6 November – Sideshows of WW1

Last year the centenary of the end World War One was commemorated, and what was remembered was the devastating four years of fighting on the Western Front. To remind us that WWI was a wider conflict, David Williams takes us round the world to visit and hear of twenty-five other locations in five continents where there were both significant and minor conflicts. He also explains how the causes of the war started as early as 1888 and continued until 1921. Only one third of the losses in the Great War were suffered on the Western Front. This talk is a journey around the world to remind us where the other two thirds were lost. The talk will be of interest as it encompasses politics, diplomacy, geography and military history during a very important period in our recent past.

David is a Chartered Engineer but retired ten years ago from running his own international engineering company since when he has been studying Military History. He visits battlefield sites all over the world in the summer months and gives talks throughout the year.

Monthly Speaker Meetings at Claygate Village Hall

4 December – Royal Christmas: Celebrations through the Ages

Our Christmas rituals evolved from Christian liturgy, pagan rites and the influence of the monarchy. The German customs of the Victorian royal family became the basis of the English Christmas we know today. This talk explores Christmas at court from the middle ages to present day and how the royals have influenced our own celebrations.

Siobhan Clarke has a BA in Modern History and has worked for Historic Royal Palaces for 18 years. Her book, A Tudor Christmas, was published in 2018 and she is currently working on The Tudors: An Illustrated History for Carlton Books.

5 February 2020 – History of the Squires Garden Centres

Over eighty years ago David Squire, Head Groundsman and gardener at the Police Orphanage in Twickenham, was made redundant. With a young family to support he set up his own business, and that business has grown into a thriving, family-owned garden centre group which now comprises 15 garden centres, and rose, herbaceous and bedding plant nurseries across Surrey, Sussex North and West London. During the 1960s people became ever more interested in gardening for themselves rather than employing a gardener. In response to this, Squires opened their first garden centre in Sixth Cross Road, Twickenham in 1964. David Squire’s son Colin will also describe how the garden centres are run and how they have become part of our culture.

Colin Squire OBE is Chairman Emeritus of the company and continuing the family tradition Sarah, Colin’s daughter, is Chairman. Colin is a hugely respected figure in the horticultural industry having exhibited at both RHS Chelsea and at all the Hampton Court Flower Shows. He is a supporter of Painshill Park and is the first President of the newly formed Rose Society UK.