

Delia's talk included clips from various newsreels and recordings of Frank Sinatra, Glenn Miller and, of course, Dame Vera Lynn. Her talk evoked much nostalgia, many memories and was greatly appreciated by her audience.

Barbara Dubois

VOLUNTEERING FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST

On a visit to Chartwell I picked up a card giving a contact number for would-be volunteers. Several weeks later after some consideration I dialled the number, attended an inaugural meeting and agreed to steward in the garden at Chartwell. I also went to Quebec House, at the bottom of the hill in Westerham, liked what I saw and joined the team of room guides.

Stewarding in the glorious garden at Chartwell was a joy. Arriving early on a fine summer morning before all the visitors I could have the garden to myself, (apart from the occasional gardener), and enjoy the delightful fantasy that it was all mine! Then the visitors would arrive, and questions would be asked, probably the most frequent being 'where is the nearest toilet?' However my knowledge of plants and shrubs did improve as I tried to remember the names of everything in bloom and would also try to provide a suitable reply to queries like 'the name of the little plant down near the wall with the yellow flower', or, perhaps more difficult, 'what is the name of the bird we heard singing as we crossed the lawn?'

Feeding the fish in the Golden Orfe pond would always attract a crowd and allowing a small child to throw a handful of food into the pond and seeing the delight as the fish raced to eat it a great pleasure. There was also the great interest of chatting to people from all over the world. It is amazing how much people will reveal in a very few minutes, from details of their latest operation to what their father did in World War II. And, of course, at Chartwell, there was always the natural seasonal changes to enjoy, from the beauty of the spring flowers, the camellias and the magnolias, the colour and variety of the summer bedding plants and the magnificent autumnal shades. Chartwell House and gardens have given so much pleasure to many people and I was happy to be a small part of it.

Room stewarding at Quebec House provided a different sort of challenge. It gave me the chance to learn more about James Wolfe, the now, almost forgotten hero of the Battle of Quebec, 1759, (part of the Seven Year War against the French). Answering visitors' questions like 'Who was he?' could sometimes involve a history lesson, though questions from French or French-Canadian visitors does require a certain amount of tact and neutrality. From learning about the history of this small but interesting house I have been able to learn about life in the 18th century and when it was decided to introduce 18th century cooking I joined the small team of volunteers who transcribe and cook the recipes taken from James Wolfe's mother's recipe book. On Sundays, (cooking day), the kitchen is always first port of call for the visitors, where they sample the freshly cooked cakes and biscuits and discover that 18th century cooking is very similar to 21st century cooking!

Meeting other volunteers is always interesting and gives an opportunity to get acquainted with people from many different walks of life, but all sharing a common interest. Although the National Trust can be controversial I personally find great satisfaction from the few hours I spend volunteering at these beautiful places, and, there is always the added joy of being allowed to walk through the doors and gates marked 'PRIVATE'!

Barbara Dubois

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – APRIL 2018

Our next talk will be on **25th April when Ian and Wendy Balmer and Colin Addison** will speak about **"Walking the Saxon Shore Way"**. This will be a review of the walk done by a group of Marden Walkers led by Ian in 2017. They completed the walk in sections, one roughly every 2 weeks from April to September.

Then on **23rd May, Steve Hookins** will tell us about **"The bits that Don't Fit"**, a mystery tour of bits and pieces that do not fit in the other talks that he gives.

Both meetings will be in the **Vestry Hall at 7.30**, with refreshments and raffle as usual.

Finally, on **June 27th** we will have our summer outing which is a **45 minutes afternoon tour around Bewl Water on the Bewl Belle, followed by a cream tea**. The cost is £11.50 per person - please contact a committee member to book a place - a deposit or full payment would be appreciated.

MARDEN IN THE SNOW

I don't have much luck attracting birds in my garden (I blame competition from neighbours who seem to have a much better idea what to do!) They will only feed from one feeder despite the next being only a few centimetres away, same make, same food. However, the snow saw flocks of 30 or more chaffinches and bramblings competing for my offerings for 2 days, before they disappeared altogether. Talking around, other people had much more success, but it cheered me up as they were so hungry they came right up to the window. In addition, I spotted a sparrowhawk on top of a telegraph pole just after the snow. That is the closest I have seen one since, 2 years ago, a sparrowhawk trapped a collared dove in the greenhouse – by the time I had enticed the sparrowhawk out the pigeon had no feathers on his bloody back and only 3 tail feathers. It was 2 hours before he would fly away but I imagine he would not have survived long with that amount of damage. We used to have a colourful pheasant strutting down the path for a few days every year, but he has disappeared too.

MIFFED OF MARDEN: While on the subject of snow, why did Marden fare so badly that bitter week? Trains did not stop at our station for 3 – 4 days and that includes the Saturday when the weather was much warmer, and everything was getting back to normal. Staplehurst and Paddock Wood, were fine..... We are told it was because the footbridge became too slippery due to ice. A legitimate excuse perhaps, but it still does not explain Saturday. More and more houses are being built here, we surely deserve a better service from our trains. For people unable to get to work it must have caused tremendous problems. On the 11th March, a group of travellers were returning to Marden from Ashford and dutifully boarded the correct train at around 7.00pm. As the train set off towards RAMSGATE the message came across along the lines of "Oops! Got that wrong, this is the Ramsgate train not the London train". And at London Bridge on 14th March, Southeastern changed departure platforms for both Ashford and Charing Cross so many times that 3 people got on the Marden train although that was not where they wanted to go. They wanted the destination on the sign!

And finally, congratulations to Colin Bristow, our milkman, who braved the elements and delivered the milk as usual. As Benny Hill might have said "...and he drove The Fastest Milk Float in the village".

Mo Clayton

MARDEN'S HERBERT HALL WINERY TO BUILD ON QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY.

For the Herbert Hall Winery in Plain Road, 2017 was the toughest year yet. With Spring arriving early we were hit by a late frost which wiped out almost 70% of the crop. To make matters worse we suffered a burglary and a pallet of wine prepared for our Christmas sales in London was stolen. Many UK wineries have big ambitions, some have industrialised and are planning to turn out up to a million bottles of English fizz a year. There is growing recognition of the vast differences in the quality of English Sparkling Wines now being produced. We have decided to stick to our philosophy of being a small, single estate producer driven by quality.

Herbert Hall currently produces a maximum of 15,000 bottles of sparkling wine annually. Organic viticulture, scrupulous fruit selection, barrel-ageing and a focus on individual cuvées, some as few as 500 bottles, set us apart as the benchmark for English artisan winemaking. Our aim is to develop the finest handmade English sparkling wines available, and to achieve this we have taken greater control over our product sales. Although we have been asked to supply many London restaurants and retailers, we have decided to restrict supply to the very best, with whom we have developed deep and enduring relationships. These include The Original Ivy, 67 Pall Mall Club, Langan's Brasserie, Le Caprice and Mark's Club; also, and in recognition of our organic credentials, we have supplied the Prince of Wales at Highgrove.

We often receive top restaurant teams at the winery who come to see the vineyard, meet the winemakers and look at the whole production process; sommeliers, wine writers and others appreciate our distinctive approach to genuine artisan winemaking. We also welcome Marden parishioners and CLUB HH members who wish to visit by appointment. Following our decision to restrict production we have changed our retail pricing for the new 2015 vintage and limited its availability to just a few outlets. But most of our wine is now being made available by allocation at a special lower price. By allocating 'En Primeur' we have shifted our emphasis towards private customers who love our wines and support our independent philosophy. We are thus remaining true to our roots as a specialist producer of premium, single-estate wines, vintage by vintage, with the emphasis on quality rather than quantity. Those joining us as 'En Primeur' customers will remain with us over many years as the business grows and become friends of the winery. Allocation or 'En Primeur' prices for the 2015 vintage (to be released in September 2018) are for a minimum of 36 bottles and are: *HH Brut 2015: £19.00, HH Brut Rosé 2015: £22.00 (all ex-duty, ex-VAT)*, the same as the trade price to retailers. Current Duty is £2.77 per bottle.

If you would like to find out more about allocations or would just like to visit us at the winery, please call Nick Hall on 07956 163 519. OR email: kas@herberthall.co.uk

ENSA: Delia Taylor began her enjoyable March talk about ENSA with the so-called 'phoney' war, until May 1940, when all places of entertainment were closed, except for the pubs. However, as the public became jittery, so this decision was reversed to help keep the people calm. In 1939 Basil Dean and Leslie Henson set up ENSA, the Entertainments National Service Association to provide entertainment for the Armed Forces and associated personnel and to

build up morale. An office was set up in the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and advertisements for entertainers resulted in 50,000 replies. All were auditioned and while some were outstanding others had little or no talent. The shows were set up in venues all over the country and many were sub-standard, hence the popular variation of the acronym ENSA – Every Night Something Awful!



The entertainers themselves were relatively well paid, £4 - £10 per week, but life was not always easy. They were sent all over the country by public transport, digs and landladies could be awful, clothes, and costumes had to be provided and clothing of course was rationed. However curtain material escaped rationing and that could produce great dresses. Changing facilities could be spartan, a Nissan hut was regarded as a luxury. Four to eight shows a day were demanded to cater for the changing shifts among the workers and armed personnel. The venues were many and varied, theatres and concert halls were taken over, also factories and village halls.

Bomb sites and the underground were used, the performers on the underground platform and the audience sitting in the well, on the tracks (with the power turned off!). Wherever the troops were sent the entertainers would follow, usually having no idea where they were going or what sort of clothes to pack.

As the entertainers were recruited particularly for the armed forces, it was decided that they should wear uniform when they were sent abroad, so that if captured they would be treated as prisoners of war. To be captured abroad in civilian clothes would probably lead to death by firing squad. Only one person refused to wear the uniform – Tommy Trinder – who maintained that if he was caught he deserved to be shot! The stars were numerous, taken from all branches of the entertainment world, actors, singers, dancers, comedians, musicians, bands and orchestras. Many continued in show business after the war and became famous, including George Formby, Tommy Cooper, the Goons, Joyce Grenfell and Anne Shelton. Not all were popular, James Mason was booed off for reciting Shakespeare, John Gielgud for reading Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward's witticisms were not always appreciated. The star of them all of course was Vera Lynn who went to all the war zones, playing to packed audiences wherever she appeared.

In 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbour, America entered the war and entertainers were brought in by the United States Organisation (USO); stars like Irving Berlin, Bob Hope, Marlene Dietrich, Glenn Miller all played to combined troops around the world. In all, over the war period ENSA produced 2,565,656 shows to over 500,000,000 people. The USO produced 293,738 shows.

ENSA became The Combined Services Entertainment, and today continues to provide entertainment to British Troops in places such as Afghanistan, the Falklands, Cyprus, or on Royal Navy ships deployed worldwide. Stars include the likes of Jim Davidson, Katherine Jenkins, Al Murray and David Beckham, and of course James Blunt. Theatrical and television spin-offs from ENSA includes Privates on Parade and "It Ain't Half 'Ot Mum".