

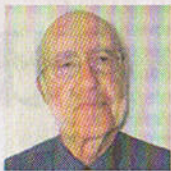
# What do visitors really think when they tour Horsham?

ONE MORNING in March, I was walking down Horsham's West Street towards the Shelley Fountain when I was stopped by a couple who, it turned out, were trying to get to the railway station. The first problem that I encountered was their very limited knowledge of English, which made our communication extremely difficult.

I discovered that they came from Brazil, which made my heart sink as I have no knowledge of Portuguese whatsoever. However, we did manage to communicate via a few words of English and the copious use of our hands.

I found that it was impossible to explain the route to the station without the aid of a map so I decided the simplest thing to do was to take them there. On the way, I was able to find out something about them and what they thought of Horsham.

They were a married couple, who had come



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to Horsham to stay with a relative. They were near the end of their holiday and they were going on a day trip to London to see the sights before returning to their home in Brazil in a couple of days' time.

They thought that Horsham was a really nice town and it was clear that the wife had enjoyed her shopping experience. I got the impression that there were more shopping experiences to come before they returned home. Not too surprisingly, they were also very conscious that their home town was

very different to our town.

Both of them were Roman Catholics but they hadn't found St John's Church for some reason or other. At least I was able to point them in the right direction with a finger pointed straight at the Shelley Fountain, followed by a right hand gesture to indicate where the church could be found.

They loved the Causeway and St Mary's Church and they were planning another visit on the following day. They had also found the delights of the museum. As we walked through the Carfax, they were interested in some of the older buildings that could be seen though I never successfully explained what was a timber framed building.

They thought that the lone spire left from the demolished St Mark's Church was rather amusing, especially as it was enclosed by more modern buildings. I think that they'd followed the route to the spire on another

day thinking it was a nice church only to be frustrated when they found that there was nothing to see.

They seemed to like the external appearance of the Capitol, which I explained, was our local theatre, and I left them at the station ready to catch their train to London.

I'm sure that their view of our town is common to most visitors, which is why it's so important to ensure that nothing happens to ruin what we have. We want to retain a compact and lovely market town. We don't want to finish up with a metropolis.

*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](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 261640.*