

Dear Members and Friends,

*This message sent in blind copy format by Robert Fowler, Hon Sec Alresford Historical & Literary Society*

We trust you are well and adapting to the Corona Virus restrictions and looking forward to the Christmas break when some of us might be able to see our families once again.

We hold out hope that restrictions on public gatherings can be eased from mid year, when we can meet for our regular talks once again and socialise normally. Its not until we are denied that opportunity we realise how important it is. We have had only 2 physical meetings in 2020 and our main Society lifeline has been 'On Line' Videos via the ZOOM Platform. Thank goodness for small mercies. However, we will not be organising a Video Talk in December.

**January ZOOM Meeting:** On the 20th Jan we have arranged a talk on ZOOM video by Cheryl Butler.

The Subject will be ***'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to China'***

Now you may think that has nothing to do with Hampshire but you could be mistaken. Navigation by the explorers in the 17th Century was not that good -- allegedly. Listen in to find out. I will send you a link in January nearer the time with more details.

**PROGRAMME:** We have not put together our usual Programme for 2021 as it is impossible to judge when all the meeting restrictions will be eased. We will continue however, to organise a monthly video ZOOM on subjects that will be of interest to our members as we have done for next January.

**AGM.** Again it will not be possible to organise a physical AGM so the Committee will organise a Video AGM on ZOOM. Details later.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS.** There will no need for Subscriptions next year. As per 2020 all paid up members will still have membership rights through to 2022. This is because we believe that restrictions for meeting in groups will still in force for much of 2021.

**PROJECTS:** Spitfire Memorial:



Artists impression of the Spitfires in training

This project was selected by our Committee from a number of ideas and approved by the AGM in 2018. It followed research by our Chairman Glenn Gilbertson into the pilot's deaths that occurred in the Alresford area during WW2. Very few people knew about the circumstances of the 3 Spitfire Pilots who lost their lives that day in 22nd July 1944 and your Committee decided that we would use some of our funds to place a memorial story board near the spot where they crashed.

Now, after a huge amount of effort, things are coming together. The landowner at the Folly Hill site near Itchen Stoke, has agreed to allow us to use part of his roadside field. The Planning Authority have at last given permission and we have ordered the Lectern and Story Board. Railings have been purchased and the groundwork organised. This gives us hope that the memorial will be installed and ready for viewing in January next. The latest design of the Story board is not reproduced here as it is large digital file. I can send this on request.

### **Our New book.**

Members will recall that as long ago as 2017 work started on an entirely new History of Alresford. I am pleased to report that in spite of recent difficulties caused by Covid-19 the project is well advanced and the book will be ready to go on sale around the middle of next year. It will be called ***ALRESFORD THROUGH TIME: A New History.***

***ALRESFORD THROUGH TIME*** has been edited for the Society by Brian Tippett, who has himself written several chapters. It will be a fully illustrated volume of over 300 pages, many in colour. It traces the development of Alresford and the changing pattern of life in the town from its foundation to the present day. The earlier of years Alresford's history are covered in chapters by Professor Barbara York and Edward Roberts. Other chapters throw new light on such matters as the

great fire of 1689, the life and career of Henry Perin (founder of the school), the presence in the town for over half a century of hundreds of French prisoners of war, and the life in Alresford of the American GIs stationed here for several months on the eve of D-Day. The book ends with an account of Alresford's growth and transformation since the 1960s.

**For local Interest: Cold War Spies.** Harry Houghton and Ethel Gee- Remember them and the town toilets? Whilst in Winchester prison, Houghton wrote a loving letter to his girlfriend Gee (pet name Bunty) when her Mother died. I have attached the copy and although the writing is difficult to read at first, you will get a sense of their relationship. In my view Gee was treated harshly in comparison with others who gave away our secrets like Blunt. This copy was from the National Archives where you can find more free documents of all kinds to browse. Other letters of Love are at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/whats-on/with-love/>

### **Other History Societies have been writing books too.**

The Worthy History Society have just published another book about Traditional Houses in the Worthy Villages. Considering the proximity of those villages we think that some of our members may be interested as it uses examples from the Worthy villages. It will also resonate with those further up the valley towards Alresford. Edward Roberts, is co - author. Details of the book are shown on the attached flyer.

**Things to look out for:** Winchester Open Days. See their website

<https://www.winchesterheritageopendays.org/>

*Winchester Heritage Open days. A Celebration of Hampshire's Heritage and History*

Every Wednesday from now until the new year you can enjoy a brand new podcast exploring local and national history, as well as some heritage delights. [Click Here to view all the episodes!](#)

**HAT. Hampshire Archives Trust Newsletter.** This is a very informative letter but it is much too large to put onto this Page, including details of Free talks and activities as well as a source of amazing information about our county. Go to this link: <https://mailchi.mp/d3856ddb61fb/hampshire-archives-trust-summer-e-newsletter-7197457?e=5a6bbf2ecd>

Best wishes and Happy Christmas 🎅

Bob Fowler Hon Sec

