

Local History Detective Talk with Jo Gosney

Jo gave a very interesting and lively talk illustrating the various sources of research that she has used in her build-up of a large archive of local history information.

The content of post cards and photographs can often be expanded by looking through local newspapers which are on film and can be accessed in the local library. Other sources are *Newspapers on line* and the *Times digital archive* on line. Again these can be accessed through membership of the local library.



Plans of houses, such as Windmill Hill, (later to be rebuilt as Farnborough Hill) can often be found in County archives. A very productive area of research is local publications, such as the *Story of a House* by Dorothy Mostyn. Farnborough is fortunate in that a number of books have been published which give a good picture of life in the old village.

Often sheer good luck comes into play. Having helped an overseas researcher on a particular subject, I was led to an extensive photographic archive of Farnborough Hill in the French National Archives. This has provided pictorial proof of the boating lake which existed near the corner of Prospect Avenue and Prospect Road.

Aerial views can be identified by consulting the relevant Ordnance Survey maps and local estate plans will invariably give field names which might well be reflected in road or development names.

Parish magazines throw light on local events such as the Coal Dust March in Queensmead in the 1960s led by the Rector's wife, using the school bell to rally the troops. The march was in protest about the dirt emanating from the coal yards at Farnborough Station. The result was that eventually an 18' wooden wall was erected which in reality was such an eyesore the residents preferred the coal dust.

Two very useful resources are old telephone directories, again accessible on line, and the Meteorological Office archives where I was able to establish that a photo of Farnborough Station in the snow c. March 1930s was in fact March 1937. This led me down other routes to find out about snow stories locally.



To be able to appreciate local history personal observation is very important. Question why a building is so named or how do we establish the ownership? An example of this is the Methodist Church on the corner of Lynchford and Alexandra Roads. An in depth look into the hedge surrounding the church will reveal a post and rail fence with a crown on the top of the post. This indicates an old military building. There are also a number of stones dotted around the woodland near to Laffan's Plain bearing a number and a military arrow. Many have been moved or damaged but again this is an indication of a military boundary. There is one visible in the Swan Inn car park which originally stood right on the corner of the building on RAE Road. In fact, the Swan was outside the military area.



At the end of the presentation members were invited to look at some of the artefacts and memorabilia on display relating to Farnborough. A detailed booklet on the history of Knellwood was on sale and that shows some of the diverse sources of the information gathered.