

Marden Motor Club held their first Motor Show on Southons Field on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2019. There were about 110 cars on display and the event was so successful that the Club resolved to hold a similar show the following year..... Two years, three months and two weeks later Southons Field was once again invaded by devotees of the internal combustion engine. This time there were around 140 cars, 10 motorcycles and a Green Goddess fire engine in attendance, along with the Club's prized Ford Model B breakdown truck. Fortunately all vehicles left the field under their own steam and neither fire engine nor breakdown truck were pressed into service.

Cars on display ranged in age from a Ford Model T to a 21 reg Alfa Romeo SUV, the latter being something that I imagine neither Nuvolari nor Fangio would have approved of. They ranged in size from a Fiat 500 to a Chevrolet Impala. For those unfamiliar with the latter this was a "full sized" American car from the 1960s. Marginally smaller than a Juggernaut. Individual tastes vary of course but the writer enjoyed seeing rarities such as a Matra Bagheera and a Jowett Javelin. Plus of course the less rare E Type Jaguars and a gorgeous 1968 Porsche 911. A Lotus Elan and Bentley were also present but sadly no sign of either Mrs Peel nor Steed. There is no prize for guessing the age of the writer!



Many local residents visited during the afternoon to see the displayed vehicles and those that the writer has since spoken to greatly enjoyed the event, including those with no real interest in either cars or motorcycles. A selection of comments is below:

*'Absolutely brilliant show at Marden...All of my family enjoyed the day.'* *'A great show today a good selection of cars and met some really nice people, hope to get an invite next year'*.

*'Just to say we had a great time at the event today. Good to see so many cars out and with the beer and burgers, a perfect day. I just wanted to congratulate you and the support team/marshals for an excellent classic car show today - the venue and organisation was absolutely first class. I shall look forward to it next year!'*

The Motor Club plan to hold a show again next year, the date yet to be decided. *Mike Lockett*

Finally. life is getting back to some sort of normality after the successful rollout of the Vaccination Programme and the removal of most Government restrictions. So our programme of talks has restarted in September, as you will read below, and will continue from October:

**27<sup>th</sup> October: Punch and Judy by Jacqui Sparks**

**24<sup>th</sup> November: Marden Wildlife by Ray Morris.**

**26<sup>th</sup> January: Annual General Meeting and Social.**

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.

### MO'S MOANS – Part 4

Our village was almost shut off for 6 weeks from the end of July, all through August and just into September by water works necessitating road closures. Obviously essential but I think a bunch of total dimwits must have been in charge. 'Road Closed' – which road? One of the side roads, the main road? On some occasions you could risk using the road and nothing was closed at all, or you could go out one way and then find the road blocked 2 hours later. Lorries were forced onto country roads, totally unsuitable for such large vehicles – twice I was held up by lorries which had jack-knifed with no apparent means of extricating themselves. Bewildered lorry drivers scratching their heads, cars turning round, everyone getting more and more exasperated. It was dangerous, badly thought out and badly implemented.

At least now we can exit our village but will likely meet other roads closed to other villages, and so it goes on. We all know this work must be done but perhaps the planners could use a bit more initiative and common sense?

And now (25<sup>th</sup> September) its Petrol Panic and Stanley's Garage has had more than 40 cars waiting at any one time for the last 2 days. The staff have done great work in directing cars not queuing but on Friday a fire engine was unable to get through and lorries were blocking the ends of the queue. The garage has run out of petrol and diesel. The days of running out of toilet paper 18 months ago seem quite uneventful by comparison with this fiasco!

On the plus side, have you tried the exercise adults' equipment in the football pitch area? Fun to use and many thanks to the Parish Council for installing them. *Mo Clayton*

## CAPTAIN OATES

It was good to see so many familiar faces at our first meeting for over 18 months, when Michael Smith, a polar historian, gave a most interesting talk about Captain Oates. Lawrence Edward Grace 'Titus' Oates is best remembered for his final, tragic words, but his relatively short life saw plenty of heroic action.



He was born in 1880, the son of a prosperous landowner whose roots can be traced back to the Battle of Hastings. Oates was a sickly child and at an early age was sent out to South Africa where his father and his uncle were explorers. His father died suddenly in 1896 and Oates was then dominated by his formidable austere mother, who doted on him but tried to control all aspects of his life. He was sent to Eton where he failed miserably, possibly owing to dyslexia, and after attending an army 'crammer' went to live on the family estates in Yorkshire, where he joined the local militia. He enjoyed army life and with the outbreak of

the Boer War he was recruited as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant into the 6<sup>th</sup> (Inniskilling) Dragoons, a cavalry regiment. In action in 1900 he distinguished himself, holding out with 15 men when surrounded by 300 Boers. During this episode however he was severely wounded in the thigh. He recovered but his left leg was left 2 inches shorter than his right.

He found army life in peacetime boring, but during time in Ireland, Egypt and India he became a devotee of all equestrian activities. On learning that Scott was planning an expedition to the South Pole he applied to join, to take charge of the horses, and also donated £1,000 towards the cost. On joining he was horrified at the state of the 19 horses that had been acquired. He considered them too old, out of condition and totally unsuited to the task that lay ahead. He was at odds with Scott from the start. Scott would not accept that dogs would be more suitable for pulling the sleds. Oates was on the verge of pulling out but in the end stayed out of loyalty for a British expedition and concern for the horses' welfare. From the start he criticised Scott's preparations. They had to transport all the fodder for the horses, the men's clothing was unsuitable, the diet was inadequate, Scott never checked on the well-being of his men. Oates, the only army man on the expedition became something of a loner, devoting himself to the care of the horses doing all he could to try and keep them fit and able to do their work.

For the final push to the Pole, Scott, instead of the party of four, which he had originally intended, decided to take five. The fifth man was Oates. On their arrival at the South Pole,

they found Amundsen had beaten them by 35 days. Facing the 900 mile trek back under horrendous weather conditions all the men became weaker and began to suffer from frost bite. In Oates's case his condition was probably exacerbated by the reopening of the leg injury he had suffered in the Boer War. His feet became horribly swollen and he could no longer pull the sled or help physically. He was aware that he was slowing the progress of the other men. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1912, in a temperature of -40, with a blizzard blowing, he left the tent, uttering his memorable words, "I am just going out and may be some time". He was never seen again and his body was never found. The 3 remaining men carried on for 9 more days but too weak and cold to continue they perished in the tent. Their frozen bodies were found in November 1912.

Oates' mother was incandescent with rage against Scott and publicly blamed him for the failure of the expedition and the loss of her son. For the remaining 25 years of her life she wore black, forbade the family and everyone else to speak of him and ordered the burning of all his correspondence and diaries. She died in 1937. Oates' sister however did make copies of some extracts from his correspondence. Oates is remembered as a brave, courageous man whose final words will almost certainly never be forgotten. Of the 5 men who reached the South Pole Oates is the only one who chose the means and day of his death. The day he died, March 17<sup>th</sup>, was his birthday.

*Barbara Dubois*

## **MARDEN LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT**

When KCC came into a pot of (Section 106) money from housing developers that they had to spend quickly, Marden Library was chosen to undergo a full refurbishment. I expect we all thought that was good news and looked forward to its eventual re-opening. Unfortunately, what was once a full and inviting community space is now just space and plenty of it. It would be interesting to meet and question the person who redesigned the interior! The good news is that the roof is fixed, there is new central heating boiler, new carpet, new wiring and computer terminals and all freshly painted (bar the office). The less good news is that the librarian is now placed right in front of the Heritage Centre, without the storage that was previously behind the desk and with the afternoon sun obliterating her computer screen. The new computer terminals are by the office door so that area is now no longer secure for volunteers to leave belongings in. The large bookcases at the rear of the library have gone and are due to be replaced by a sofa and a "coffee station"!!

Replacement bookshelves will be on wheels so that they can be moved aside when KCC wants to hold events in the space. (Since when does a large county council hold events in relatively small spaces?) The paintings of Marden Village by Marden artists are no longer allowed to be hung on the walls as the head librarian likes a "tidy space" and plants are also now not allowed. KCC has not yet placed an order for replacement tables and chairs so there is nowhere for the scrabble players, mums and tots, storytime, etc to take place and no date when this might happen. A knock-on effect is that the mums and tots would go over the road to the village café after they had sung about the wheels on the bus going round and round, so the café will now be affected too. The head librarian has taken back a cupboard that was given to the History Group to store stationery, so that is currently stored offsite, hopefully temporarily. Getting back to normal is not going to be quick, I'm afraid. I have also been told that just because it has had money spent on it does not mean that our much-loved library is safe from fewer opening hours or closure.....

*Diane Fisher*