

Wed 27 th Feb	English Sparkling Wine <i>The history and future of "English Fizz"</i>	Nick Hall
Wed 27 th March	My Adventures in the land of Blue Sky <i>Walking in Mongolian mountains</i>	Cliff Grieve
Wed 24 th April	A Schoolgirls War <i>An account of the lives of Maidstone Grammar School girls during World War 2</i>	Mary Smith
Wed 22 nd May	History of the Red Arrows	Guy Bartlett
Tues 25th June	Medway trip with tour of Allington Castle	
Wed 25 th Sept	Van 132, Soldier Sailor Spy <i>Railway van 132 brought home the bodies of The Unknown Soldier and Edith Cavell from WW1.</i>	Geoff Turner
Wed 23 rd Oct	History of Canals	Chris Woodward
Wed 27 th Nov	History of Hopping and the Hartlake Disaster <i>1853 accident in Hadlow when 30 hop-pickers were drowned in the River Medway</i>	Mike Doel

The 2019 SUMMER OUTING is a trip on Tuesday 25 June, 13:30 to 16:00, on the Kentish Lady down the River Medway to tour Allington Castle. This is a rare opportunity to tour the castle as it is not normally open to the public. The cost is £30 per person including tea/coffee and cake. If you would like to come, please contact Carol on 832900 or carol.hogg@hotmail.com

HISTORY GROUP LISTED BUILDINGS EXHIBITION: On 26th January Lady Sue Fenn opened this new exhibition and spoke of her love of these buildings, their history and the part they play in Marden Society. She expressed her gratitude for the privilege of living in Turnpike House and in Marden whose friendliness we can be proud of. She urged us to extend that friendliness to the many in-comers amongst us and to continue to support the Friends of Marden Heritage in their efforts to maintain and support our heritage.

Sue spoke of her own home, Turnpike House, one of the oldest listed buildings in the village. "The craftsmanship and beauty preserved in these old buildings is amazing. No nails or screws just wooden pegs needed to build my house now about 600 years old! And the massive size of the oak beams! How did they get them into place without the cranes and other equipment which would be used today? Nowhere else have I lived with such an awareness of past generations. Probably due to enthusiastic storytellers like Mike and Robin Judd and Graham Tippin, and many others eager to share memories of their childhood. Being surrounded by the spirit(s) of these stories, sometimes when I put my hand on a carved wooden beam in the house, I try to imagine the thoughts and aspirations of the man or woman who worked on it centuries ago. I'd love to meet the people who lived in these old houses when they were new.

I believe it is our responsibility to pass on to the next generations an interest in our local history, the stories, buildings and traditions or we risk losing an important part of our own identity, whether our family has lived here for generations or only a few years."

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – FEBRUARY 2019

Our first talk of 2019 is on **27th February** when **Nick Hall of Marden's Herbert Hall vineyard** will tell us about "**English Sparkling Wine**". This will cover the history and future of English Fizz which is proving very popular and giving the French a run for their money! Then on **27th March** **Cliff Grieve** will tell us about his "**Adventures in the land of Blue Sky**", a light-hearted look at walking in the Mongolian mountains. All meetings will be in the **Vestry Hall at 7.30**, with refreshments and raffle as usual. Full details of all our 2019 programme lectures are given on the back page.

PLEASE NOTE 2019 SUBS ARE NOW DUE, STILL EXCELLENT VALUE AT £5 PER PERSON

MO'S MOANS.... *Some Observations on Maidstone roads:* – while driving over the years I have often been puzzled by the number of traffic islands which have been damaged – there they are, centre of the road, but many of them have obviously been hit. This winter I have also been struck at how many of these yellow pillars are so dirty that at night they are invisible and car lights cannot reflect off them to give warning. The poor unsuspecting motorist often cannot see them. I know the argument will be that there are insufficient resources. But it must cost more to replace them than a six-monthly quick wash, and the increased number of residents paying increasing sums to the Council could surely aid this situation. *Mo Clayton*

MARDEN AT CHRISTMAS The Parish Council must be congratulated once again on their Christmas celebrations. Carol singing, Morris dancing, sword dancing, refreshments at The Allens and Father Christmas stopped briefly to say Hello on his way to the Memorial Hall. The local hostelrys were all open, the Devil was in the stocks for some well-aimed hits, and the Church was open for the Christmas Tree Festival and soup. The Marden Society ran a stall, "Wine or Water". If you picked the right bottle (all wrapped in newspaper), you won a bottle of wine. This was not intended as a fund-raising event, just an opportunity to show who we are and what we do. It was a very successful day and thanks to all who took part. *Mo Clayton*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The AGM was held on 23rd January in the Vestry Hall as usual. Steve chaired the meeting deputising for Chairman Mo who had an operation on her foot the previous day. She thanked the members of the Committee for their work during the year and commented on our successful year of talks, and the summer outing around Bewl Water. She remembered the five members who had died during the year and hoped that membership would continue to grow as the village grows. Finally, she expressed her wish to retire having been Chairman for several years and asked for volunteers to join the committee or take over.

Treasurer Mike reported that we had increased expenditure in 2018 due to purchase of a projector and printing the new walking guides. Income was slightly down due to lower sales of the old walking guides and cancellation of the February meeting due to the "Beast from the

East"! However total funds are still a healthy £1982. Carol reported that our membership was stable at 112, but we had not been successful at recruiting members from the new estates.

Eunice reported that the History Group had a busy year, having documents digitised, installing a new computer system and hosting visits from various groups. Two new publications had been issued on Percy Day's Boer War and Nick and Sue Fenn's book on their diplomatic life. There had been several exhibitions and they had helped with Paddock Wood Lions at Christmas. Her favourite job though was welcoming visitors who made contact from all over the world. Catherine reported that the Walking Group's main achievement had been publication of the new Marden Walks Guides, which were launched at the meeting, and she thanked Steve McA for producing them and the other walkers who had checked the routes. Saturday Health Walks continue to be well supported, and the Wednesday and Sunday walks will restart in March.

Steve's Planning Report stated that all the new developments in Marden were well underway, the latest being the cricket field. However the proposed Gladman development in Maidstone Road had been withdrawn. He praised the sympathetic redevelopment of the old Post Office and looked forward to the opening of the new café. Finally, the Neighbourhood Plan is almost ready to be submitted to Maidstone BC for checks and approval. It has been a long time coming but is almost there. The existing Committee were re-elected en bloc, and Carol gave further details of the summer outing. After the meeting closed, members enjoyed a wine and cheese social.

Steve McArragher

HISTORY OF MOTE PARK

Simon Ginnaw spoke in November about the history of Mote Park. His grandfather was a park ranger, so he grew up with Mote Park. 1.6 million visitors visited the Park last year, many from outside the area. It consists of 480 acres of land, owned by Maidstone BC, but was once much larger. It has been voted the second-best public park in England and won a Green Flag Award for Excellence! It has a great variety of wildlife and Simon has identified 148 different bird species, 26 mammals, many different bats, 29 butterflies, 100 wild flowers and 120 trees.

Roman coins have been found – Maidstone Grammar School is built on the site of a Roman villa, and there was a Roman burial ground where Vintners Park houses now stand. Some of the yew trees are at least 800 years old. Giant redwood trees were planted in 1895. Ragstone was quarried here, and was used to build the first Mote House, also Henry V ordered 7000 cannon balls made of ragstone. However the caves and tunnels which extend under the Shepway Estate, were blocked off in the 1950s/1960s.

Henry III granted the right for people to gather on the Mote. The Leybourne family were the first owners in the 1200s, Roger the family head was a crusader. At some point a substantial property known as Mote Place was built, with one of the earliest deer parks in Kent. Baron de Burghersh lived there for some time in the 1300s. The Woodville family, who owned the Estate in the 15th century, were deeply involved in the Wars of the Roses. After turbulent times the crown took over the estate, then Henry VII married Elizabeth Woodville and restored the estate to the Woodvilles. In the 16th century Mote Place was owned by the Wyatts who also owned Allington Castle. Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn stayed there when visiting Sir Thomas Wyatt. After Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger was executed in 1554, the estate again reverted to the crown. In the 1600s Sir Henry Tufton purchased the estate, and it is believed he abandoned Mote Place (its site is now under the lake) and built the first Mote House.



in preparation for yet another war with France. Over six thousand troops were reviewed, with 91 tables of food laid out, and the story is that the food left over was enough to feed the Maidstone poor for over a month.

In 1793 the then current Lord Romney started building a new house, the current Mote House. This was designed by a French architect who specialised in prisons, including Maidstone and Dartmoor! When the 3rd Lord Romney died in 1874 there was a tenant, Lady Howard de Walden living in Mote House, and the family was badly in debt. In 1895 they put their whole estate up for sale, including all fixtures and fittings and it was bought by Sir Marcus Samuel of Shell Transport fame (Steve McArragher spoke about him in Nov 2017). He was an East End Jew who wanted to become an English Country Gentleman, so bought a country estate and became first Lord Mayor of London and eventually Viscount Bearsted. He was a benevolent owner who enjoyed hunting and fishing in the lake. He died, a day after his wife, in 1927. His son Walter inherited the title but moved out and bought Upton House in Warwickshire. He sold the whole estate (except the cricket ground which he gave to the cricket club) to Maidstone Council in 1929 for £50,000 "to do something for Maidstone". It was then opened to the public as a park and used for various events including agricultural shows and a Scout Jamboree in 1932.

The Caldecott Community opened a "Home School for Children", many from London's East End, in the house in 1932 to learn farming and other skills. In 1935 the then Duchess of York paid a visit to the community. However, in July 1940 the school was evacuated, and Mote Park and House requisitioned for war service. It was used for training troops from various countries including some Australian aboriginals who caused consternation by shooting up at aircraft while in the middle of Maidstone. Later it was used to prepare for the D-Day landings, and General Montgomery reviewed the troops there in February 1944.

After the War the Kent Agricultural Show and the County Show were held there for some years and Churchill entered some of his livestock for one of these shows. The house became a Cheshire Home for the disabled until crippling maintenance costs to the house forced the Trust to leave. Car Autocross, model car racing, a miniature railway track to take passengers – all have taken place there. Now there are music festivals, beer festival, food festivals, Race for Life, all can be seen at the Park.

In 2008 Audley Homes bought the house with permission to develop it into a retirement village, and have renovated the House and the old clock, and built many homes. *Mo and Steve*