

SMALLPOX WAS NOT THE ONLY KILLER DISEASE

While smallpox was a killer disease (see the last Parish Pump) in England and Kent, other diseases proved equally devastating. Bubonic plague – or the Black Death – had reached our shores by 1394 and Maidstone by 1563.

Scarlatina was particularly devastating in children – it reached Maidstone in 1843, followed closely by cholera – and it was fatal in adults too with 43 hop pickers dying in East Farleigh at that time. Hop pickers were frequently blamed for these epidemics, but they lived in appalling conditions in unsanitary huts and tents, some even being reduced to sleeping rough in the hedgerows. In 1866 the school inspectors closed Marden schools due to epidemics such as whooping cough, diphtheria, scarlatina, and measles. This was repeated in 1901, when another outbreak occurred necessitating the cleansing of schoolrooms, and two children died

In the mid-19th century barges were used to bring supplies to Kent inland ports such as Faversham, but also brought chickenpox, which then spread to hop pickers. Heavy rains had forced work to cease, so the workers were crowded into their unsanitary living quarters. Coxheath Workhouse was taking in 600 - 700 extra people every night at one time.

Polluted water caused a typhoid epidemic in Maidstone in 1897, with 1,800 cases and 132 deaths. Maidstone Water Company was blamed for this epidemic but problems with sewage continued for many years. Typhoid was rife, caused by human faeces contaminating the water. Even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert succumbed to this disease. 1905 had more school closures, this time from measles. However 1906 beat this with whooping cough, ringworm and measles. Marden was well supplied with water, with several wells and pumps. However the sewage system, while working well, emptied into an open ditch which ran round the back of the school. New sewage works were installed in 1933, but as late as 1980 raw sewage was threatening Marden, holding up new developments in the west end of the village.

Diseases just have a knack of changing and developing, but we are lucky with today's medical knowledge. With many thanks to Ann Farebrother and the Marden History Group for their research and making it available to me.

Mo Clayton

THE HOGS ARE BACK IN TOWN



Yes, after their winter hibernation the hedgehogs are out, thanks to the warm spell in March, and they are feeling hungry! We have started putting food out in our feeding station around 7 p.m. for the last week or so. The camera trap showed a large hog feeding around 7.30 and by 8.30 on 28th March, when this picture was taken, the bowl was empty. The hog continued to return throughout the night (or was it different hogs?) until around 5 in the morning.

We will continue to keep feeding and see if we can spot more than one of them. Don't forget that the Marden Wildlife Group are still logging hedgehog sightings in Marden so please let them know if you see one.

Steve McArragher

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – APRIL 2022

Spring is now well and truly sprung, the daffodils and primroses are out and things are warming up ready for summer. Our season of talks continue as follows:

27th April: “A Policeman’s Lot can be an Interesting One”, by Neil Sadler. *Neil spent 30 years as a Police officer in various ranks across Sussex, working briefly in Hong Kong, Trinidad and Abu Dhabi....he even survived Bognor Regis, Haywards Heath and Crawley !*

25th May: “Medical Detection Dogs” by Bridget Wood and Millie Harries. This is a change from our programme and the Lighthouses talk will now be in November.

22nd June: Summer Outing to Provender house. This is the home near Faversham of Princess Olga Romanov who is a great-niece of the last Russian Tsar and was featured in a recent TV series. Cost is £20 including tea and a few places are still available. If you are interested, please contact Barbara Dubois on 833058 or barbara@dubois.org.uk.

As usual our meetings will start at 7.30 p.m. in the Vestry Hall followed by refreshments and raffle. Hand sanitiser will be provided, and chairs will be socially distanced by around 1 m. Wearing of face masks is optional.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Oh dear, just when things are starting to look up after COVID and spring is on the way, Putin goes and starts a war! What a mess he and his henchmen have made and set the world back at least 50 years. After a good few years of glasnost and perestroika, we are going back to the Iron Curtain and the 60s again, or maybe even the 40s. Of course Russia has always been ruled by autocratic strong men, going back to Ivan the Terrible and later the Tsars. But in more recent times it seems that the bad guys have all been “...ins” (Lenin, Stalin and now Putin) while the good (or at least better) have been “...evs” (Kruschev (?), Gorbachev and Brezhnev), perhaps there is something in a name....

Well done to Olga from the Café and the Parish Council for organising some village aid to Ukraine, and to all the residents who contributed. It is so much appreciated in Ukraine and is something we can do to help.

Sadly it seems that around the world democracy is losing out to the dictators and hard men in so many countries. It's worth remembering that as Churchill said, “Democracy is the worst possible form of government, except for all the other forms that have ever been tried”. It will be interesting to hear Olga Romanov 's views when we visit her in June.....

Yours Democratically, Steve McArragher

BLOOMING FLOWERS!

On a more positive note, how lovely our village has looked this spring! A carpet of purple crocuses outside the library, followed by thousands of daffodils throughout the village, from Stilebridge, past the library and in the churchyard, all the way down to and along Sheephurst Lane. And colourful planters on street corners, outside the shops, the pubs, the village hall and in our recreational areas.

Our thanks go to Anne Boswell and her Marden in Bloom team for all their hard work and for lifting our spirits in these very difficult times.

Carol Hogg

50 DAYS IN A RED T-SHIRT

Jon Hill arrived with his red T-shirt, red bucket and red rubber ball to describe his walk along the Grande Randonnée Route 5. The purpose of the walk was to raise funds for the Red Rubber Ball Foundation, a small charity set up 11 years ago, based in Welwyn Garden City. The charity's object is to help provide secondary school education for young Kenyans. In Kenya there is free education from 5 – 11 years, but further education must be paid for and in many cases this is not possible. The Red Rubber Ball Foundation provides scholarships to bridge that gap and has so far aided 243 Kenyan children, 122 girls and 121 boys. Jon Hill himself was educated at Christ's Hospital in Horsham and felt, after his privileged education, that he needed to give something back. He had always loved the outdoor life and was happy walking in the mountains.



In order to walk with friend Brian from Chamonix to Nice, some 650k along the GR5, with 37,000m of ascent and descent (the equivalent of climbing Everest four times!), he made a list of rules. The first was no walking until he could touch his toes, he needed to be fit. The speed of walking was to be slow up, slow down and slow flat. He planned the route with the help of guidebooks, online route guides, 17 paper maps and an electronic map. He needed to book 47 places of accommodation along the route so prior to the walk he booked rooms for the first week and then booked later as the walk advanced. Each carried only one rucksack, and everything was pared down to the minimum. For a luxury he took a roll of vitamin C tablets! To keep up fluid the rule was to drink whenever he and Brian came to a

signpost. Breakfast was eaten at the hostel accommodation, a picnic lunch was carried and eaten en route and dinner at 5 p.m. at the next hostel stop. Bedtime was around 9 p.m. and the day started around 5 a.m. Alcohol was only drunk at weekends, though exceptions were made when various friends joined for parts of the walk.

No camera was taken so all his many photographs were taken on his mobile phone. The photos included pictures of fauna such as various rodents, ibex and crickets. The birds varied from eagles to house martins, with many flowers and fungi also shown. The pictures included shots of the many beautiful waterfalls that they came across during the walk. The high points of the walk included a trip to Mont Blanc, while scary moments included an encounter with some very

territorial sheepdogs. The final town they reached was Menton which was some 717.4km from the starting point, or 1,151,796 steps!

All money raised for the Red Rubber Ball Foundation goes to support the education of young Kenyans, so that around 45% will probably go on to university. This will enable them to acquire better jobs and earn more money to support their families and this should subsequently lead to greater support for the future of their country, Kenya.

Barbara Dubois

HERITAGE CENTRE EXHIBITION

The History Group are planning the next exhibition on the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and are searching the archives for stories and pictures. If anyone has anything relating to this theme, such as family members being present at the coronation or subsequent Jubilees, can they please get in touch with either Ann Farebrother or Barbara Dubois. Also does anyone have photos from Jubilee celebrations here in Marden that they could share? Any photographs or social changes that have happened in Marden since 1952 would also be appreciated. This could cover changes to schools, shops, housing, farming, etc. Has anyone been at any of the palaces for functions, etc? Have you met the Queen? The exhibition will cover the years from 1952 to 2022.

Diane Fisher

NEW "HISTORIC WALKS" GUIDES

The Walking Group has just published a new series of "Six Historic Walks around Marden".

Walk 1: Trees of Marden - 3 or 4 miles

The walk features mainly trees and hedges, also some aspects of Marden's history. It circles the village and can be undertaken as a whole or in parts.

Walk 2: Historic Farmhouses around Marden - 6½ or 9 miles

This walk visits a number of historic farmhouses to the north and east of Marden, including Wanshurst Green, Underlyn Green and Chainhurst, and passes alongside the River Beult.

Walk 3: Hops and Grapes in Marden - 5½ miles

The walk goes through a new vineyard, part of which was once a hop garden, and later goes through the only commercial hop garden left in Marden. It also passes woodland in Sherenden Lane which was used to produce charcoal to dry hops in the oast houses.

Walk 4: The PLUTO Walk - 6½ miles

This is a flat walk that follows the route of the wartime "PLUTO" pipeline through Marden Parish, a section of which can be seen outside the Library.

Walk 5: Marden's Aviation history - East - 5½ or 7 miles

Marden had its own landing ground during WW1 and until the 30s when commercial aviation was in its infancy. Then during WW2 much of the battle of Britain was fought over Kent. This inevitably led to many crashes and the walk visits some of these sites to the east of Marden.

Walk 6: Marden's Aviation history – West – 7 miles

As for walk 5 above but visiting sites to the west of Marden.

These are available from the Library or "No. 47" shop for £6 per set.

Steve McArragher

