

The cross-channel service ceased in October 2000 as it became uncompetitive. There was competition from traditional ferries and catamarans; the duty-free shopping with the EU disappeared; the craft were ailing and failing and the Channel Tunnel led to faster crossings by train. After the closure of operations one of the craft was sent to Lee-on-Solent to the Hovercraft Museum and a propeller from the other craft was erected in Dover.

Due to increasing hearing problems Brian himself resigned, regretfully, in 1996. He had taken immense pleasure in his career, enjoyed a 32-hour week with the benefits of duty-free shopping and obviously frequent trips to France. There had been heart stopping moments like the time the hovercraft went over a windsurfer! Thankfully the windsurfer emerged unscathed but angry, although his board appeared to be somewhat beaten up! To Brian his crew and cabin attendants were like friends and family and as far as he personally was concerned, there definitely was "a lot less bover on the hover"! *Barbara Dubois*

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 4TH APRIL

The Annual Parish Meeting is a very good way to get an overview of all that is going on in Marden and around. It is such a shame that this year it was attended by only around 20 people representing local organisations. There were presentations from Marden PC Chairman Kate Tippen, Anne Boswell on Amenities, Andy Turner on Planning, on MBC activities by Annabel Blackmore and a comprehensive report on KCC activities from Lottie Parfitt-Reid although she was unable to attend. There were also presentations from Living Memories Dementia Group, Marden in Bloom and the Village Club which continues to grow from strength to strength. One highlight was the presentation of the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award to Olga Rance of the Old Post Office Coffee shop. This was presented by Kate Tippen in honour of her work to help fellow citizens in Ukraine and those who are living as guests in Marden and the surrounding area, organising collections of much needed supplies for shipment to Ukraine and the amazing concert held in Marden Church after Christmas.



Other random highlights (for me) from the meeting:

- Flooding and drainage continue to be major problems, largely because too much rainwater is going down the foul sewer. Meetings have been held with Southern Water who are aware of the problem and looking for solutions, but it all comes down to money.
- There is still no Planning decision about the Chainhurst chicken farm....
- Input to the MBC Local Plan Review has been a major job for the Parish Council and work is proceeding on our Neighbourhood Plan Review which has to be in line with this.
- The saga of the allotments at Highwood Green continues, but there is still hope as Redrow have at last agreed to transfer the allotment site *only* to the Council. Watch this space but don't hold your breath....
- The Leeds – Langley road will be closed for 6 months this summer, a suitable diversion is under discussion..... That will be fun!!
- MBC are purchasing houses and land to build a stock of affordable housing for local people. It would be good to get a bigger audience to attend these meetings, perhaps we need a bit of excitement like the Handforth Parish council which went viral in 2021! *Steve McArragher*

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – MAY 2023

Our programme for 2023 continues as follows:

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.

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

It's not long now till King Charles III will be formally crowned, but what difference will that make as he became King on the death of Queen Elizabeth? While mulling this over I realised I did not know much about it but found a useful House of Commons briefing paper available on the internet. The history of the Coronation can be traced back over 1000 years and main elements of the ceremony were devised by St Dunstan for King Edgar's crowning at Bath Abbey in 973. The first Coronation at Westminster Abbey was for William the Conqueror in 1066. It is part of a European tradition of Church involvement in the State and government, and the UK is now the only European monarchy to retain the tradition.

Central to the ceremony is the "unction" or anointing of the King with holy oil, as part of the religious service. This is the moment when the King is deemed to be remade as a divinely ordained King: God's chosen representative on Earth. This led to the concept of the "divine right of Kings" to do whatever they wanted, much abused by Henry VIII and others. This is no longer exercised of course but one wonders whether Charles would like to use it for some of his environmental crusades!

The one legal aspect of the ceremony is the requirement for the King to swear an oath to govern the peoples of the UK and Commonwealth "according to their respective laws and customs". This stems from the Coronation Oath Act of 1689, brought in by parliament to limit the power of William and Mary and all future monarchs, after the religious policies of King James II/VII. So we can rest assured that Charles will be a responsible King and not chop any heads off. Clearly the coronation is a bit more than just an excuse for lots of pageantry and big parties, but then there's nothing wrong with that either! Do come to the village Coronation Event in Southons field on May 8th and visit the Marden Society stall. *Steve McArragher*

FLAGS OF BRITAIN

In February, to start our year, one of our oldest members, Commander Bruce Nicholls OBE, gave an entertaining talk about the history of the British Union Flag (or Union Jack) and the Royal Standards. Bruce was posted to the Bahamas and was liaison officer with the American base situated there. When asked why the Union Jack had to fly the right way up (with the wide white stripes at the top), he realised he didn't know and so his interest and research began.

Before 'civilisation', as we understand it, people lived in small communities and could easily identify each other. As communities grew larger, they needed better identification and used different body markings. Eventually more visible signals arose and a pole with a brightly coloured piece of cloth flying in the wind became the recognised symbol. The Romans referred to it as 'vexillum' and this eventually produced our word 'vexillology', the study of flags. As nations developed their standards or flags they were mostly used in connection with war, to identify friend or foe. Flags often depicted animal or bird symbols, e.g. the dragon was an early Chinese symbol, later adopted by the Saxons or the raven as used by the Vikings.

When the Crusaders set out in the 1100s, they used symbols on their armour for identification. Knights displayed these symbols on their helmets, surcoats, shields and banners and so heraldry commenced. The Plantagenet kings subsequently adopted the lion as their heraldic emblem and Richard the Lionheart is believed to be the first to have shown the three lions still featured on the Royal Standards. At about the same time the red cross of St. George on a white background was adopted as the English ensign, although, many other countries (including France) also used it, but later dropped it. In the 14th century Edward III chose St. George as the patron saint of the Order of the Garter and so used the George Cross on the Royal Standard. At about the same time the Scots adopted the fleur-de-lys symbol and the white cross (saltire) on a blue background for St Andrew, with the lion rampant also used on the personal banner of the Kings and Queens of Scotland. When James I of Scotland inherited the English throne, becoming James VI of England, a new flag representing the Union of England and Scotland was created by royal decree. This combined the St. George and St. Andrew crosses to form the flag, which was used primarily for maritime purposes. In 1801 the Union flag was changed again following the union of Ireland with Great Britain. This combined the red saltire of Ireland with the red cross and blue saltire of England and Scotland. Although the Republic of Ireland is no longer part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland is and the combination remains.



There are no symbols representing Wales in the Union Flag but the Welsh dragon was adopted into the Royal coat of arms during the Tudor dynasty. It was not until 1959 however that the red dragon of Wales was adopted as the official Welsh flag. The current Royal Standard came into being when Queen Victoria, in 1837, was obliged to give up the German shield on her standard as she could not accede to the throne of Hanover. The Royal Standard is divided into four quadrants, the first and fourth contain three lions passant guardant representing England, the second has a lion rampant for Scotland and the third a gold harp for Ireland. This standard is used generally by the monarch except in Scotland where the red lion rampant appears in the first and fourth quadrant and the three gold English lions appear in the third quadrant. The Irish harp remains unchanged.

Other members of the Royal Family have their own personal standards, usually representing their life or heritage. For example, the banner of the late Duke of Edinburgh showed his Danish, German and Greek heritage with the fourth quadrant showing Edinburgh castle. With his death the standard was withdrawn and will not be flown again. The Royal Standard is reserved for the monarch and most famously is displayed on royal residences to show that the monarch is present. Prior to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the flagpole at Buckingham Palace remained bare unless the monarch was in residence. After the public outcry at the time of her death it was decided that the Union Jack would always be flown from that pole unless the Royal Standard was flying to denote the monarch's presence.

Barbara Dubois

BOVVER ON THE HOVER

Brian Laverick-Smith's talk, "30 Years of Bother on the Hover" was an entertaining account of his 30-year career working on hovercraft, laced with anecdotes of incidents which took place. He started life in the Merchant Navy, but in 1966, after a chat with his CO, decided to quit and move nearer to Dover (and his girlfriend) to join one of the new hovercraft companies.

The modern hovercraft as we know it was mostly associated with Sir Christopher Cockerell. The original hover known as SRN 1, (Saunders-Roe Nautical 1), was very noisy with 4 jet engines, 30 feet of rubber skirt and a cruising speed of 70mph. The SRN-1 carried out many test programmes, including a test cross channel run in July 1959 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Louis Bleriot's crossing of the channel. It was launched commercially in 1959 and many companies expressed interest in this novel form of transport, including Vickers-Armstrong, Westland, Hoverlloyd and Townsend/Thoresen. Brian joined Townsend/Thoresen in 1966 when the SRN-6 was operating the Isle of Wight crossing from Southsea to Ryde. He spent 2 years there but after months of disrupted crossings Townsend/Thoresen pulled out and Brian was out of a job. He turned to Dover where in 1968, the first big craft, the SRN-4 Mountbatten class came into operation. Mountbatten had been a very keen follower of the hovercraft and used the Solent crossing frequently, declaring himself the first paying passenger when he gave the then Captain £1 on the occasion of the first crossing. He would also bestow gifts such as a brace of pheasants upon the crew, although Brian's wife refused to cook them.



There were two models used by the rival operators, Hoverlloyds and Seaspeed. They joined forces to become Hoverspeed in 1981. The craft were named the 'Princess Margaret' and the 'Princess Anne', or 'Maggie' and 'Annie'. Hoverlloyd initially operated from Ramsgate (where a special hoverport terminal was built at Pegwell Bay) to Calais. Seaspeed went from Dover to Calais and also Boulogne. The first ten years were difficult, but the craft always attracted a great deal of attention and many celebrities used them to cross to France. Among them were Richard Burton, who refused to go onto the flightdeck, and John Cleese who enjoyed it. At first the craft carried 254 passengers and 30 cars, then in 1978 the hovercraft were enlarged to carry 418 passengers and 60 cars. The crossing took about 30 minutes and the operation was run like an airline with flight numbers. There were still operational difficulties though, as the channel was rough and there was a great deal of turbulence which caused damage.