

party and quickly retreated back into his house. They are also working with KWT in the Wilder Blean Project to reintroduce bison, with three of them plus a new calf in a reserve next to Wildwood. Longer term it is hoped to create public access to this to allow viewing of the bison in their natural habitat.

They only currently have one wild boar but are hoping to get more and resume breeding soon. We saw many other smaller animals including badgers, foxes and wolves, and altogether it was a very enjoyable day.
Steve McArragher

4TH MARDEN MOTOR SHOW

This was the 4th Show put on by Marden Motor Club on 27th May, and the feedback received showed that it was the best yet. It is a very informal show open to anyone with an “interesting” car, and people There were about 195 cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles and tractors on show. The sun shone brightly all day which helped to bring in a bumper attendance of around 500 people in total.



There were vehicles of all ages on show, everything from a vintage Bentley and Austin Seven to modern supercars and even a stretched limo.

Next year's Show will be held on Saturday, 25th May, and will hopefully be even bigger and better!
Steve McArragher

The Parish Pump

THE JOURNAL OF THE MARDEN SOCIETY – SEPTEMBER 2023

Our 2023 autumn programme will restart in September:

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: Restoring the Old Vicarage by Toby Spanier. Toby and his family moved into the Old Vicarage a few years ago and will tell us about its design and renovation, and Georgian vicarage life.

22nd November: Tom Crean, unsung hero of Antarctic Exploration by Michael Smith. Tom ran away from home at 15, served on three expeditions to the Antarctic, spent longer on the ice than either Scott or Shackleton and outlived both men. But he could never speak about his exploits and took his remarkable story to the grave.

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

Let's talk about the weather, it's what we Brits do best isn't it! It has certainly been quite a summer of extremes, the hottest July on record globally, but not for us thank goodness. We have had the sixth wettest July ever (1988 was the wettest), though not so much in the southeast. It feels like we have gone back to a traditional British summer, wet and windy! We can all remember cool wet summer holidays, perhaps sitting in a soggy tent trying to keep dry. This is a big change from last summer when I wrote about our hottest July ever when we broke the 40 C record.

Well I for one am grateful that we have been spared the heat, and the wildfires that other countries like Greece, Portugal and Canada have had to endure, and especially Maui where the town of Lahaina has been destroyed. All thanks to the vagaries of the Jetstream which kept us cool while southern Europe sweated and burned. And we can think back to flaming June, when we had hardly any rain and the gardens dried out leading to a hosepipe ban, at least that has been lifted now since 4th August. In fact, it has been a very good year for many flowers, especially roses and hydrangeas.

The experts tell us that Global Warming means more extreme weather, not just higher temperatures, and this summer has certainly emphasised that. There is no doubt that our climate is changing and doing so much faster than anyone had predicted. We will just have to get used to it and learn to adapt, but then we are good at doing that. And King Charles can very justifiably say “Don't say I didn't warn you”.
Steve McArragher

THE TITANIC

The disaster of the Titanic and in particular, 'What went wrong?' was the topic of Eddie Asquith's talk in May. The glamour and tragedy surrounding the sinking of the Titanic is universally known. Described as the 'ship of dreams' and 'unsinkable' it departed on its maiden voyage on April 10th 1912, leaving Southampton to travel to New York. It made 2 scheduled stops, one at Cherbourg to pick up 281 passengers and one at Queenstown, Southern Ireland, to pick up 183 third class passengers, so the total number of passengers and crew was around 2224. On the 14th April it struck an iceberg 14 miles off Newfoundland and within 2 hours 47 minutes the ship had sunk 2.5 miles to the bottom of the ocean. There were only 710 survivors. In Eddie's opinion the reasons for the tragedy can be divided into three areas: the ship itself and its construction, the personnel and the weather conditions.



In 1908 Bruce Ismay, head of the White Star Line, commissioned Harland and Wolff to build 3 large ships to rival those of Cunard, who at that time had the supremacy of the sea. These were the Titanic, Olympic and Gigantic (subsequently renamed as Britannic which also sank). To build them H&W needed huge numbers of rivets to join the iron plates and build the hulls. They had to subcontract to several local suppliers, and subsequent analysis

showed that some were made of low-grade metal containing too much (25%) slag. During the collision the ice sheared them off, allowing the plates to buckle and let water enter the hold. Many broken rivets were found on the seabed! There were also design flaws, especially poor design of the watertight compartments in the lower hull. This was divided into 16 watertight compartments which could be individually sealed off if the hull was punctured. Six were damaged during the collision and sealing was completed, but the bulkheads were not high enough, so as soon as the bow pitched forward the water began to spill into the adjacent compartments. Also there were no longitudinal bulkheads, and a long passage above all of them which allowed the water to flow along inside the ship.

There were too few lifeboats. The Titanic carried only 20 lifeboats taking 65 passengers each, enough for about half the passengers on board. It was originally designed with 64, which was reduced by Ismay to 45 for 'aesthetic' reasons, then to 20 which still fulfilled legal requirements! In the event however there were too many people and so much chaos that some of the lifeboats were only half full. To add to the chaos no lifeboat drill had been practised. Bruce Ismay was on board and jumped into the last lifeboat. After this he became a total recluse and died in 1937.

In the inquiries that followed the shipwreck several of the crew were criticised for their actions. The Captain, Edward John Smith, had a great reputation and went down with his ship, but was criticised for maintaining full speed of 21 knots. It was felt that he was going too fast in view

of the weather conditions and iceberg warnings that had been received. First Officer Murdoch turned hard to port, and put the engines into reverse to slow down, but this meant the rudder would not work and the ship continued straight on. Multiple iceberg warnings had been received but were regarded as non-urgent and had not been passed to Captain Smith. Distress flares were fired, these were thought to be fireworks and ignored by the captain of the nearest ship the SS California, whose radio operator had gone to bed so did not pick up SOS messages. The iceberg may have been spotted sooner if binoculars had been available, but these were locked in a cupboard and the 2nd officer who carried the key was not on board.

The weather was the final factor in this disaster. In January 1912 there was a mild winter and unusually high tides, which may have dislodged icebergs stuck in the Labrador Sea creating the worst iceberg conditions for many years. There were also cold water mirages which created false horizons hiding the icebergs, even though the visibility was good and the sea was like glass. An exceptionally calm sea is now recognised as a sign of pack ice.

The public enquiries that followed the shipwreck led to major changes in marine regulations. New safety measures were introduced regarding lifeboats and lifeboat drill and the manning of radio equipment. An International Ice Patrol was set up to monitor icebergs in the North Atlantic and maritime regulations were harmonised internationally through the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, (SOLAS). With the discovery of the wreck the question is now whether it should be raised. The opinion of the Marden Society members present at the talk was that it should be left on the seabed. One other surprising fact is that in 1898, 14 years before this event, a novel called "Futility" was published in which a ship called the Titan, the biggest ship in the world and considered unsinkable, hits an iceberg in the Atlantic and sinks with only 13 survivors, spooky.....
Barbara Dubois

SUMMER OUTING TO WILDWOOD

Our summer outing on 21st June to the Wildwood Trust near Herne was enjoyed by 27 members and guests. Wildwood Trust opened in 1999 as a centre of excellence for the conservation of British wildlife and became a registered charity in 2002. It is home to over 200 native animals and birds which lived here in the past or present, set in 40 acres of beautiful ancient woodland. The weather was perfect for our visit, sunny but not too hot.

Our young and knowledgeable guide led us round the reserve to see birds including storks, cranes, choughs and ravens. They are collaborating with Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) in a project to reintroduce choughs to Kent, where they once lived. These are housed in an aviary near Dover castle from where they were released in July, shortly after our visit. However they will be closely monitored and have been trained to come back to their cage for food when a whistle is blown!



We were also able to see the three brown bears (including baby bear but not Goldilocks!), but they weren't doing very much on a warm afternoon. Sadly the bison did not like the look of our