



**October 2024**

### **New Season, New Committee**

Many of you will know that the SIHG committee has lost several members in recent years. Jan Spencer and Bob Bryson have passed away and Tim Wilcock has left. In November, Pam Taylor, Malcolm Watson and John Bourne will be standing down after years of service – many thanks to all of them – but we are happy to report that we have three new committee members – myself, Simon Ritchie and Richard Shenton – and that Michael Herbert and Hugh Anscombe are remaining on the committee. We still have room for more people on the committee – let me know if you are interested. Some of you know me, Simon and Richard, from SIHG meetings, or through our involvement with other local groups. We will introduce ourselves at the first few meetings.

We are very pleased to say that we have managed to compile a pretty full programme from October to April, including our first physical live talks since before Covid. Please come along and support both the *free* Zoom talks and the live talks (free to members for the moment) We will make decisions about longer term membership and entrance fees at our AGM on 31st October.

We are actively looking at some day trips for spring/summer 2025 – we hope to have some news in the next newsletter. In the meantime, our website at [www.sihg.org.uk](http://www.sihg.org.uk) will be updated as new events are added

*Garry Brooks, Acting SIHG Chairman*

### **October to December Programme**

- 10 Oct** “Bradshaw’s and an Early Railway Tour” by Robert Mee (Zoom).
- 24 Oct** “So You Think We Do Not Make Anything Anymore? British Manufacturing in the 21st Century” by Dr Richards Marks (Leatherhead).
- 26 Oct** “The Truth About Harry Beck” (a play about the London Underground Map’s inventor). London Transport Museum Cube Theatre (1:30 p.m.)
- 26 Oct** GPS day conference at Leatherhead Institute, hosted by Simon Ritchie.
- 31 Oct** AGM (Zoom) at 10.00 AM – see below
- 07 Nov** “Brunel – Father, Son & Grandson” by Bill McNaught (Zoom)
- 21 Nov** “Mayors, Thieves & Bargemistresses: People of the Early Wey Navigation” by Dr Sue Jones (Leatherhead)
- 05 Dec** “Musings of a Miner: A Glimpse of Life in County Durham a Century ago” by Michelle Howes (Leatherhead). Plus Christmas drinks and snacks

Leatherhead talks start at 2.00 p.m. with doors open at 1:30. Talks will last about 90 minutes with a tea break in the middle. The address is:

Oddfellows Hall  
45-51 Bridge Street  
Leatherhead, KT22 8BN

Zoom talks start at 7.30 p.m., doors open 7:15, and will usually last an hour or so. You need to register for Zoom talks. The registration link for our October 10th talk, ‘Bradshaw’s and an Early Railway Tour’, is:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sfumrqzkgGtdRRRl7\\_Lls9nDnCdcsmkHj](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sfumrqzkgGtdRRRl7_Lls9nDnCdcsmkHj)

### **Membership**

Membership of SIHG will be *free* until April 2025. All members will enjoy free entrance to our talks, both Zoom and live at Leatherhead, and will receive newsletters and emails on SIHG news and events.

If you are not already a member, please email [membership@sihg.org.uk](mailto:membership@sihg.org.uk) and we will email you a (very short) membership form.

## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will take place by Zoom on Thursday, 31st October, at 10.00 a.m. Please come along as we need to make some important decisions.

Please register at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAuduuvrTMoGNyhhAoE6o5RTGwgTK8zpB6p>

and Zoom will send you a login link.

---

## The Future of SIHG

Since Covid, SIHG has been largely a virtual group, holding 15- 20 Zooms a year on Thursday mornings, with only the very occasional physical meetup (for example, to visit Gatwick Aviation Museum.) The late Bob Bryson did an enormous amount of work, acting as treasurer, programme secretary and more, to keep the group going. Now that Bob is no longer with us, we need to change to survive.

The committee has met a few times and made some key decisions, the most important being to restart live talks at Leatherhead in addition to doing Zoom talks. The live talks will be at 2.00 p.m. on Thursdays at Leatherhead Oddfellow Hall (doors open 1.30), while the Zooms will be at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday evenings (doors open 7.15). We would have preferred Thursday mornings for live talks but could not find a suitable hall that was available. We also decided to try holding Zoom talks in the evenings to cater for people who are at work during the day.

In addition we no longer have a treasurer role; our funds now being held by the Surrey Archaeological Society, our parent organisation.

Regarding the programme, which has been compiled by Michael Herbert, Garry Brooks and John Bourne, we have tried to broaden its scope by including talks which focus on industrialisation's social history, with talks on some of those brilliant individuals who contributed hugely to the industrial revolution. Other events include a play and a day conference on GPS. You may also notice that on the October to April programme four of the speakers are female and over half of the speakers are new to SIHG.

Next year we hope to organise some days out. Candidates include a visit to the Rural Life Museum in Tilford, near Farnham; the Basingstoke Canal; one of Richard Shenton's tours on industrial archaeology; and an 'Engineers and Railways Tour' of Kensal Green cemetery, which is the final resting place of Brunel and many other greats of the industrial revolution.

However, we need your help and support to make things happen. If you would like to volunteer to organise an event or help at the live talks, setting up beforehand, clearing up afterwards or making teas and coffees, please email [meetings@sihg.org.uk](mailto:meetings@sihg.org.uk)

Lastly, although the group intends to change, we all still want it to be a place where you can come along and chat with friends. The Zooms will stay open for a post-talk chat, and now we are running Leatherhead live talks again we can go for a drink after. Any suggestions?

---

## Introducing: Robert Mee



Our October speaker, Robert Mee, is a local historian of the Derbyshire / Nottinghamshire border area. He has been involved in local history for many years, and on retirement he went back to university, gaining an M.A. in English Local History at Leicester.

Robert is from a former mining area and often speaks about the industrial development of his hometown. Many of his talks, however, are not purely local. He can address audiences around the country by Zoom, and he is just as happy talking about village lockups, alms houses, or the Midlands' castles. And he is speaking at the national conference of the Police History Society in Leatherhead in November.

Robert can be contacted at [robertmree@btinternet.com](mailto:robertmree@btinternet.com)

## Introducing: Michelle Howes



Our December speaker, Michelle Howes, is a tour guide at Painshill Park and a member of the curatorial team at Leatherhead Museum. Keenly interested in social and family history, she has spent the first few years of her retirement building up a picture of the life and times of her ancestors in Durham and Northumberland, who lived through key periods of the industrial revolution and the depression. Surrey born and bred, Michelle's roots are firmly in the Northeast and she's proud of her working class ancestors who did their bit, and enjoyed life, in the most difficult of times.

During lockdown, Michelle joined a project transcribing documents for the Foundling Hospital, and she became fascinated with witches' marks and other methods of averting evil used in medieval times; completely different topics which both sparked further research and added to the talks which she delivers in person or via Zoom.

Michelle can be contacted at:  
[michelle.r.howes@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.r.howes@gmail.com)

---

## In Memory of Bob Bryson

I first met Bob when I joined SIHG in about 2003. We met for lectures at the Surrey University site, a venue enabled by Alan Crocker, professor of physics at the university. Bob had taken over from, I think, Alan, who had been an enthusiastic founder member. Many of the more senior members will remember the cold, often wet, walk up the hill from the car park, always made worthwhile by the excellent speakers at the talks. It was not long before I joined the committee, ably run by Bob, not always an easy task as most of the

committee members were people of some experience and not short of opinions.

SIHG was extremely lucky to have the advantage of Bob's experience and commitment for so many years. As time went on, he took over various roles when they became vacant, so that, for most people he became Mr SIHG. For this reason, together with the loss of a good friend, the Society mourns the loss of Bob. A memorial lecture will be held in October, which we hope many of you will attend.

*Pam Taylor, Vice Chairman, SIHG*

---

## Our New Website

Many of you will already know that we now use the Surrey Archaeological Society (SYAS) website. Our section is at:

[www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk/content/sihg\\_front](http://www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk/content/sihg_front) Our old website URL, [www.sihg.org.uk](http://www.sihg.org.uk) should redirect you to the new site.

Jan Spencer maintained our old website, but it became out of date technically, so after Jan's death the committee decided to use the website of our parent organisation, SYAS. The SYAS website will be undergoing a major upgrade and re-design in the next three to six months, but we will keep you posted.

Simon Ritchie and Garry Brooks, who have both had decades of IT experience, are joint local webmasters for SIHG, but please note that this only gives them power to change SIHG listings and text, the wider structure of the website being handled by SYAS.

If you have any comments on the website, please email [membership@sihg.org.uk](mailto:membership@sihg.org.uk)

---

## Oddfellow or SYAS Member?

You too will enjoy *free* entry to our talks at Leatherhead Oddfellows Hall (as well as Zooms). Please come along.

We hope you like this newsletter. We'll send out another one in November or December. If you have any comments on it, please email [membership@sihg.org.uk](mailto:membership@sihg.org.uk)