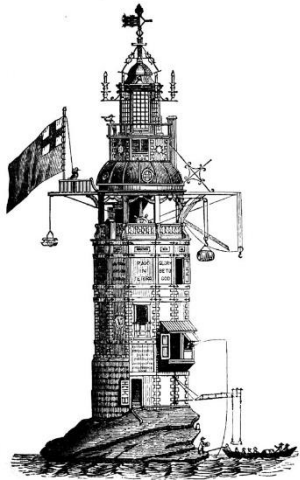


LIGHTHOUSES - SENTINELS OF THE SEA

In November Mark Lewis spoke to us about “Pharology”, or the study of lighthouses, named from the prototype Pharos of Alexandria. Mark has no formal link to lighthouses but is a real enthusiast and is the Education Officer for the Society of Lighthouse Keepers, even though there no longer any real lighthouse keepers!

The Pharos was the first lighthouse, built around 270 BCE, and was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was most likely lit by an open fire and survived two earthquakes but is now long gone. Then came the Romans who did lots of things for us, including building lighthouses. These included the Dover Pharos, originally there were two on each side of the port, and the Tower of Hercules at Coruna in Spain which is the oldest working Lighthouse. There are no records of lighthouses during the Anglo-Saxon period, then in medieval times Church towers were used. In 1514 Henry VIII established Trinity House which has been responsible for lighthouses ever since. In 1566, Elizabeth I's Seamarks Act enabled Trinity House to erect “seamarks - whereby the dangers may be avoided and escaped and ships the better come into their ports without peril”. It has always been a charity and is funded by the shipping industry.



WINSTANLEY'S EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

One of the most famous is the Eddystone Light near Plymouth. The first, built of wood by Henry Winstanley, only lasted 6 months before repairs were needed, then a further 5 years till the great storm of 1703 when it was destroyed killing five people including him! The second built by John Rudyard lasted 50 years but was burnt down. The third was built in stone, modelled on the shape of an oak tree, by John Smeaton in 1769 and survived till 1882 when it was moved to Plymouth Hoe.

Early lighting was by fires and then candles followed by paraffin lamps. A major development was the Fresnel lens which focussed the light into a beam. Initially the direction was fixed, but later developments allowed use of rotating lights, with the whole “lantern” rotating very easily on a bed of mercury, which was fine as long as it did not escape! Some paraffin lamps were still in use up to the 1950s, though

electric lighting had largely taken over during the 20th century.

Lighthouse keepers were a special breed who must cope with living with one colleague in cramped quarters for several months. Alcohol was not allowed, and they must keep the light going at all times, or else they were fired. In 1775 at the Smalls lighthouse 20 miles off the Pembrokeshire coast, the two keepers did not get on, and in a fight one was killed. His body had to stay there for 6 weeks, and the killer Griffiths lost his mind, ending up in an asylum. After that there were always three keepers on island lighthouses. Drinking water supply was always a problem, and sanitation was rudimentary, “bucket and chuck it”, hopefully downwind! All Lighthouses have been fully automated and unmanned since 1998, when the last manned lighthouse, the North Foreland, was converted. They are still needed even in this era of satellite navigation, just in case things go wrong!

Steve McArragher

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – FEBRUARY 2023

Our programme for 2023 is as follows:

22nd February: “Flags in Britain” by Commander Bruce Nicolls OBE. A history of how flags began and their use in Britain, covering the influence of Heraldry and the history of the Royal Standard and Union Jack.

22nd March: “Thirty Years of Bother on the Hover” by Brian Lavercroft-Smith. A humorous look at the world’s biggest hovercraft operation across the English Channel and the history of Hovercraft in Dover.

26th April: “The Bayeaux Tapestry” by Imogen Corrigan. A story of Kings, chivalry and ambition, looking at many of the scenes in detail and what we might learn from them.

24th May: “The Titanic” by Eddie Asquith. A review of how the idea of Titanic was born, why the tragedy occurred, who or what was to blame and the legacy of this disaster.

21st June: Summer Outing to the Wildwood Trust near Herne. A guided tour of the nature reserve to view British Wildlife past and present, including bears, bison and wild boar.

27th September: “Hampton-on-Sea, For the Want of Five Shillings a Village was Lost” by Geoff Turner. The story of how Hampton, an oyster fishing village near Herne Bay, came to be built but eventually succumbed to the encroaching sea.

25th October: “The State of Marden Wildlife” by Ray Morris. An update on the activities of this group since Ray’s last talk in 2020.

22nd November: “Tom Crean, unsung hero of Antarctic Exploration” by Michael Smith. Tom served on three Antarctic expeditions with both Scott and Shackleton and outlived both. However he never spoke about his exploits and was overlooked for 80 years.

All evening meetings are free and will be held in the Vestry Hall at 7.30 p.m. with a raffle followed by refreshments after the talk.

CHAIRMAN’S CHAT

January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow.... but no it was December and very pretty it was while it lasted. But once the thaw started what did we get? Potholes that’s what we got, everywhere on all the country roads which had only just about been repaired since last winter. Some marked with traffic cones but only a few, and on a cold wet night you just cannot

see them. I have lost two tyres and one wheel to them in recent years so am very wary and have avoided most of them so far this year. The best way to report them is via <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>. One cause of the problem is the number of heavy trucks using the country roads and the repairs often don't last very long. Tenterden has reported a "pothole crisis" with over 60 potholes and has organised a demo to try and get KCC to fix them properly. Perhaps we should copy the "Just Stop Oil" demonstrators and superglue ourselves to the roads by the potholes..... Not really! *Steve McArragher*



1 Alison Bristo

ORANGUTANS – MEN OF THE FOREST

Alison Bristo has always been passionate about orangutans, but it was a serious illness and 14 months in hospital that gave her the determination to fulfil her dream to visit Borneo and work with them. These 'men of the forest' are closely related to humans with almost 98% of the same DNA. There are 3 types and they are only found in Borneo and Sumatra. The Sumatran and Bornean species have shaggy reddish fur, but the Sumatran orangutans have longer facial hair. The third species, the Tapanuli orangutan was only announced in 2017 but is threatened with extinction with less than 800 individuals in existence.

Sumatran orangutans live most of their solitary life in trees, the females rarely descend to the ground and the males only occasionally. The Bornean species, by contrast, descend more frequently, make nests and move from tree to tree, needing large tracts of land to satisfy their diet of fruit. They will eat over 300 variations of fruit, also young leaves, tree bark and insects. Their feet act as another set of hands, with 4 long fingers and short opposing thumbs for a strong climbing grip.

They are gentle creatures who never kill each other or fight back, which makes them very vulnerable. They have many characteristics in common with humans, and can express joy, well-being, surprise and fear. When angry they growl but do not run. They can also suffer the same diseases as humans, as well as strokes, paralysis and cataracts, so were vulnerable to Covid with no immunity. Social bonds really only occur between a mother and her offspring, who will co-exist for up to 15 years. During this time the child is totally dependent on its mother and will learn all life skills from her. The mother will only give birth to one child at a time and will not have more until it becomes self-reliant, so a female will only produce 3 -4 babies during a lifespan of 60 years. Orangutans are an endangered species, mainly due to human activities. Their natural habitat has been destroyed by development, logging and palm oil plantations. They are subject to poaching and their young are vulnerable to kidnap, also local inhabitants will slaughter them for food. There is a fine balance between commercial development and the protection of the species, and while the economic need for the human population is acknowledged the destruction of natural habitat and the threat to orangutans is devastating.

However, slowly steps are being taken to improve this situation. Some orangutans are being rescued and taken to live in safe enclosures, but unfortunately in Borneo it may mean that they spend up to 30 years in a cage. Keeping young as pets is unlawful, although this rule appears

to be overlooked when people of 'importance' are involved. In some areas the forest is slowly being replanted with new trees when the palm oil plantations reach the end of their productive life. Lemon grass is also being planted to help restore soil fertility. Local residents are being encouraged to learn to live with orangutans and children are being educated about them and taught how to regenerate the rain forest. But these are mostly long-term projects, meanwhile these lovely, gentle creatures continue to be threatened. Enthusiasts like Alison, (who donates her fees to this cause), continue to beg and plead and spread the word. We can only hope that the world listens and saves these beautiful creatures.

Barbara Dubois

MARDEN VILLAGE CLUB WINS CAMRA NATIONAL AWARD



2 L-R: Chris Barker (MVC Committee Member), Simon Banfield (Club Manager), Laura Emson (CAMRA Awards Director), Martin Knight (CAMRA Kent Regional Director)

At lunchtime on Saturday 28th January a sizeable contingent of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) members from Kent, London and further afield joined regulars in the Marden Village Club for a celebration. The event was the official presentation of the CAMRA National Club of the Year award for 2022. There are believed to be around 28,000 private members clubs in the UK

and of these the Marden Village Club successively won the Maidstone and Mid Kent Branch, Kent Region, Super-Regional and finally National Club of the Year competitions. Clubs in the competition are selected by CAMRA volunteers and judged on their atmosphere, decor, welcome, community focus, service, value for money, customer mix and most importantly – quality of real ale, cider and perry. The three runners-up in the national final were the Cheltenham Motor Club (previous winners in 2013, 2017, 2020), Dobcross Band Social Club in Greater Manchester and Barnton Cricket Club in Merseyside-Cheshire.

The Club put on an excellent buffet lunch after the presentation and all in attendance were impressed with the efficient way staff, committee members and other helpers coped with what the Secretary later described as the busiest shift she has experienced. Winning this award is a fantastic achievement for the club and a recognition of the hard work put in over several years by Club Manager Simon Banfield, the Committee and staff.

Mike Lockett

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM on 25th January had a very good attendance of 31 members. Highlights were:

- Subscriptions will remain at £5 this year in view of the cost-of-living crisis (**AND ARE NOW DUE**) but may need to increase next year.
- We have lost a few members but also gained some so membership is stable at 108.
- The committee will continue as it is but we desperately need some help and new blood.
- A full programme of talks is planned (see first page) with an outing to Wildwood.
- We will try and be more active monitoring village developments.
- Finally, it was agreed unanimously to continue with refreshments *after* our meetings.

Steve McArragher