THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Autumn visit: 22 September 2018

Dissent in the Horsham area

West Sussex might be thought a quintessentially Anglican county. Certainly many parishes had no dissenting congregations appearing in the 1851 Religious Census returns. Yet it is host to a rich Dissenting tradition. Our visit will explore some of its oldest manifestations, in the form of the Society of Friends, as well as some General Baptist congregations which became Unitarian. We also take in the Strict Baptists, for whom Sussex and Kent were a heartland, and the Roman Catholics, who maintained a presence in the area throughout.

Our day begins in Horsham at the **Unitarian Church (Grade II; 1721)**, opposite the bus station, where tea and coffee will be available from 10.15. The church which met here owed much to the ministry of the 17th-century General Baptist leader Matthew Caffyn, whose views occasioned bitter dispute nationally. We then walk 100 metres to the **Friends' Meeting House (Grade II; 1785)**. A coach then collects us for our afternoon's tour.

We go first to the **Unitarian Chapel at Billingshurst (1754; Grade II)**, where tea and coffee will be available to accompany your packed lunch (please buy this before the day starts). This building, still used for worship, has developed a role as an arts and community venue. We then visit (subject to confirmation) England's first post-Reformation Marian Catholic shrine, **the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation at West Grinstead (1893; Grade II)**. As part of the visit, it may be possible to view the 'secret chapel' hidden away in the house (accessible only by steep stairs). From there we visit the **Friends' Meeting House at Ifield (Grade I; 1676)**. We return to **Rehoboth Baptist Chapel, Horsham (1834)**, whose first pastor was Edward Mote, author of the hymn 'My hope is built on nothing less'. Here we shall enjoy a chapel tea. The day ends about 5.45 pm.

NB: Intending participants are advised to use public transport where possible. Horsham enjoys an excellent train service from London and Chichester, and now also as part of the Thameslink network. Parking is difficult and expensive, but there is a Park and Ride site at the Hop Oast roundabout on the A24 to the south of the town. Some venues are difficult of access or have potentially slippery flagstones.

Please send your application, by 7 September, to Dr Tim Grass, 1 Thornhill Close, Ramsey, Isle of Man, IM8 3LA. For tourist information, contact Horsham TIC, at www.horshamvisitor.co.uk or 01403 211661.

Visit to Horsham – 22 September 2018

Please reserve ____ places for members @ £34 per head £____

Please reserve ____ places for non-members @ £36 per head £____

Enclosed is a cheque made out to 'The Chapels Society' for the **total** amount due: £____

I/we have the following dietary requirements:

Name(s) of members: Name(s) of guest(s):

Address: Address (if different):

Telephone: E-mail:

☐ I wish to receive a paper copy of the visit notes (a self-addressed, not stamped, C5 envelope will be required for this).