

The Amberley Society

The aim of the Society is the conservation and improvement of the amenities, character and interests of Amberley and its surroundings

www.amberleysociety.org.uk

Newsletter October 2015



Autumn Meeting

Aircraft Noise

Talk and Discussion
including a presentation by PAGNE
(Pulborough Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions)

Friday, October 16, at 7.30pm
Amberley Church Hall

Aircraft Noise

Aircraft noise, emissions and the possibility of a second runway at Gatwick have been recent issues of concern to residents. At our next meeting you have an opportunity to understand the airspace above and around Amberley and possible changes, which might occur. Ian Hare, Chairman of PAGNE, Pulborough Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions, will be giving a presentation about their work. The meeting is open to all, not just members of the Amberley Society, so do please invite your friends and neighbours along to share their views and join in the discussion.

South Downs National Park Local Plan

You have heard much about the Amberley 'Neighbourhood Plan' which is currently being prepared by Amberley Parish Council. That plan has to fit into the much larger overall plan for the National Park, called the 'SDNP Local Plan.' This will contain the policies that set the course for development within the National Park for the next 15 years. These are both important strategy documents that will affect planning around us. It is important to ensure we get the type of development we want for our community rather than have it imposed upon us by others. The draft Preferred Options of the SDNP Local Plan are at the public consultation stage and we can all add our comments until 28 October. To read more about it and add your comments, which can be done easily online, see: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/local-plan-preferred-options-public-consultation/>

New Archive Material – The Wontner-Smith Album

Thomas Wontner-Smith (1868-1938) lived at Amberley Place in the Alley and is buried in the churchyard. His niece, Ro Rickett, who lives in Devon, kindly got in touch via our website. She wished to see if we would be interested in Tom's old visitors' book/album containing many photographs, newspaper cuttings, a poem etc. The contents run from 1919 to 1938. The album

binding is fragile and it also has to be returned, so the pages have been copied and stored on a USB memory stick. Some images from the album will be on a slideshow before the start of our meeting on Friday, October 16.

The Gurkha Suspension Footbridge - John Fitzmaurice

Capt John Fitzmaurice, a Sapper with the Royal Engineers, who was key to our success in the campaign to save the suspension footbridge at North Stoke, has sadly died, aged 86. Along with his friend and Army colleague Major Reggie Trench, of East Street, Amberley, he was invaluable in persuading the Army to step in and restore the bridge after it was badly damaged by a falling tree back in 2008. It was through his skill, enthusiasm, contacts and tireless efforts that we were able to persuade the Regimental Colonel of the benefits of the project as a training exercise for the Gurkhas. John lived at Birdham, near Chichester, and I have sent our condolences to his wife Sheila and family.

The Black Horse

Communication between the owner and the Black Horse Action Group (BHAG) is on going. Progress is slower than we would like, but we have to remain patient. At the moment there is nothing further to report since the following update from BHAG appeared in the Parish Magazine:

Walking past the buildings that make up the former Black Horse public house it would be all too easy to conclude that this was another abandoned commercial concern. Those who have indicated their willingness to invest in the future of the pub believe passionately this is wrong.

The Black Horse Action Group was set up because it recognised the true value that a successful pub, right in the heart of the village, would bring in many ways to the wider community of Amberley, not just in the short-term, but in the long term as well. Whilst it may be tempting to settle for a compromise solution to meet a demand for action, we have always believed the solution must be on a sound commercial basis that recognises not just the value the pub would bring to the community but reward those who are prepared to invest in it if it is to survive in the long-term.

The BHAG, as it is often known, is more actively working to this end than ever before. In the last few months we have not only employed the services of specialist surveyors to ascertain the true commercial value of the property but also consulted builders, interior designers, brewers, successful pub operators and accountants, all with the one aim of ensuring that a lasting solution is found. Our recent survey of potential investors from our local community again confirmed that commitment is there.

We are currently in direct discussion with the freeholder and it is, therefore, difficult to be specific about the detail, but we hope that now it should be possible to bring about a satisfactory outcome sooner rather than later.

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