

The Amberley Society

The aim of the Society, which has more than 200 members, is the conservation and improvement of the amenities, character and interests of Amberley and its surroundings

Newsletter September / October 2009

Amberley Parish Map Unveiling Celebration - Saturday 26th September

St Michael's Church Hall, Amberley - 11am

Amberley's map, which has been several years in the making and shows the whole of the parish, including Houghton Bridge and North Stoke, is to be unveiled by Revd. David Farrant at a celebration this coming Saturday.

An impressive work of art, measuring 3ft x 4ft, it combines cartographic (flat-map) elements with elevations (landscape views) in an integrated contemporary image. Calligraphy and collaged photographic images create a further layer of interest, inviting the viewer to explore a myriad of small details that reflect Amberley at this point in time.

The map will be shown for the first time in St Michael's Church at 11.00 am. You are warmly invited to join us and enjoy a glass of wine or coffee/tea, while seeing the map for yourself. The Church will be open for viewing the map for the remainder of the day, although there is a wedding in the afternoon.

Copies of the map, at reduced scale, will be on sale.

The Revd. Farrant and the Parochial Church Council have kindly agreed that the map may remain in the church for an initial period of six months, after which its location will be reviewed.

Drewitt's Farm Housing Development in Church Street

There has been considerable concern by members about the handling and failures on the part of Horsham District Council and the developer with planning issues and work on the site. Letters to the council, dating back to 1996, seeking protection for wildlife on the site have been ignored, despite a legal requirement for an ecological survey. No such survey was carried out; as a result, buildings containing birds – such as owls and swallows, as well as roosting bats – were demolished during the nesting season.

Furthermore, despite having been forewarned in writing in 1999 of the presence of asbestos, HDC stands accused of not having applied proper supervision to ensure the demolition was correctly handled, much to the concern of residents nearby. Concerns have also been expressed to Horsham District Council about the preservation of the old wrought iron Croft fence on the western boundary of the site, about the extension of the settlement boundary into agricultural land, and the scale, especially the height, of the four planned large houses.

For further background, and to view correspondence, visit Horsham District Council's website (www.horsham.gov.uk), or visit the council offices in Park Street, Horsham. Details can also be accessed at local libraries. The latest planning application for Plot 4 has the Application Reference: DC/09/1278.

Website link:-

http://62.189.207.186/pap_hdclive/framepage.asp?appnumber=DC/09/1278&dc2=

The Gurkha Suspension Bridge

The North Stoke footbridge has been renamed the *Gurkha Suspension Bridge*, following its restoration by the Army earlier this summer. The Ordnance Survey has agreed to the proposed new name, which will be added to maps from next month. Furthermore, the landmark bridge is to be given a blue star 'tourist feature' symbol, underlining its significance as an attraction.

Major Gavin Brown, Commanding Officer of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, was delighted, saying: "It's a great privilege and honour to have the bridge renamed after the Gurkhas and I'm sure it'll now attract visits from many serving and ex-serving soldiers and their families."

The Gurkhas would like to continue their bond with our community and have suggested trying to form a link between Amberley C.E. First School and a school in Nepal. Michelle Clifford, the head teacher at Amberley School, is keen on the idea and can see many benefits, especially with teaching computer skills, along with geography, engineering and cultural aspects.

The Amberley Society's chairman, Grahame Joseph, has received a letter of thanks to everyone for their very generous donations to the Gurkha Welfare Trust from the Chairman, General Sir David Richards, who has just taken over as head of the British Army as Chief of the General Staff. For those receiving this letter by email, a copy is attached.

Amberley Walk with broadcaster Ben Fogle - Saturday 17th October

Jacquetta Fewster, Director of the South Downs Society, invites all members of the Amberley Society to join them for a walk celebrating the forthcoming National Park. The walk is being organised jointly by the South Downs Society and the Campaign for National Parks, of which, Ben Fogle is their president. It starts from Amberley Station at 11am. The route is 5.5 miles long, and includes the Gurkha Suspension Bridge and Amberley Mount. En route, Ben Fogle and representatives from both CNP and SDS will say a few words about the National Park. Walkers should wear stout footwear, bring a drink, a bite to eat and waterproof clothing.

100 Years of Gliding on the South Downs: a talk by John Land and Craig Lowrie Friday 16th October, St Michael's Church Hall, Amberley 7.30pm

Jose Weiss was an interesting and well known Amberley artist and pioneer of early manned flight. His glider, piloted by 17-year-old Eric Gordon-England, flew the world's first recorded soaring flight, from Amberley Mount 100 years ago. The story of Jose Weiss and his family living at Houghton, his art, his politics and the incredible aircraft that he built and flew here on our doorstep should make for a fascinating evening. John Land, a former British Airways' flight engineer who now works at Amberley Museum, has spent many years researching the subject and will bring along many photographs, as well as a model of a Weiss glider. Craig Lowrie, chairman of the Southdowns Gliding Club at Parham, will then give us an insight into the modern world of gliding.

My thanks to all who have helped with the busy programme. I look forward to the meetings and hope you will enjoy them.

Grahame Joseph, Chairman. (01798) 831340