

## Top town (nearly)

No sooner did we report in the October issue that Horsham had been ranked twelfth best place in which to live than our standing shot up even further according to a recent TV property programme. Apparently we have now been elevated to second best place in the country, based on a battery of measurements including life expectancy, educational standards, crime rate and so on. Winchester came out top, and we were ahead of Tunbridge Wells in third place. Goodness me – can we handle all this?

I don't want to sound disloyal, and while being delighted by the news, I must say I was also faintly surprised by the ranking. A radio station rang up the next evening and asked for an interview. I asked 'when?' and they said 'now!' – so I had to get my act together sharpish. I held

forth for a few minutes on Horsham's good access to both London and the countryside, the town's harmonious mix of the old and the new, the fine schools and so on, and in the end had no trouble in persuading myself that our high position was totally justified.

Presumably anyone selling a house can add a bit to the asking price on the back of all this good news – but does it also mean that the bureaucrats busily re-calculating our council tax will seize the opportunity to slot this new data into their computers and saddle us with an extra loading?

BS



## Too much chat?

I never cease to be amazed by all the public chat that goes on these days, thanks to the high street invasion of mobile phones. Wherever you go you are faced with wave after wave of men and women, striding along with phones glued to their ears and gabbling away as if their lives depended on it. What on earth can they find to talk about? In those blissful days when the telephone box reigned supreme, everyone seemed to manage perfectly well - and the fact that you needed a few coins to make a call concentrated the mind enormously. Time really was money then – and verbosity came at an immediate cost.

But is this surge in communication making the world a better place? Has it led to a greater understanding between us all? Is conflict on the way out? I don't think so: in fact, just the opposite. We now live in a world of 'jaw jaw' as well as - and not instead of - 'war war'.

We all know those types who conduct what should be the most private of conversations on their mobiles, only inches away on the train. And then there are the ones who carry on chatting when paying for goods at the check out. Our local newsagent put up a notice saying he would have none of it, and quite right too. All this charmless behaviour is likely to increase conflict, not diminish it.

And what about the fellow you suddenly find behind you, seemingly talking to himself. Poor crazed chap, you think: it's all

got too much. He can't handle Horsham's newly-found star status. But it turns out he's at it as well. He's a step ahead of everyone else though, with some kind of kit that doesn't even need a phone. Away with them all, I say – and then we wouldn't have to worry about those horrid masts that are springing up everywhere.

Next month: down with email.

## Editor's note

We've got two offers in this month's issue. Way back in 1992 Nigel Friswell had the great idea of making two video films, one of which was *Welcome Back to Horsham*, following the rebuilding of the town centre, and the other was of St Mary's church. He has now transferred them to DVD (both on the same disc with a running time of one hour) and is happy to offer copies to members at just £6 each. Details are on page 83.

And if you are stuck for ideas for a Christmas present, why not give your nearest and dearest a copy of John Bray's excellent *Drawings of Horsham*. There's a special price to members, see page 86.

Copy date for the January issue is 8 December.

## From the Committee

### A-frames

Oliver Palmer writes: A-frames are now ubiquitous and Society members, who not infrequently ask whether anything can be done about them, may like to know that I raised the issue at the October meeting of the Horsham Town Centre Forum. Not surprisingly the representative of the Horsham Traders' Guild forcibly extolled the virtues of A-frames, arguing that they are a necessity if traders are to attract much needed custom. Others shared the views of our members.

The key question is whether A-frames are illegal. The answer seems to depend on whose lawyers are consulted. I am reminded of that other question – how many lawyers does it take to change a light bulb? Answer, how many can you afford?

The West Sussex County Council's lawyers believe that A-frames are illegal, therefore it could not support the suggestion of a code of practice as it would be seen as condoning an offence. However Brighton and Hove City's lawyers believe that they are legal and have introduced a licensing system. If there was a conclusion it was that the Guild would write to its members suggesting that, if enforcement action is to be avoided, the number of A-frames should be limited to one per business and that it should be sited within a metre of the frontage.

**note: views on this troublesome issue would be most welcome.**

### Meeting with Chief Executive

A group of committee members recently held an informal review meeting with Tom Crowley, HDC's Chief Executive. There was an useful exchange of views on matters such as Horsham Park, Chesworth Farm and Design Statements, and it was agreed that there would be full consultation with the Society on issues such as the first two, for example, at the proposal stage.

### Leisure Centre extension

In response to a planning application for an extension to the Leisure Centre, the Society has sent an objection to HDC's Head of Development Control. The text of the letter is as follows:

'The Society notes that we owe the birth of our parks to the nineteenth century. As cities and towns grew, some contact with the countryside became increasingly important but increasingly difficult, and the purpose of parks was to bring something of the character of the countryside to the newly built-up urban areas. They would provide familiar surroundings and space for informal relaxation and it was a fundamental characteristic of parks that they should be large enough to ensure that the surrounding built-up area would be out of sight and briefly out of mind. It is this last characteristic which makes them essentially different from other open spaces.

The Society also notes that only the utmost restraint will limit further weakening of this precious characteristic. The Leisure Centre has unfortunately already been built but the proposed extension will further and significantly increase its bulk and intrusive appearance and planning permission can therefore justifiably be refused and, in the unanimous opinion of the Society's executive committee, should be.

At the same time the proposal to extend the car park, though of limited extent, can be and should also be rejected.'

**Oliver Palmer**  
Vice president, Horsham Society



No extension, please.

### Horsham District Community Partnership

HDCP held its annual conference at Roffey Park Institute on Saturday 14 October, and delegates from HDC, WSCC, local voluntary organisations, local councillors and a range of other concerns, including the Horsham Society, spent time in the morning at the event. A total of 56 delegates was listed.

The conference paperwork was larded with words and statements, much beloved by local government, which sound purposeful but mean absolutely nothing. A declaration of 'our purpose' held that the meeting should 'update on successes and achievements over the past year, consider how we add value to the work of the Theme Groups and look forward to the future work of the Partnership'.

Under 'outcomes from the meeting' there was a declaration that everyone should leave having 'contributed to where the HDCP is going at the strategic level' as well as having 'identified how the Partnership will feed into the partners' Corporate Plans/Strategies' and having 'identified priorities for the Partnership Board and raised issues to feed into Theme Group Action Plans for 2006/7'.

One item on the day's agenda went as follows: 'Move to break-out rooms. Groups will consider current action plans and priorities, as well as parish plan outcomes and individual experience to brainstorm the way forward. The outcomes will help in directing the priorities and projects for the Theme Groups and Partnership Board to identify and move forward in the next year'.

I wasn't there, and have tried hard to understand what it was all about from the agenda and priorities statement, but have failed miserably (although a briefing note from a colleague did help). All the usual suspects are there: 'partnership', 'outcomes', 'strategic', 'update' and so on; words that take you nowhere. And what on earth is a 'break-out room'? Whoever is responsible for mangling and diminishing our language in this way should brainstorm their way forward to a course in plain English.

But having said that, there were a lot of experienced and hard working people there on the day, and let's hope their combined talents rose above all this and they decided on lots of highly specific things to do, to the benefit of us all. We look forward to hearing about them. **BS**

### Urban extensions tour

Oliver Palmer has just represented the Society on a fact finding tour of three urban extension sites (as they are known) in Essex and Kent. These are housing developments similar to ones envisaged for west of Horsham, and councillors and others were also in the party. The developments, which were generally well designed, were characterised by high densities (twenty properties per acre), small gardens and winding and fairly narrow roads – to discourage speeding. Green spaces featured well, and land contours were exploited intelligently. But retail outlets were noticeable by their absence, and developers claimed that there was no case for their presence on sites under 2,500 dwellings. However 30 minute bus services were in operation, free to certain age groups, and acting as a shuttle between housing and the nearest retail centres.

# Local Development Framework

## Public examination of the Core Strategy – a briefing note for members by John Steele

The public examination ended in September, having taken the best part of three weeks. The two Planning Inspectors – Alan Foster and David Vickery – divided the hearings into a number of subject areas (or ‘Matters’) and one or other led each of the sessions.

At the opening session the Inspectors explained that this was a new procedure unlike the public enquiries for previous local plans, or planning appeals. They were at pains to stress that the public examination was just one part of a process which started when Horsham District Council submitted the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State, and ended when the Inspectors issued their binding report.

HDC is one of the first local authorities to embark upon the process and it was evident there was a steep learning curve for everyone involved. For example the Inspectors were clearly disappointed that objectors had not tried harder to resolve issues amongst themselves and with the Council in the period leading up to the hearings, despite being encouraged to do so by the Inspectors at their Pre-Examination meeting in May.

If there is a single factor that makes the new process different to what has gone before it is that the Inspectors’ duty is to test the soundness of the Council’s strategy against a prescribed list of ‘Tests of Soundness’. The assumption is that the strategy is sound unless evidence can be placed before the Inspectors that it is unsound. Whilst the Inspectors can require changes to be made to the Core Strategy, it seems these can only be relatively minor because they cannot make changes which may disadvantage third parties. In other words, they cannot say the Council should replace plans for development south of Broadbridge Heath with a specific new location. If they thought that the Council’s proposals were unsound in respect of such a key issue they would have to reject the Core Strategy as a whole. It is also possible that the Inspectors might decide to reject the strategy on the grounds that there were too many less serious problems – what was referred to at the hearings as ‘death by a thousand cuts’.

The first two authorities to have their plans tested under the new procedure both had them rejected by the Inspectors. It seemed that our Inspectors were conscious of the waste of resources, and the unhelpful planning environment, that such a course involved and they were trying to be pragmatic and encourage an agreed

resolution of issues where that was possible.

During the consultation stage which followed the submission of the Core Strategy the Horsham Society made a number of detailed observations, both objections and comments in support, on those parts of the document affecting the town. We also submitted additional Statements on five of the Matters identified by the Inspectors (these were published at the time and are available on our web site). We were represented at four of the hearings. I attended those on development strategy and level of housing provision, sustainable development principles, and infrastructure and community facilities/services. Ian Dockrey represented us at the hearing on the proposed development west of Horsham. Each hearing followed a similar format with the objectors relating to the matter under review sitting around a table (or the Council chamber), and the Inspector leading the discussion. The purpose of the hearings was to enable the Inspectors to understand better the issues, not for individual objectors to restate their objections. These were taken as read, and the Inspectors clearly had read them carefully all in advance. The Inspectors produced an agenda for each session, setting out the points they wished to cover and they usually invited the most relevant objector to introduce each item.

At the risk of being simplistic or over-cynical, discussions sometimes seemed to be polarised between representatives of the developers with land in the two strategic locations supporting the Core Strategy and emphasising its deliverability, and those representing land owners and developers with other sites (such as in Billingshurst and Southwater) arguing that the stipulated number of new homes was either insufficient, or could not be delivered in time, and therefore further land should be identified for development.

The sessions were business-like without being over-formal, and both Inspectors were adept at ensuring that everybody had an opportunity to make the points that they wished to. Whether or not we like the eventual outcome we certainly had a fair hearing within the new rules of the game.

With the end of the public examination the opportunity for objectors to initiate new evidence has closed, although the Inspectors can seek further clarification of the evidence already given if they wish. The Inspectors’ report is expected in the New Year.

## Slinfold Horticultural Society

I spent a very pleasant evening recently in the company of Slinfold Horticultural Society, reviewing what our own society was all about and swapping stories about the village’s history. Slinfold has had a number of distinguished residents in the past - the St John family from Slinfold Lodge, David Shepherd (fine cricketer and bishop of Liverpool), Alfred Shrubbs (world renowned athlete in the early twentieth century with many distance records, and born in the village) and sculptor Bainbridge Copnall (see page 87).

Slinfold Horticultural Society has a lively programme of meetings, and well known plant expert and local resident Mrs J Pope will speak on *Christmas Plants* on Thursday 14 December at 7.30 pm in the village hall. All are welcome.

BS

### Now on DVD!

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after the reconstruction of the Town Centre in 1992

&

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# When the German army swept through Horsham

## by Brian Slyfield

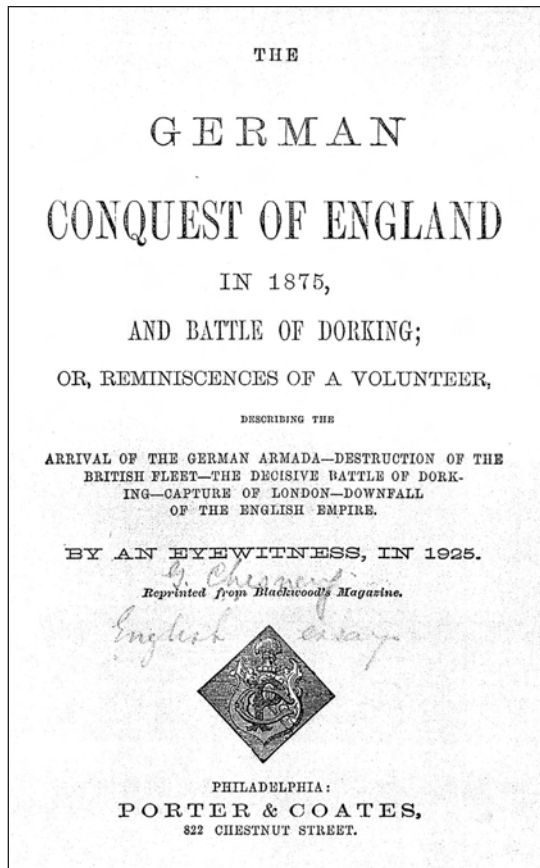
Don't worry – it didn't happen, at least not in the real world, so you haven't missed anything. But it did in the fertile imagination of a certain Victorian Army officer and author named Sir George Chesney, and thereby hangs a most interesting tale.

It all started, for me, when I was in New Orleans some time back with a group of friends on one of our annual battlefield walks, in this case the Battle of New Orleans (made popular, of course, by the late, great Lonnie Donegan), before the catastrophe which overwhelmed that part of the world. As well as chugging up the Mississippi by paddle steamer to the battle site I struggled to identify interesting new birds in the Louisiana swamps, gaped at a good few alligators – they gaped back, disconcertingly – and stocked up with jazz records in the French Quarter. And as ever, I poked around in the city's old book shops, not with any real hope of finding anything, but more out of habit: but you never know your luck.

I was about to leave one particular shop when a pile of pamphlets and booklets, all jumbled together in a box, caught my eye. Oh well, better have one last look through - and thank goodness I did, for tucked away among the local stuff was a slim volume with the following title: *The Battle of Dorking, and German Conquest of England in 1875; or, Reminiscences of a Volunteer by an Eyewitness, in 1925*. A quick scan of its pages gave mentions of Horsham, Box Hill, Leatherhead and Guildford; what on earth could this be all about? It was a booklet I had never heard of before, and it was truly bizarre that I should have stumbled across it in exotic down town New Orleans – such a contrast to all those homely places which were featured in its pages.

It was crying out to be bought, so that's just what happened; and it was given to me, by a good friend, as a most welcome gift. It wasn't particularly cheap, but subsequent research showed that the very few copies on sale anywhere else were a lot more expensive – well into three figures. And to obtain it in such extraordinary circumstances was worth a lot in itself, of course. It really was a collector's dream: an unusual title, a new discovery with local relevance, a fascinating background and found unexpectedly at a good price – what more could one ask?

Researching newly acquired old books is always rewarding, and none has proved more so than this item. The story goes as follows: Sir George Tompkyns Chesney, the anonymous author, was from an eminent academic and military family, and of Irish stock. His father was Charles Cornwallis Chesney, and he was also the nephew of Francis Rawdon Chesney, general and explorer, whose two main claims to fame were a) that he assessed



the viability of the Suez Canal and b) explored the Euphrates Valley. His brother, also called Charles Cornwallis, was a soldier and professor of military history at Sandhurst. George Tompkyns Chesney was born on 30 April 1830, and was educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton. He later served in the Indian Army, and moved steadily through the ranks until he became a general. He left India in 1892, and that same year became Conservative member for Oxford until his death on 31 March 1895.

But it is as a writer that he has left his mark. His first work was a text book on the administration of various departments of the Indian government, written in 1868, and which, although sounding a trifle tedious, gained him much praise at the time. His was a versatile talent, and he also wrote novels such as *The Dilemma*, an Anglo-Indian tale, and *The Private Secretary*, and he contributed frequently to magazines. But the work which was to bring him fame on both sides of the Atlantic was *The Battle of Dorking* which started life in *Blackwoods*

*Magazine* in May 1871, and was rapidly translated into book form when publishers saw how successfully its subject matter tapped a contemporary nerve. That same year saw two Canadian editions, two in the United States, in 1871 and 1872 (I have a Philadelphia edition), and one in France – again in 1871. But curiously, given the subject matter, there does not seem to have been a British edition. To understand why Chesney created such a surge of interest, and why so many outstanding claims were made for his work, we must first understand the political background to the times – and then tell the story.

Essentially, Chesney's impetus was Bismarck's Franco-Prussian War, which resulted in the defeat of France, the occupation of Paris on 28 January 1871 after a siege of 131 days, and much confusion across the rest of Europe. This mainland European war had brought the threat of invasion close to our own shores, and many were worried. Chesney held that the country was ill-prepared for such an event, and the purpose of his work was to ring alarm bells - loudly. And so he cleverly created an imaginary scenario in order to make people sit up and think – but one which was rooted in reality. The eminent historian RCK Ensor stated that 'by 1871 both public and professional opinion were strongly moved. One of the most successful anonymous pamphlets ever issued, *The Battle of Dorking*, appeared from the pen of a clever Engineer officer, and raised for the first time the spectre of a German invasion of England'.

Chesney's premise was that the German advance continued after the fall of Paris with a cross-Channel invasion and the consequent defeat of Britain, whose defences were nowhere near

strong enough to resist. He tells his story sharply and vividly, and while a work of fiction, it played upon the very real concerns of the time ('he exposed the fears of a society' as one commentator puts it), and caught the mood of uncertainty in the country brilliantly. As we will see, his story was written in graphic style, full of realistic detail, which added even more to the sense that such an event could actually happen. His purpose, in which he was totally convincing, was to shock the public with a clear, no-holds-barred demonstration of the possible consequences of Britain's defensive shortcomings.

No-one had ever written a work like this before, and in literary circles it is now seen, perhaps a mite pretentiously, as a classic futuristic tale, and an early example of a tradition that led to twentieth century novelists such as John Wyndham, with his own imaginary (but even less likely) stories of invasion. Academics have claimed (and who are we to argue?) that Chesney's brief account represents 'one of the most important precursors to the dystopias of the twentieth century'. Let me save you the trouble of reaching for a dictionary: 'dystopias' are, in short hand, the opposite of 'utopias' – very much John Wyndham and HG Wells territory, in fact.

So let us take a look at what happened in Chesney's fertile mind when the Germans invaded, swept through Sussex and moved on to London, capturing Horsham and other towns as they went. The story's anonymous author purports to tell the tale to his grandchildren some fifty years after the event, in 1925 - but that is merely a literary device, as the actual publication date, as we have seen, is 1871. He tells how the nation at the time was rich but complacent, and totally unprepared for a foreign threat. The country's naval defences, for example, were under strength, and one fateful day, on Thursday 12 August 1875, the enemy fleet was sighted off the Sussex coast, having engaged our war ships and defeated them. The story's narrator, who worked for Carter and Co, his father's company in the City (so let us call him Carter, for the sake of convenience), had volunteered for defence duties, and along with many others hastily began rifle drill and parade training – in a Dad's Army kind of way.

The word went about that the enemy had landed in force at Worthing (just imagine it), and so the volunteer militia struggled by train from London to Dorking, where the way forward was blocked by other troop trains. At this point, in an engaging detail, we read that Carter seized the opportunity to take a late breakfast, and he states, smugly: 'I had the remains of Mrs Travers's fowl and some bread wrapped up in my waterproof, which I shared with one or two less provident comrades'. When the line became clear they moved on down towards Horsham, as apparently 'Horsham Junction' was an important strategic point to be safeguarded. But in the event they got no further than an intermediate halt (perhaps Capel?) where they all disembarked. The enemy, it seems, had moved rapidly up country through the Weald, and had got to Horsham before them. It was now in German occupation.

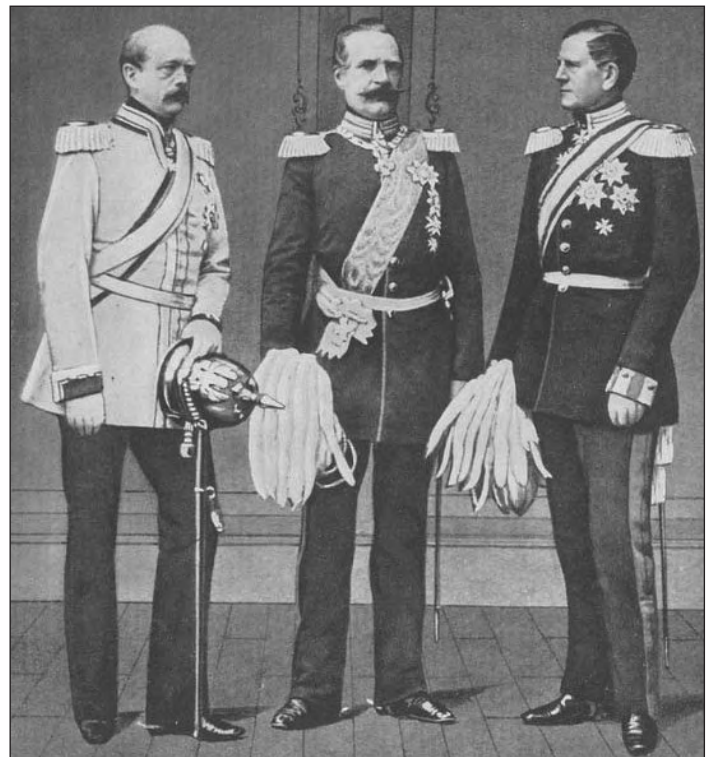
Carter and his men were ordered to fall back on Leith Common, so that they could threaten the enemy's flank if further advance was made towards either Dorking or Guildford. They were afflicted by heat and thirst, and while 'I had saved a soda-water bottleful of yesterday's claret', this, excellent though it sounds, did little to assuage them. They then dug in at the top of Leith Hill, where the air was cooler, but even the commanding view they now held to the south told them little about the enemy's troop movements. All they heard was the distant sound of gun fire, and they could only speculate as to what fate had befallen Horsham.

But in one or two places they managed to catch a glimpse of the Dorking to Horsham line, where men in red (Royal Engineers) were busy breaking up the track, so as to render it useless to the enemy. Further orders then required them to fall back and take up a position at Dorking, and so they retreated to Box Hill, where they awaited the German advance. And so the scene was now set for the famous Battle of Dorking.

The author's descriptive powers make for a most vivid account. It goes without saying, of course, that this was a battle the British troops lost, and the following extract sums up the carnage and also illustrates the strength of Chesney's writing, together with his eye for detail: 'I found Travers sitting with his back against the bank. A ball had gone through his lungs, and blood was coming from his mouth. I was lifting him, but the cry of agony he gave stopped me. I then saw that this was not his only wound – his thigh was smashed by a bullet (which must have hit him when standing on the bank), and the blood streaming down mixed in a muddy puddle with the rain water under him'.

There is more, in similar vein. Dorking soon went the same way as Worthing and Horsham, the Germans then swept northwards towards London, and before long the rest of the country was taken. At the end of the story the author reflects bitterly, looking back from a supposed standpoint of fifty years: 'All this misery and decay might have been so easily prevented, and we brought it about ourselves, by our own short-sighted recklessness. There, across the narrow straits, was the writing on the wall, but we would not choose to read it'. His grandchildren, we now learn, were 'off to seek a new home in a more prosperous land', but as for him he was too old to begin life again in a new country, and so he would have to see out his remaining years in the land he loved so well, but which was now occupied by a foreign power.

Chesney's message in this curious and interesting booklet was a powerful and vivid one, told with conviction in uncertain times to a receptive audience, and it was no wonder that it had such an impact – particularly, one imagines, on the good folk of Horsham and Dorking. But remember – it didn't happen.



Otto von Bismarck, Albrecht Graf von Roon and Helmuth von Moltke, the military leaders of Prussia in 1871.

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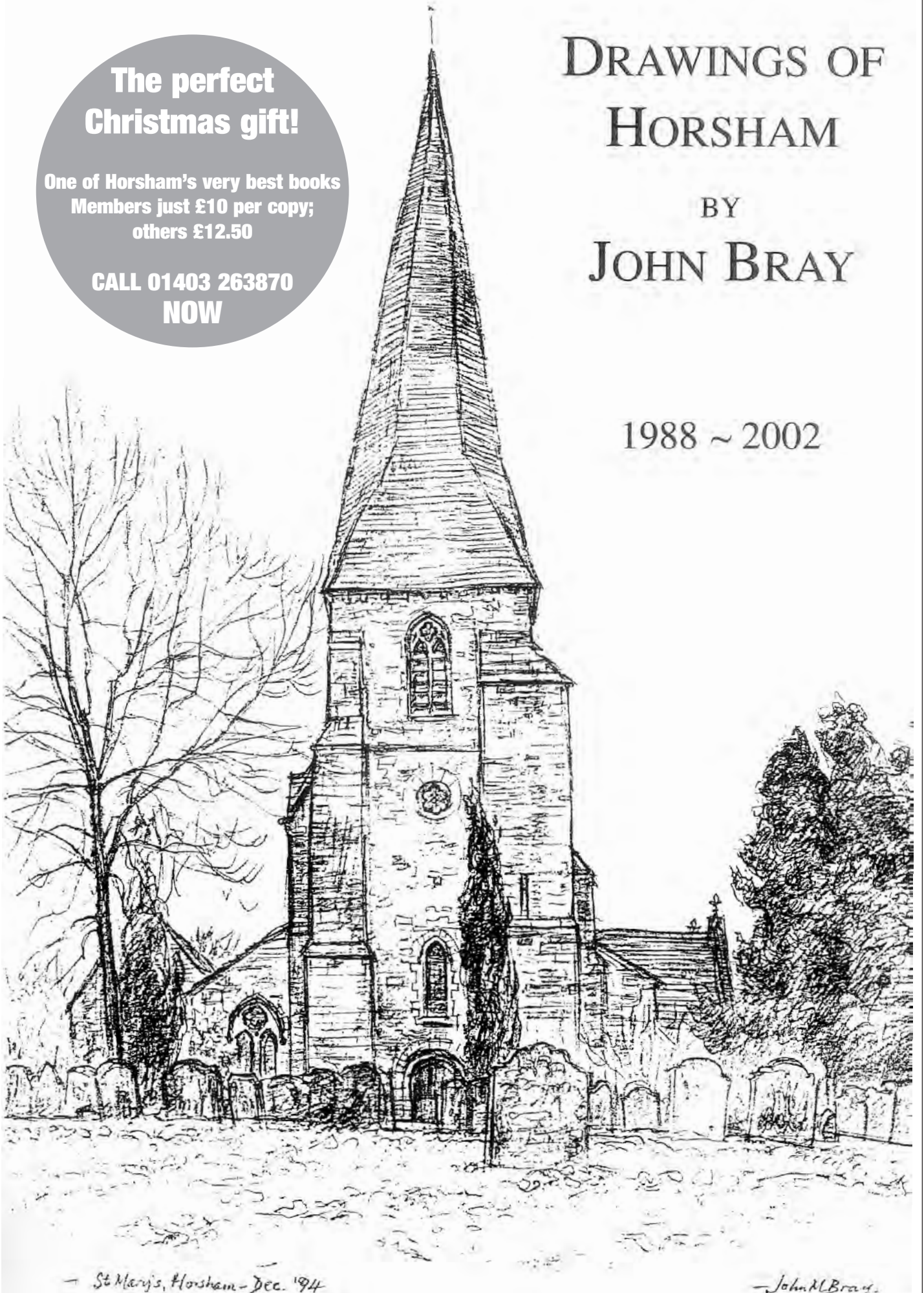
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# DRAWINGS OF HORSHAM

BY  
**JOHN BRAY**

1988 ~ 2002



# Letters to the Editor

**Do please write in: letters for publication to Brian Slyfield, Arun House, Denne Road, Horsham RH12 1JF**

## Fairies at the vicarage

It was interesting to see the picture of the vicarage garden (November issue). I remember it with extensive lawns, and huge trees – but then I was only eight years old at the time!

I was one of a troupe of fairies from Beryl Munro-Higgs' School of Dancing which danced in a Midsummer Night's Dream performed by the Horsham Players. Mr Pomroy Sainsbury, who was a dentist and lived in the Causeway, used to direct for this society and produced many Shakespearean plays in Horsham. Bainbridge Copnall, son of EW Copnall the photographer, used to act in these plays.

**Molly Cramp  
Cedar Close, Horsham**

note: Bainbridge Copnall MBE, author of *A Sculptor's Handbook*, was an artist and sculptor with an international reputation. He lived for a while in Slinfold, and among his public works was a magnificent 20 ft high 'Stag', in memory of the old Stag brewery near Victoria station. He also created the figure of Christ on the exterior of Broadbridge Heath church. ed.

## 'Free' electricity

**Nigel Friswell sent the following letter to the WSCT recently. It made a number of good points and is republished here for the benefit of those who may have missed it:**

One of the Horsham Society's functions is to try and make Horsham a better place for us all. The Society is as keen as anyone to embrace 'green' technology and alternative sources of power need to be looked at. Two of these have implications for the visual environment and I have been asked by the Society's committee to sound a note of caution.

Power generated locally has a superficial attraction, particularly if it is 'free'. Electric solar panels and mini wind turbines can be fitted to houses in order to produce electricity to top up what is bought from the grid. There are, however, some major problems. The Society's committee at first thought that the only drawback would be the unsightliness of the installations, but further study reveals that these devices are also unlikely to be cost effective.

Photovoltaic solar panels (the sort that generate electricity) are very expensive and relatively inefficient. The amount of electricity you can get out of them is small relative to the installation costs. So while they might be good for an isolated road sign or parking meter they are not much help in reducing the cost or environmental impact of buying power from the grid. As most of our power requirements are after dark they also need an efficient battery to store the electricity for when it is needed, at further cost.

Solar panels are usually mounted on a roof or special framework. For maximum efficiency (albeit still very low) they need to be oriented to the sunny side of the house and this may result in considerable visual impact on the locality. Is it worth it?

The same question can be asked of the small wind turbines now being promoted by DIY chains and some electricity companies. They have additional problems. Not only is there an even greater visual intrusion but, in order to catch the wind to any great extent, they need to be mounted well above the roof line on a substantial pole. It is important that the fixings are very strong and at least one of the suppliers of these devices warns that garages and gable ends are unlikely to be strong enough.

It has to be remembered that the electricity might be free but the installation cost will be considerable, corresponding to many years' electricity bills. The wind turbine will almost certainly be worn out and need replacing before it has paid for itself. As well as visual impact there may also be noise implications for the owner and the neighbours.

The suppliers of these wind turbines and electricity solar panels claim that they can be 'just plugged in', but the Institution of Electrical Engineers says that this can lead to dangerous situations. Clearly a live plug with exposed pins is unacceptable, but in addition the fuses or circuit breakers in your installation might not work properly if the power is fed in at a remote point, instead of at the main switchboard (consumer unit).

The message therefore is: 'Please think very carefully before installing electric solar panels or a mini wind turbine on your house'. You are unlikely to get your money's worth and you may well be spoiling the local environment instead of enhancing it. HDC is starting to get planning applications for mini wind turbines. The Horsham Society advocates that the

planners (officials and councillors) consider their policy very carefully before giving blanket approval for these devices. There may be considerable environmental impact for little or no benefit.

**Nigel Friswell  
BSc (Eng) CEng FIEE  
Vice president, Horsham Society  
Millais, Horsham**

## Recycle junk mail

Last month's Newsletter gave some excellent advice on how to reduce unwanted mail received through the post. The trouble is we also get a lot of it inserted in newspapers and magazines. However we need not throw this junk mail in the bin. Most of it, except for envelopes and plastic covers, can be recycled.

The trick is to tear each leaflet etc to see if the paper has white fibres. If so, it's for salvage, not the bin. This is official advice from Aylesford Newsprint, which takes all our recycling paper.

**Peggy Gledhill  
Highlands Road, Horsham**

## Protect Horsham Park

I agree totally with the Society that any encroachment into the natural beauty of Horsham Park would be destructive, irreversible and a great deprivation for the people of Horsham for ever.

Every aspect of 'gardening' takes expertise, time and money. Flower beds are labour intensive and seasonal, easily looking untidy and therefore costing a lot to be successful. The current vistas, the space and the peace which we all enjoy in the Park are very special and do not need anything else to enhance them.

This year HDC has tried very hard to plant flower beds suited to our dryer summers. However the dead daisies in North Street embarrass me every time I pass. This does nothing to impress residents or visitors. No daisies and just swaying grasses would be better if time and money are not available to keep up standards. Simplicity is often the greater art.

We must all learn not to meddle with things which are successful and as precious as Horsham Park. With thanks for all your efforts on our behalf.

**Mags Fisher  
Bashurst Copse, Itchingfield**

## Review: *Schooldays Remembered* edited by Sue Checkland

We've reviewed some good local publications recently, and this latest offering keeps up the standard. In *Schooldays Remembered* Sue Checkland has edited a collection of reminiscences relating to Oxford Road Senior Boys' and Girls' Schools and St Leonard's Infant School for the period 1914-2006, as recounted by past pupils and teachers.

Sue, who taught at St Leonard's between 1976-95, explains that in 2004 it became known that the school was to relocate to the Chesworth site in King's Road in 2006 and join with Chesworth Junior School to become Kingslea Primary. The Oxford Road building was to be demolished and the site used for new houses.

Oxford Road had served as a school site for 92 years, and many people thought the fact should be celebrated – hence this book, which is a truly collaborative effort. The building was originally erected in 1914 as a school for senior boys and girls – separate units under the same roof, with the playground divided by a high fence. When the schools became over-crowded plans were put in place for a new boys' school in Comptons Lane and a new girls' school in Depot Road. And so Forest and Millais were built during the fifties, and as pupils started to move into the new buildings other children were transferred from Clarence Road School (now the Professional Centre), which had been officially renamed St Leonard's Infant School in 1952. All clear?

And so many thousands of Horsham folk were educated in Oxford Road, and a good few celebrate the fact in this book. Information has also been gained from old school log books and reports, and many people volunteered photographs. The land on which the 1914 school was built was purchased from the Hurst family, and early log book entries from the World War I period make interesting reading. 1917 was the coldest winter on record since 1895, with heavy snowfalls and 18 degrees of frost, and earlier a 'Miss Greenin called about the boys who were trespassing for horse chestnuts. These were required by the government for munitions'. Really? Allotments were rented and gardening lessons started, no doubt as part of the war effort, and in November 1918 the school was closed for no less than five weeks because of a flu epidemic.

I particularly like another 1918 entry. A blackberry picking scheme was begun in the autumn, and the children were allowed to spend two half days or one whole day per week picking the fruit on the Denne estate, for which they received 3d a pound. This scheme involved all the school children in Horsham, and a grand total of 1,228 lbs was collected and dispatched to Richardson's jam factory in Denne Road.

I wish I could quote more, but there simply isn't the space. So there's only one thing for it – you'll have to go out and buy a copy for yourself. You don't have to be an ex-pupil or teacher to enjoy this fascinating dip into Horsham's educational past, and all proceeds will go to the Kingslea Primary School Fund.

BS

Copies of *Schooldays Remembered* ISBN 902484-27-4 are available from Horsham Museum, price £5.00



The Horsham Society is an independent body supported by members' subscriptions, a registered charity (No.268949), affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England and registered with the Civic Trust. It is a member of the English Historic Towns Forum.

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All correspondence should go to the Hon Secretary in the first instance. The Newsletter is published monthly except for August. Letters and articles to be considered for publication should be sent to the Editor, Brian Slyfield, Arun House, Denne Road, Horsham RH12 1JF. Opinions in the Newsletter, whether Editor's or contributors', are not necessarily the policy of the Society.

## By The Way

### New members

A warm welcome to the following: Mrs Blagdon, Bramber Close, Roffey; Mrs McLauchlin, Lambs Farm Road, Horsham; Ms Coates, Wimlands Lane, Faygate; Ms Saville, Littlehaven Lane, Horsham; Mrs Tandy, Bishopric, Horsham; Mr Cusick, Sedgwick Lane, Horsham; Mrs Munden, Hayes Lane, Slinfold; Mr and Mrs Weston, Birch Drive, Billingshurst.

### Please pay by 15 January!

The next issue will hold annual subscription renewal forms, so this is an early request. It would be enormously helpful to Pat Gale and her admin. if everyone could send her their payment by 15 January, so do please make a note in your brand new 2007 diary. Full details next month.



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