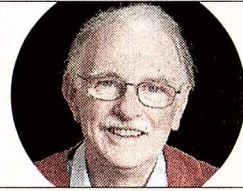


# Horsham Society

Oliver Farley



## Town's entry merits 16 pages in new book

**O**ur town is ever expanding and over the last few decades it has extended and altered enough to challenge recognition.

While its inner core has remained the same, (supporting our claim to be an historic market town), yet over those same recent decades our understanding of the town's historic heritage has deepened and widened. Much research has gone into the past of our older buildings and modern scientific methods have assisted the dating of their structure, complementing the patient hours spent in poring over the records.

A pleasing feature of these investigations is that interest in them has extended beyond antiquarianism into the realm of popular appeal. Some may well remember the handbooks on the Buildings of England, published by Penguin, and written mainly by Nikolaus Pevsner. The one on Sussex, both East and West, first appeared in 1965, co-authored by Ian Nairn. It was a trove of information on dozens of buildings throughout our county and certainly wasn't confined solely to the obvious churches and grand houses; for example, the motor



Horsham Station receives a complimentary mention in the new book.

showroom of Walter A. Wood in the Worthing Road was picked out for special praise and detailed description.

That edifice has, alas, long gone but there is still much to describe and laud in Horsham now.

Therefore, it's a singular pleasure to inform our readers that a new edition of the Sussex volume of the Buildings of England has just been published, this time a single eight-hundred-page version for West Sussex alone. The entry for Horsham

has gone up from the original six pages to sixteen, reflecting both the extra knowledge we now have of the town's buildings and the greater enthusiasm for seeking out their curious and interesting aspects.

Some changes are welcomed in the new edition which notes that Ian Nairn's plea for the removal of through traffic has been met and Horsham is no longer "an exasperating, traffic-laden, half-realized town" so that the centre can now be described as "...a more attractive, introverted and mainly

traffic-free island with most of its oldest buildings intact."

Those older buildings get very detailed treatment in lengthy sections most notably on the Causeway in general and St Mary's church in particular. There are two perambulations, one around the market area and the other around the Causeway and east of it; there's a map to identify the buildings, and one of the centre coloured illustrations is of the monument to Elisabeth Delves (1654) in St Mary's.

More recent developments are referred to, and, for example, the station (1938) is singled out for complimentary mention, undoing Nairn's dismissal of it as "horrible". There are many other elements which could be engagingly discussed here but I must leave that to the many eager readers of this essential new edition.

One final topical note: Nairn stated that "...the great trouble with these parts of north Horsham is their disconnectedness – bits of this, bits of that – and the through traffic which roars through it." Progress has been made in curing some of these problems in the inner town yet more remains to be done to integrate the newer, outer portions into the town as a whole.