



with Oliver Farley

Horsham Society

Look up for much of great interest

The definition of an extrovert mathematician, so I'm told, is one who stares at your shoes instead of his own. Mathematics aside, we have to admit we're all guilty of gazing straight ahead and never bothering much to raise our vision and truly see what's around us.

Oscar Wilde remarked that we're all in the gutter... but some of us have our gaze fixed upon the stars. Leaving the merits of stargazing aside, we might for a start limit our range of elevation to the curiosities of the buildings in our home town and give a little more attention to the quirks and oddities which give character to the townscape.

Rooflines are always interesting and often reveal that the modernity below is a cosmetic addition to antiquity above. Take a glance down Horsham's West Street and look above the glittering shop line at the buildings above.

There's great variety and not much continuity in this street which has evolved over the decades from the traditional provincial market town to the high street serving today's demands. The shop fronts



Rooflines are always interesting. Horsham's West Street in the 1950s.

have moved with the times while the structures are frequently well behind. East Street displays the same

compression to a greater degree and to our credit quite a few buildings are fully exposed for the mediaeval installations they are. The blend of styles and ages merge into a harmonious whole. Take a look upwards when next you pass through and spare a few moments to see the context of our home environment.

You'll find much of interest and some elements you may well not have seen before.

Look up! At the old Co-op building, now an Italian restaurant, and can you spot the fasces flanking blank shields above the second floor? These symbols of Roman justice, the rods for beatings and the axe for executions, became the logo of the Fascists some time after they were an Art Deco devise (there's even a railing in Moscow of them).

Look up! There's a house in the Causeway with a lizard clinging to the wall just above the doorway. The door itself is now a rich, royal purple and the house has been most carefully restored, with keen attention to its historic core going back in parts by six centuries.

Look up! There are 38 heads under a broach. They ring the top of the twelfth

century tower of the parish church and the broach spire rises to more than 150 feet above, finished off with a weather cock which has been on the outlook for over 400 years.

Look up! Number 13A in the Causeway claims to be The Town House while the Manor House across the road is properly Hewell's Manor.

Along the side of the additions in the grounds of Hewell's Manor are purpose built bird boxes, often with occupants, while along Blackhorse Way at Hewell's Court house martins regularly make their own hemi-spherical abodes.

Look up! Blackhorse Way has the old stable bloc sports a type of baldachin and a handsome clock. Look up! For an author - for a speed ace - for a sun. Just keep looking!

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 261905.