

The charity's work is ongoing but relies on public donations and its enthusiastic volunteers to assist with the training and general day to day administration. It was a very inspiring and uplifting lecture, and sales and donations raised £312 for the charity. *Barbara Dubois*

### QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION– JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>

The Jubilee Celebration organised by the Parish Council was a great success and very well attended on a lovely sunny, but very windy day. We ran a stall offering a Giant Jenga competition to win a bottle of champagne and “Beer and Skittles” where anyone who could down all nine skittles with two balls won a bottle of beer. It was a fun event and not intended to raise funds, but we still made £50. The highlight was the winning Jenga score of 32 blocks removed and balanced on top of the pile by a young lady which completely eclipsed the best adult score. We could not give her the champagne, but she was happy with a bottle of ginger beer and lots of sweeties! Our stall was next to the History Group and Walking Group stalls under a big 3-bay gazebo, which sadly did not fare very well in the gusty wind and needed a lot of running repairs with gaffer tape etc.

*Steve McArragher*

### COPPER LANE DEVELOPMENT

Rydon Homes are proposing to build 124 new houses on land between Copper Lane and Albion Road, as included in the new Maidstone Local Plan (despite opposition from our Parish Council). The plan is due to be adopted in Jan 2023 once independently examined and approved. A recent exhibition on this was run by SP Broadway a PR firm on 6<sup>th</sup> July. The proposed plan looks a lot better than the adjacent Countryside development on the old cricket and hockey field, with significantly lower housing density. Good news is that there will be no vehicle access on to Copper Lane, but a new pedestrian access will be created from footpath KM282 down to Copper Lane. Also the existing ponds will be retained and landscaped to create an open space, and they have promised to retain existing hedges and trees where possible. It's a shame there will be no connections to the Cricket field estate. Comments are invited but of course there is no guarantee that the final layout will look like this. Indeed it is always possible that it could be sold on to another developer, as happened before in Marden. Further details of their proposal can be seen at <https://www.copperlane-albionroad.co.uk/>

*Steve McArragher*



# The Parish Pump

## THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – AUGUST 2022

Summertime, and the living is easy ...or is it in a record heatwave? We have no talk in August but our Autumn season of talks will start in September as below:

**28<sup>th</sup> September: Geoff Doel on “Hopping in Kent and the Hartlake disaster”.** In October 1853 a wagon taking around 30 hop-pickers and their families back to their camp crashed through the Hartlake bridge over the Medway near Hadlow, drowning 30 of them. This talk was originally planned for November 2019, so we hope nothing will go wrong this time!

**26<sup>th</sup> October: Alison Bristo “All about Orangutans and why they are endangered”.** When Alison became seriously ill, her desire to visit orangutans in Borneo gave her the strength to get well. After 3 years battling illness, she fulfilled her dream and went to work there.

**23<sup>rd</sup> November: “Sentinels of the Sea, the Amazing History of Lighthouses”, by Mark Lewis.** An introduction to “pharology”, the study of lighthouses, from the prototype Pharos of Alexandria through the history of their construction, methods of illumination, operation and maintenance, and lives of the keepers, including some extraordinary heroic stories.

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

### CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Well the record has been well and truly broken and England recorded its highest ever temperature of 40.3°C on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July. It's a shame (?) this was in Lincolnshire not the north Kent Coast, which only saw 38.9°C in Faversham. The highest I saw here in Marden was 37.5 and that was quite enough! It was very sad to see the fire in Wennington which destroyed or badly damaged over a third of the village's homes. Perhaps we are lucky to live on a flood plain after all. At least we did not lose our water like so many in Kent did.

Still we shouldn't complain as many of us pay large sums of money to go in search of these temperatures on holiday. Who needs the Med when you can bask in the sun in Margate! All the experts agree we are going to have to get used to it and adapt to the higher temperatures. Certainly, closing up all the windows and curtains during the day, then opening them all night worked for us. The next “Big Thing” in home improvements will probably now be window shutters as used in southern Europe, probably a good time to invest..... *Steve McArragher*

### PROVENDER HOUSE VISIT

25 members had a very enjoyable summer outing on 22<sup>nd</sup> June to Provender House near Faversham, the home of Princess Olga Romanov, great niece of the assassinated Tsar Nicholas II. On a perfect summer afternoon Princess Olga and a local friend showed us round the house, part of which dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It has had many owners over the years, and was

named after its first owner, Sir John de Provender. It was bought in 1912 by the McDougalls (of self-raising flour fame), whose daughter Nadine married Prince Andrew Romanoff and were Olga's parents. When Prince Andrew died in 2000, the house was almost derelict, but has been largely restored with the help of English Heritage, Swale BC, and conservation architect Ptolemy Dean. Provender's antiquity is reflected not only in its large inglenook fireplaces and flagged floor stones but also, according to Olga, in the freezing temperatures which she endures in winter. We could enjoy the coolness of the house on a beautiful warm June day, but English Heritage does not allow central heating in the oldest rooms which must be cool all year.



Along with the architecture and layout of the house we were also able to see numerous family photographs and portraits, many brought over when Olga's father fled to Europe during the Russian Revolution. Many of the portraits were apparently painted from photographs. We heard tales of various family members who included not only the Romanovs but also the British royal family. These were not always flattering, but often amusing for example the rivalry between an Empress and a Queen over who should have precedence and the kleptomania of Queen Mary, the Queen's grandmother. Olga was educated in Provender by private tutors but never learned Russian. She was told of her family's Russian history by her exiled father. She joined the Romanov Family Association and was elected President in 2016. The house itself is not just a showplace but very much a family home as reflected by the toy car left on the table, the toy tractors underneath it and the dog basket beside the inglenook fireplace. Our visit was rounded off by tea and homemade cakes in the dining room. *Barbara Dubois*

#### **A POLICEMAN'S LOTS.....**

Our last three lectures before the summer break all, in their own way, dealt with detection work. In March, in his talk "**Bell, Book and Candle**", **Geoff Lewry** described his work as a member of the anti-terrorism squad with the Metropolitan Police. His service began in 1973, the year the Provisional IRA came to London. They left four cars fitted with explosives at different sites around the city, one person was killed and 180 injured. All but one of the gang were arrested. In 1977 he was attached to the forensic team and as such would be one of the first to be despatched to a crime scene. Crimes he attended included the assassination of Airey

Neave, the Tory MP, in the House of Commons car park in 1979, and the Canary Wharf bombing in 1996. One of the worst incidents was the murder of PC Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan Embassy in 1984. Justice has never been brought for this murder and the file remains open.

Acts of terrorism can be carried out against many people, especially ethnic minorities and homosexuals. Geoff himself was called to the homophobic attack at the Admiral Nelson, a gay pub in Soho, where three people were killed and 70 wounded. Other disturbances include those organised by animal rights campaigners who often used simply made incendiary bombs which can cause considerable damage. He was also involved with the London bus bombing in July 2005 when 56 people were killed and 700 injured. He gave a graphic description of travelling through a deserted London, with no pedestrians, buses, cabs or traffic of any sort and then arriving at the awaiting horror scene. Despite the tragic nature of his work Geoff emphasised how he had enjoyed his time with the Met. When asked how he coped with the mental stress he said that for him the best therapy was meeting his colleagues for a couple of pints in a local pub at the end of the day and thrashing out the scenes they may have witnessed.

By contrast **Neil Sadler's** talk in April, "**A Policeman's Lot can be an interesting one**", dealt with the lighter side of police work and showed how the public image of the police can often be found in the way the force is portrayed in books and in particular on television. He mentioned various series such as Dixon of Dock Green, The Bill, Morse etc and refreshed his audience's memories with recordings of their theme tunes. He described the equipment that a police officer on the beat might carry and the way in which it had changed over the years, especially for WPCs. In the 70's or 80's the WPC's uniform always included a shoulder bag and items like truncheons had to be adapted to fit into the bag! Today's uniforms are much more practical and designed to carry such essentials as handcuffs, captor spray and in some cases a taser. Although his talk was mainly humorous, he ended with a sombre note, the murder of PC Andrew Harper, who was tragically cruelly and painfully dragged to his death while trying to apprehend a criminal gang. It was a reminder of how precarious a policeman's lot can be.

Our May talk, "**Medical Detection Dogs**", given by **Bridget Wood and Millie Harries**, described a different form of detection. 'Medical Detection Dogs' is a registered charity based in Milton Keynes whose aim is to harness the incredible power of dog's sense of smell to detect various ailments which can affect humans. It was set up 14 years ago after researchers became aware of accredited stories of a dog's behaviour in alerting people to undisclosed illnesses such as cancer. Dr Claire Guest, the CEO and co-founder of the charity, used to train dogs in her dining room and her own dog, Daisy, started as a puppy and subsequently alerted her to her own breast cancer, thereby saving her life. Dog noses can detect specific VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) at a concentration of one part per trillion and are between 10k and 100k times more sensitive than human noses! They are trained for 18 months at a cost of about £10,000, including 3 months with their new owner. Dogs are not only able to detect the underlying illness, but can also forewarn sufferers from e.g. diabetes of an impending attack and so allow them to take appropriate measures, which can totally transform a sufferer's life. More and more conditions are literally being sniffed out by dogs which can save the NHS thousands. Research is ongoing into illnesses such as Parkinsons, malaria and even Covid. Dogs have been used to help people with nut allergies, cystic fibrosis and a condition known as POTS which can cause sudden collapse, as well as many different forms of cancer with 95% reliability.