

Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Potted Histories No 52

Jimmy Hanley - The Plough Effingham



Jimmy Hanley (pictured above) the English actor, lived in Fetcham and could often be seen chatting to locals in the village. He resided at 'Tanglewood' on the Cobham Road.

He was born in Norwich, Norfolk, in October 1918 and began his career as a child actor before becoming popular in juvenile roles. He was groomed by the Rank Studio system during his teenage years and earned film stardom as a "boy-next-door" type.

The young star-struck actor attended the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts and whilst he was studying there, made his stage debut at age 12 at the London Palladium, as John Darling in Peter Pan. He began to make films in his teens.

During the Second World War he served as an officer with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and in a commando raid in Norway he was wounded in the leg and was invalided out of the service. He returned to films, including *Salute John Citizen* (1942), *Henry V* with Laurence Olivier (1944), *For You Alone* (1945) *The Blue Lamp* (1950) *The Galloping Major* (1951) and the *Huggetts Family* series of films.

He later worked on radio and TV, appearing in several television series and hosting the ITV series *Jim's Inn* from 1957-1963, which combined advertising messages with the plot of a soap opera. For many years he was a real life publican, for he and his second wife 'Maggie' ran 'The Plough' at Effingham (pictured above right).

His first wife was actress Dinah Sheridan (1942-1953) they had three children, including Jenny Hanley and the Conservative politician Sir Jeremy Hanley. The third died in infancy. He then married actress Margaret Avery in 1955, they had three daughters: Jane, Sarah and Katy.

He died from pancreatic cancer in Fetcham in January 1970, aged 51.

Goff Powell

For information regarding Membership, Lectures and Museum opening hours

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