

The battle at Crecy, D-Day Landings, Korea, Japan and the film “The Longest Day” were also discussed. Weapons ranged from rocks, the crossbow and longbow to guns, rockets and nuclear weapons. The devastating effects of Spanish Flu after the first world war were also included.

In less than an hour all these facts and many others, along with illustrations, were given to the audience leaving the impression that Steve’s encyclopaedic knowledge was by no means exhausted.

*Barbara Dubois*

### ALL ABOARD THE BEWL BELLE



Aboard the Bewl Belle, the blue tinted roof made us feel cooler

Overflow and viewing platform

Disembarking the Belle ready for a cream tea!

Over 30 members of the Marden Society met at Bewl Water on 27<sup>th</sup> June, for our annual summer outing. After a slight hiatus as most of us had been directed to the sailing club building, which was NOT where organiser Mo had arranged to meet us, we all met up. The Bewl Belle was summoned from her moorings and we embarked for a 45-minute trip around the reservoir. The weather was superb with a cool breeze, bright sunshine and a cloudless sky.

While the boat cruised around the water revealing its hidden scenery the boat’s operator gave us some information about the reservoir and its construction. It was built over 3 valleys with a 1.8km dam and reaches a depth of 97 feet. Three farmhouses were moved and reconstructed elsewhere, one on the bank of the lake, one in Cousley Wood and one went to the Weald and Downland Museum. The land was acquired for the project in 1942, construction started in 1973 and was completed in 1975.

It supplies water to the Medway towns as well as Thanet and Hastings, also Goudhurst but not Marden. It is connected to the River Medway at Yalding by a pipeline that runs through the Scotney Castle Estate and this can be used to fill the reservoir. At the end of 2017 the level had fallen to 30% of capacity, so Southern Water applied for an order to pump water from the Medway and by March it was full. At the time of our trip the level was 94%, good news for our long hot summer.

After the trip we went up to the Bistro for a cream tea. The large windows of the Bistro offered a beautiful view over the water and we were able to watch other water activities such as sailing, canoeing and windsurfing.

Everyone agreed it was a very pleasant afternoon and a big thank you is due to Mo Clayton for arranging the event.

*Barbara Dubois*

Welcome to the summer edition of the Parish Pump. There are no meetings in July or August, so our next talk will be on **26<sup>th</sup> September** when **Melanie Gibson-Barton** will tell us about “**The Life and Times of Edith Cavell**”. This talk tells the story of the British nurse who died in Brussels in 1915, illustrated by photographs of existing artefacts from her life. Then on **24<sup>th</sup> October** there will be a “**Talk and Demonstration of Handbells**” by **Mary Douglas of the Boxley Handbell Ringers**. Both meetings will be in the **Vestry Hall at 7.30**, with refreshments and raffle as usual.

**NOW, HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY?** We are looking for new contributors for the Pump, so why not send us a short piece on your views of the village. Perhaps the congestion, housing construction, amusing anecdotes of life in Marden, should our transport links be improved? Or else just a Letter to the Editor (Steve) would be appreciated. We would love to hear your views.

### WALKING THE SAXON SHORE WAY

Having suggested to Catherine Alderson, the leader of the Marden Walking Group, that the Group might like to consider a long-distance walk, Ian Balmer found himself organising the project. The Saxon Shore Way was established in 1980 and follows the coastline as it was around 1500 years ago but crosses the Wantsum channel. Starting at Gravesend the walk follows the coast line as far as Hastings. It is 163 miles long and should take approximately 70/80 hours to complete. It passes lots of “Cs” Castles, Churches, Canals, Crops, Cereals, Crafts etc. and offers outstanding views and scenery.



Marden walkers near Iwade Ian Balmer

It was decided to break the walk down into 18 legs, roughly 9 miles per leg. Walkers taking part in the individual legs varied from 4 to 9. Ordnance Survey maps and smartphone apps were used to navigate the walks. They tried to use buses where possible to travel back from the finish to the start of each leg, but this didn’t often work so they generally used cars. Most important were the decisions regarding where and when breaks should be taken for snacks and lunch!

The various legs of the walk were described and illustrated by the many photographs taken en route. Colin Addison talked about the history of the various castles visited during the walks including Cooling built on the Hoo peninsula in the 1380s and now occupied by Jools Holland, Upnor built in 1560 for £4400, Rochester’s 12<sup>th</sup> century stone tower, and Richborough, built by

the Romans. Kingsnorth Tower was shown before and after its demolition. Wendy Balmer described some of the many churches that were visited, several with the name of St. Mary, e.g. St Mary's Charity, Faversham; St. Mary Magdalene, Ruckinge; St Mary's, Reculver and St. Mary the Virgin, Upchurch. Roger Couchman described some of the many flowers and plants that were seen during the walks.

Other highlights included the Brett aggregate conveyor which they had to pass under while trying not to get wet, and Cliffe Fort where the Brennan Torpedo was developed, apparently the world's first guided missile. They enjoyed a lovely walk from Sandwich to Walmer, passing through Deal with its Time Ball on the way. Since 1864 this has gone down at 13.00 exactly, originally to help ships set their chronometers. There were of course more unsightly views encountered such as derelict buildings and ports and there was always plenty of mud!

All 18 legs were completed, the last of which required walking up and down five creeks. The group enjoyed the walk to the extent that a second long walk was planned along the Wealdway, which has just been completed, a mere 83 miles this one!

*Barbara Dubois*

### **GIVE THE TURTLE DOVE SOME LOVE...**

...says the headline in this month's Birdwatching magazine, and they certainly need it. You will not be surprised to hear that the Turtle Dove is another bird species in trouble, big trouble! In fact the population in Britain has reduced by 93% since 1994. It is thought that lack of agricultural weeds on intensively farmed land is a major factor in their decline as they are taking too long to get into breeding condition when they first return from their sub-Saharan African wintering grounds. But the good news is that lots of people are trying to do something to help them, especially in Kent.



Turtle Dove "Titan" complete with aerial!

Turtle Doves are summer migrants who spend their summers and breed here in England, mainly in the south and east, but winter in Africa. They normally arrive in April-May and depart in September. In summer 2014, scientists from the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science fitted a turtle dove – named Titan – with small, lightweight satellite tag in Suffolk before it embarked on its mammoth migration journey. Titan then completed an incredible 11,200 km journey to Mali in West Africa where he spent his winter and back to Suffolk again – to exactly where he originally was tagged.

Titan flew mostly under the cover of darkness. He flew across vast landscapes such as the Atlas Mountains, Sahara Desert and the Gulf of Cadiz, travelling around 500-700 km per night, flying at a maximum speed of 60 kph. Titan's outbound journey to Africa took around a month to complete flying south from Suffolk through France and Spain before reaching Africa. He travelled from Morocco to Senegal in West Africa where he briefly stopped before reaching his main wintering area in Mali. On his return he spent two weeks making his way through France, initially following the Atlantic coast, before leaving from Dunkirk and touching down in Suffolk. Titan spent six months in Africa over winter compared to just four months in England! Sadly

they have not heard from Titan since April 2016 when he was still in Mali so either his transmitter has failed or he has perished. However, a further six birds are now being tracked by RSPB in collaboration with Operation Turtle Dove. Further information is available from their website: <https://www.operationturtledove.org>

From the results of surveys carried out by local volunteers, Marden and the surrounding area has been declared one of twelve "Turtle Dove Friendly Zones" (TDFZ) in Kent. As it already has breeding Turtle Doves, Mill Farm is one of a number of farms in mid and west Kent to host a supplementary feeding scheme. The purpose of the trial is to assess the extent to which the provision of additional seeds influences their breeding success. Although research is ongoing, preliminary results suggests there is a positive impact.

Another hotspot for Turtle Doves is Staple, between Wingham and Sandwich, where a group of local birders found them in a small half-acre plot used by a local nursery for wallflower production. Once harvested it was left fallow and the turtle doves fed there while nesting nearby. When the land came up for sale, a group of local people bought it and have created a "Turtle Dove Summer Field (TDSF)". The whole village has now got involved and are encouraged to keep their gardens unkempt. Trees have been planted to screen the plot and a pond has been dug to provide drinking water. Native plants such as birds-foot-trefoil, vetch and especially fumitory (apparently their favourite) have been planted to provide seed. The plot is rotated every 3 weeks as the birds prefer to feed on bare earth. In 2016 TDSF had eight birds on their patch, including 3 young birds. Note that to protect the notoriously shy doves, the site is not open to the public.



Turtle Dove Summer Field in Staple with local owners

So while they are certainly in trouble, all is not lost and hopefully they will come back from the brink, if more people like us just give them some love!

*Steve McArragher*

### **THE BITS THAT DON'T FIT**

With no recourse to notes Steve Hookins delivered his talk, "full of useless information", (his words), like the rapid firing of bullets from a gun.

An early fact was that termites cannot eat cinnamon, followed by spiders, who allegedly don't like conkers. Conkers, however, were used in the manufacture of Lucozade in World War II. Denis Papin invented the pressure cooker and Archduke Ferdinand's car number plate was 11 11 18.

Via this circuitous route he arrived at the Romans, what did they ever do for us? Well along with Latin, the Romans also introduced into Britain the road network, (still in use), chickens, bottles, glass, carrots, rabbits, herbs, onions, apples, pears, cider, turnips and stinging nettles. The '£' sign goes back to the Romans as well as fast food. Roman apartments did not include kitchens so people went to taverns and bars to buy their food.

The Chinese invented gun powder, so they can be held responsible for mass killing throughout the world. Humpty Dumpty was a gun, not an egg. America invented the slinky toy, the toilet brush and Fanta drinks.