

Kings Bromley Historians had a meeting in the Village Hall on Friday 28 March when Allan Howard gave a talk on “Emily Meynell Ingram and Hoar Cross”. This follows the Historians’ visit to Hoar Cross Church last year.

Emily Charlotte Meynell Ingram (1840-1907) was the eldest daughter of Lord Halifax who was Chancellor of the Exchequer – his laissez-faire actions during the Great Famine in Ireland greatly increased the suffering of the Irish people.

Emily played with Queen Victoria’s children and her character as a child has been variously described as ‘difficult’, ‘precocious’ and ‘headstrong’. She married Hugo Meynell Ingram in 1863, when she was 23 and he was 41; sadly, she had a riding accident and suffered a miscarriage, resulting in her being unable to have children. Hugo inherited the vast Meynell Ingram fortune in 1869, together with Hoar Cross Hall and Temple Newsam, near Leeds. Hugo died two years later, and Emily inherited 16 estates in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Staffordshire plus an annual income of £45,000 (equivalent to £6.64 million today).

She built the Church of the Holy Angels at Hoar Cross as a memorial to her husband. It is a very large church for the small village of Hoar Cross, filled with works of art from all over Europe. Emily’s brother and family lived with her at Hoar Cross Hall and she enjoyed sailing in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, but she suffered bouts of depression. Although at the end of her life her income had risen to today’s equivalent of £22 million a year and her estate was valued at £342 million, Emily’s story shows that money does not always bring happiness.