII banned the practise in 1542 although it came back briefly under Mary I in 1552 but Elizabeth I finally stopped it during her reign.

HLHS Annual General Meeting

Please make every effort to come along to our monthly meeting on 27th February which will also include our AGM. This will give members an opportunity to question Committee Members and make any polite suggestions as to the future of HLHS or the content of our monthly talks.