



with Oliver Farley

Horsham Society

Cherish a memory of glorious weather

Rarely have we had it so good. Yet even Harold Macmillan at his urbane best couldn't deliver a summer like the present. We've had such exceptional weather for so long now that like Keats' bees we think warm days will never cease; and it really is exceptional, both here in Sussex and across the country.

The Meteorological Office says June was the third warmest since 1910 and with a mean temperature provisionally put at 14.8°C that's 1.8°C above the average from 1981 to 2010.

Numbers have their place and they can tell an impressive tale but it's our everyday memories which makes the phenomenon come alive and forms those vivid recollections for future years and endless discussion.

Once upon a time 1959 was legendary, then came the 1970s and 1976 was baking.

We've surpassed those days easily since and I suppose a reason our parents recalled exceptional summers was that back then foreign travel was the privilege of the wealthy, while the rest of us took our chance on the weather in Devon or on the



The annual Horsham Riverside Walk is on Saturday July 14. Entry to the walk is free and further information is at www.horsham.community or www.facebook.com/horshamcommunity or on 07780 701184.

Broads.

Nowadays, a casual weekend abroad is not noteworthy and most of us will have programmed some summer sun

somewhere into our holiday plans.

Let's try - while it lasts - to cherish a memory of our home town in the seasonal heat.

We'll think of the park and the grass going brown, while the trees give welcome shade to lunch-timers and picnic-ers alike. Yesterday, a tiny toddler decided clothes were all too much and made a break across the lawn near the Pavilions to a chorus of shrieks from his pursuing mother and aunts; the swimming pool itself is extra full, though the school holidays still lie ahead, and for those with panting dogs there are the long shadows of the bordering trees giving welcome relief from intemperate Helios.

Venture a bit further afield and enjoy our well known Riverside Walk which lies within easy reach for much of Horsham. A stroll under the oaks at Owlbeech or by the river bank at Chesworth are tempting ways of adding some quiet enjoyment to the end of the day and, closer to town, the river itself is getting some renewal at the Garden of Remembrance, just beyond the church.

My own lasting memory of this exotic summer will be the screams of speeding swifts, flying so very high and so very fast

overhead, a good hundred metres or more, in flocks of twenty, our own personal version of the Red Arrows with something to celebrate.

The heat seems appropriate for these living comets from tropical skies, the dark messengers from those African climes which are their home for most of the year.

One last word on the sun and its representation in Horsham. In January we drew attention to the unfortunate 'Sun God' in the garden of Park House which had been thoroughly vandalised with malicious intent.

It lies there today still in its truncated state, cleaned up but uncared for.

Might we not dedicate a renewal of this once well-liked figure to the glorious summer of 2018?

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 259038.