

A useful glimpse of how others see our town centre

TWO WEEKS ago, The Horsham Society spent a day in the entertainment business.

The day started with a visit to our town by the Guildford Society and my heart sank when I awoke and saw what the weather was like that morning.

We met up with 20 members of the Guildford Society at the Normandy Centre.

They were fascinated by a short talk on the history of the building and this was followed by a description on the problems that we believe Horsham faces now and in the future.

What's always interesting in such meetings of like-



by
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minded people is how housing needs dominate the agenda for better or for worse.

We then took our visitors on a guided tour of the town, in simple terms from the park through to St Mary's Church in one direction and Shelley's Fountain to the junction of East Street and Denne Road in the other direction.

They were pleasantly surprised as to how compact

was the central area of our town.

They seemed to like what they saw but some of them were surprised to see vehicles driving down and through East Street. 'It's a shame it's not pedestrianised' was one of the comments made.

We were extremely fortunate that the rain held off during our hour and a quarter walk.

Our guests went off for lunch, several to The Crown, followed by some private time to look more carefully at some of the places they had seen.

The evening was a completely different kettle of fish with a talk to members of the society by Dr Janet Pennington on the subject of

inn signs of Sussex and their history.

Janet was very fortunate to have enjoyed the pleasure of undertaking her postgraduate studies visiting an array of pubs and inns.

Inn signs were, and still are, much more than external advertising for food and drink.

The signs, and their brackets, reveal patronage, land ownership, social status and local events, opening a window on to the past.

Our Sussex inn signs are a colourful addition to our urban and rural surroundings.

So it's unsurprising that with Horsham's proud brewing history residents

react fiercely whenever there is a proposal to change pub names or signs.

It will be a long time before the Green Dragon fades from people's memory.

Two things struck me as particularly interesting about the day.

Firstly, it is always fascinating to see our town through the eyes of a visitor.

Things that we grumble about they sometimes scarcely notice whereas others we take for granted strike them immediately.

In the event, it was encouraging to see how much visitors to our town enjoy what we have to offer and one could see the benefits of having a fairly compact

central area to the town.

Secondly, it was interesting to see how our members enjoyed something different with the inn signs of Sussex talk before returning refreshed to our key objectives, the past, present and future of Horsham.

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 our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 263870.