

WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.....

Over the centuries numerous illnesses and viruses have surfaced and caused havoc, disfigurement, death – it is only now that science can track these diseases quickly and advanced medical practices can help us bring things under control.

Smallpox goes back thousands of years – Egyptian mummies have been found to be infected. It was spread to indigenous populations by earlier European conquests, sometimes wiping out whole communities. However by the 10th century the Chinese were using the practice of “variolation” by which a small amount of smallpox matter was inserted into people and proved very effective at controlling this disease. Dr Jenner was variolated aged 8 and went on to study treatment with cowpox, which proved effective. His injections commenced in 1796 and the disease is now considered to be eradicated.

The first case of smallpox was identified in Marden in 1784 but the 19th century saw a regular increase. 1849 saw more deaths in Marden followed in 1859 by a father and son dying within hours of each other. But the period between the wars saw a surge, mainly due to hop pickers arriving from crowded and unsanitary areas.

The Salvation Army were praised for their selfless work in nursing the sick. Contacts were sent home, possibly spreading the disease still further, 14 days incubation was required for those who managed to survive. In 1928 there were 3 cases in Marden - a brother and sister who had caught it from an older 14-year-old sister, they went by motor ambulance to a London hospital but died there. By 1930 there were 26 cases..... By 1933 better sewerage had come to the village, so with better sanitation and cleaner living conditions, things started to improve.

But the story continues - there is worse to come. Bubonic plague, typhoid, whooping cough, scarlet fever, all these horrifying diseases spread to villages like Marden. So hold onto your hats, more will be revealed in future Pumps.

Thanks to the Heritage Centre and their research for help with this article. *Mo Clayton*

TREE CHARTER DAY – 27TH NOVEMBER

Sadly I was unable to attend this event, but despite terrible weather on the day, Parish Councillors, the Clerks and residents met on Southons Field to plant two trees. One in memory of the late Duke of Edinburgh and a Roots of Remembrance tree in memory of those who lives have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the parish. They were joined by Vicar Nicky Harvey who said two prayers and a blessing. A number of further trees, supplied by the Woodland Trust, were also planted at various sites on the new estates around Marden.



Steve McArragher

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – JANUARY 2022

Firstly, may we wish a very **Happy and Healthy New Year** to all our members. We have planned a full programme of talks for this year, as detailed below, and just hope that we will be able to go ahead with them without any further lockdowns. We will start as usual with the AGM in January, unless the COVID situation changes for the worse.

26th January: Annual General Meeting and Social.

23rd February: “50 Days in a Red T Shirt”, by Jon Hill *describes the challenge of walking the GR5 through the French alps from Lac Lemans to the Cote d'Azur, 700Km with over 37,000m of ascent and descent. Woven into the talk is the story of the **Red Rubber Ball Foundation** charity, providing educational opportunities to deprived children in Kenya.*

23rd March: “Anti-terrorism at Scotland Yard”, by Geoff Lewry

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: “Sentinels of the Sea, the Amazing History of Lighthouses”, by Mark Lewis. *A general introduction to “pharology” - the study of lighthouses and other navigational aids, giving an outline from the prototype - the Pharos of Alexandria, through the evolving history of their construction, methods of illumination, operation and maintenance, the lives of the keepers, including some of the extraordinary heroic stories associated with them.*

22nd June: Summer Outing TBA

28th September: “Hopping in Kent and the Hartlake Disaster”, by Geoff Doel. *This talk was originally planned for November 2019 and covers the history of hop growing in Kent and the Hartlake Bridge disaster in 1853 when 30 hop-pickers were drowned in the River Medway,*

26th October: “All about orangutans and why they are endangered” by Alison Bristo. *When Alison became seriously ill, it was her passion and desire to visit orangutans in Borneo, that gave her the strength and determination to get well. After 3 years of battling with illness, she fulfilled her dream and went to work there.*

23rd November: TBA

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.

We look forward to meeting you there.

MARDEN AT CHRISTMAS 2021

When Christmas came to Marden on 4th December 2021 it was a big improvement on the previous year. The busy Parish Council elves kept onlookers refreshed whilst an appreciative audience watched Boughton Monchelsea Morris dancers outside The Allens. The Devil raised £21 by being pelted with wet sponges so thank you very much to him. The Parish Council had once again organised a very full Memorial Hall with interesting stalls and the fabulous W.I. and their unmissable cakes. The Marden Society had so much success with their Bottle game that they ran out of wine as prizes and had to close early. £77 was made for such a simple idea. The History Group sold around £60 worth of publications, but this is not all profit. The Friends of Marden Heritage sold all the flags for their Treasure Hunt game and raised £60. This is a wonderful way to engage the whole village and, hopefully, next year we will be free of viral problems and see even more new incomers join with us oldies.

Diane Fisher

MARDEN WILDLIFE – FARMERS AND VILLAGERS CONSERVING NATURE

Ray Morris delivered our last, well attended, lecture of 2021. His very topical talk described the work, enthusiasm and findings of the Marden Wildlife Group, which is open to all. COVID has made a great difference to people's interest in the countryside and wildlife and this Group explores, surveys, records and enjoys the natural biodiversity to be found in the Marden area.

Ray began by contrasting the difference between the national population of 1930, 46 million, with that of today, 67 million. As a result of this huge growth 50% of the national ancient woodland has been lost. Marden village grew up around natural oak woodland and its continuing good health is something that is vital not only to us but also to all the flora and fauna that depend on it. The roots underneath trees provide sustenance for many varieties of fungi. The fungi provide and recycle many of the nutrients essential for flowering plants and trees and are also essential for the growth of orchids such as those in Marden Meadow. Fungi will also help provide food for human use such as bread and beer. Hedgerows from ancient woodlands are another important feature of the countryside. Sadly it is estimated that 10,000 miles of hedgerow is lost annually throughout the country. Marden is fortunate in that it has retained much of its ancient hedges.

Fauna seems to be thriving in the area. Foxes, badgers, deer, weasels and stoats all abound. Hedgehogs are to be found at several sites, and there is an ongoing village survey, though sadly throughout the country the hedgehog population has declined by about 30%. Field mice and yellow mice are around and there is evidence of harvest mice and dormice, although they are rarely seen. There are toads, frogs, great crested newts, grass snakes, slow worms and common lizards. Seven species of bat and 20 species of dragonflies have been recorded.

While 97% of meadowland has been lost nationally, the good news is that farmers and landowners are starting to return some of their land to its natural state so flora can be found in abundance in some areas. Notably in Marden green winged and other orchid species are thriving and can be seen in several areas around the village, spreading out from Marden Meadow. Along with the flowers can be found bees, 30 species of butterfly and over 300 species of moths so far. Weeds also play their part and although ragwort is often demonised as toxic to livestock it is essential for the survival of the cinnabar moth and many other insects.



Nationally the bird population has declined dramatically; in the case of lapwings by 50%, turtle doves 96%, yellow hammers 56%, skylarks by 300 per day and in the case of starlings, 50 every hour. However, Marden continues to attract over 100 bird species, including many red-listed ones. The village boasts a significant percentage of the nation's turtle doves, the great white egret can be found here along with red kites, buzzards and ravens. More than 6000 birds have been ringed by the group in Marden, including in one year 80% of Kent records for linnets and yellowhammers, which was 4% of the nation's yellowhammer ringing records.



Along with the local farmers and landowners the group also work with the Kent Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the RSPB. The formation in 2020 of the Marden Farming Cluster, supported by Kent Wildlife Trust, has proved a practical way of pooling good practice to work on joint initiatives. In 2021, new crops were put into the ground to conserve soils, as well as to support declining species – bird, insect and plant-

and to improve water quality. This work is reviewed in the latest edition of KWT's Wilder Kent magazine.

Young and old contribute to the Group's surveys and findings and hopefully the outstanding enthusiasm and interest in the Group will continue to flourish and grow. At the end of his talk Ray announced that the MWG had just won the 2021 NBN Group Award from the National Biodiversity Network. The citation stated "*It is hard to overstate how profoundly Marden Wildlife has influenced the area. Recording by group members on farms – encompassing all taxa – is enthusing more farmers to take positive action to increase biodiversity on their land, with an ambitious network of new Countryside Stewardship agreements in place, aiming to deliver landscape-scale enhancements.*"

Barbara Dubois