

Chairman's October report.

Our September social afternoon was slightly different. As most of the committee were away on their Autumn break, they visited several beauty spots along with Chatsworth House and had a good time, we had to make some changes. Members took their own chairs and we sat socially distanced in a circle to listen to Ian's adventures in France. We were pleased to welcome three prospective new members and we hope they will revisit the meetings again soon.

In advance of my visit to the D. Day beaches at the end of October, I had been invited to an event called "Remembering the Fallen". This event had been arranged with St John's Catholic School in Gravesend and Gravesend Historical Society. The afternoon was very interesting and had speakers from Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The Normandy Trust and a local military historian, as well as Camilla Baker, who spoke about her great-grandfather, Sir Herbert Baker of Owletts, Cobham who was one of the three architects who initially drew up the designs for the war grave sites, he is particularly known for Tyne Cot and many more historic properties throughout the world. Also, there were several veterans from the time, including George Batts who campaigned for a memorial way back in 2005 and it was David Cameron who eventually granted its go ahead and this year it was completed. The trip to Normandy will be the first time George has actually seen it and he is really looking forward to that day. See picture below. The school then went on to dedicate a memorial garden in their grounds, one to the Normandy campaign, one to the Holocaust and another to those associated with the school who were lost during the pandemic.

Tickets for the Race Night are going well and we will be joined by guests from CliffARA. Christmas lunch at the College is booked and arranged, see Jan for more details.

As for November main meeting, Sonja has arranged something special, the speaker is from the Maidstone gin distillery and they will be telling us all about various gins. They will have products to purchase in time for Christmas gifts.