

The Parish Pump

The Journal of the Marden Society

January 2011

THE SAXON SHORE WAY - Part 2

Chris Wade conducted us on the second leg of the Saxon Shore Way from Reculver to Rye, with many an appalling pun along the way. *Reculver* was fortified by the Romans against the invading Saxons, until Ethelbert built a church in the middle of the fort. This was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the sea at the time, now it almost touches the sea. Authority decided to pull down the crumbling church completely



until it was realised how useful the towers were to shipping. They were also used by the 'Dam Busters' during their training for dropping the bouncing bomb. If you want a good picnic site along the way try the one at the Grove Ferry Inn and evidently Stodmarsh was well known for its lavender fields. The geology gives way to shale along the way to *Richborough*, where a footbridge put in the wrong place promptly started to disappear. Don't worry there's now one in the right place. The Roman concrete at Richborough still stands – they used 2 – 1 of the normal mix with the secret ingredient – blood! When Claudius invaded here in AD 43 he only stayed 6 days, as it was too cold. Did they really lash themselves with nettles to keep warm? Next stop was Sandwich, from 6th to the 11th century one of the most important ports in the land until a giant storm deposited acres of silt. Its

architecture and industry were influenced by the many Dutch inhabitants who came to escape religious persecution. You might find the next leg temporarily blocked if the Royal St George's Golf Club is hosting a tournament. *Kingsdown*

Castle is now no more but its twin sister at Deal is still there – built by Henry VIII in a Tudor rose pattern as seen from above.

Then you can watch the time-ball come down the top of the tower at one o'clock in Deal. Walmer is the home of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports – with Winston Churchill being the only one not to have lived there – he didn't want to encourage the German bombers. The houses on the front at Dover are reputed to be the model for Betsy Trotwood's abode in David Copperfield. Dover also boasts a pharos (Roman lighthouse), a painted Roman house and the base of the accommodation for the Roman Fleet. Also of unusual architecture are Pitt's Martello towers built along the coast as fortification against the invasion by Napoleon. In this same era the Royal Military Canal was finished too late and only built to half its intended depth and width. Lymppe has a fascinating history, in spite of its fort sliding down the hill. One part of it is said to be haunted and

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was also used to inspire H.G. Well's Time Machine.

The fair Maid of Kent had her vision at Aldington, but after her fourth sermon against Henry VIII she was burned. Aldington Knoll is another haunted place supposedly protected by the souls of ancient mariners. Continuing the spooky theme we reach Appledore where the stories of Dr Syn were based on the smuggler George Ransley.

Another important port was at Smallhythe – again now silted up. The Isle of Oxney used to be in Sussex and you paid a toll to pass over into Kent.

This footpath covers 160 miles and is marked by 'horned helmet' waymarkers. There are some flat parts, which have been made accessible to all. Feel inspired to wander part of it?



EUNICE DOSWELL

Graham's Reminiscences

The Best Days of Your Life?

According to the saying, Schooldays are the best of your life. But are they? Turning out a cupboard the other day, I found a copy of **Marden School News**, edition No.6, for Whitsun 1964. Here's what a few contributors said.

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Dreena Green said, "In this school I like the field. I like it because we have ropes and the swings and the sandpit. We have a nice swimming pool. I like that. The teachers are nice and do not tell you off except when you are really naughty. I like it because we have a clock in each classroom. We have a nice big hall, I like that. We have a lovely film projector that shows colour films. We have painting. I like that. We have very nice things in the school like sums."

But one anonymous child was not quite so keen "I hate Mr Roberts and Mrs Roberts. I don't like sums because you have to do a page. I don't like English because I get it wrong. I like choosing

time. I like to play tunes."

But we all have to leave school eventually. The News also tells of what some children wanted to be.

Peter Smith wanted "to be a Diesel engine driver. I would go through all the stations and tunnels' arches as well. I would go to London every day. The Golden Arrow is pulled by an electric not a diesel. I think diesels are better than electric." (Peter is now a distribution manager).

And David Wells wanted "to be a captain of a big ship like the Queen Mary. I would travel around the world to Australia and come home again. We would take cargo there. They would give some cargo to us. I would be wearing a black suit and black trousers and a white cap. I would tell everybody what to do."

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CHAIRMAN'S INVITATION—AGM 2011

First of all I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. Then I would like to invite you to the Society's Annual General Meeting on January 26th, Wednesday, at 8.00pm in The Old School Room of the Memorial Hall. If you would like to join us on the Committee, please contact me or another Committee member. The AGM is a short meeting, followed by cheese and wine and a chance to socialize.

Please do join us. We have a full programme of interesting talks already booked for next year, so if you would like to receive the Parish Pump, all of you have to do is join the Society for a very nominal sum.

Maureen Clayton (Chairman) e mail : tillergirl2913@aol.com

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THE SNOW GARDEN 2010

Did you like us, see any strange occurrences of nature during the bitterly cold weather last November?

For the very first time since we have lived here (24 years), we had our first sightings of Redwings. They cleared the pyracanthas of berries without so much as a fight with the Blackbirds. In itself quite unusual as the Blackbirds are usually very defensive of the berries and spend most of their time chasing each other away. There was also just one Fieldfare.

For three days, when the snow was at its worst, I looked out and saw a Moorhen. I



can't imagine what it found to feed on as it never came near to the feeders. Once or twice it

flew up into the Pyracanthas from where I had a good view of its enormous feet. As it is a water fowl I expected the feet to be webbed but they weren't; just very long "toes".

Green Woodpeckers are often seen around Bramley Court on account of its

large areas of lawns. A cheeky Great Spotted Woodpecker commandeered one of the hanging feeders on a tree, by keeping one foot on the tree and pulling the feeder nearer. It perfected the trick and came back several times a day.



One day, I saw what I thought was a Green Woodpecker fly up into the tree, thinking how bright it seemed. Another look and I saw that it was a Green Parakeet! I know that they have been reported as having naturalised in the wild but hadn't realized that they had reached Marden. Have they been seen anywhere else in the Village?

For some years a large Pheasant has been coming into Bramley Court, sometimes with a female. During the last two weeks



Mr Welch has opened his patio door and the male has been taking food from his hand.

Please let us know what you've seen.

EDITH DAVIS (Editor)

MARDEN AS SEEN THROUGH OTHER EYES

Retirement has many benefits, one of which is giving oneself a little more time to dwell on subjects that interest you. Whilst researching for an exhibition, I came across several views of Marden.

The first is from Hasted's Survey of the County of Kent dated 1794.

"The parish of Marden is about 5 miles long and not more than 1 broad. There are about 300 houses, and 1500 inhabitants in it.

The turnpike road, which leads over Cocksheath to Style-bridge, separates there at the 44th milestone from London, the left branch passing to Cranbrook and the right through this parish towards Goudhurst, the only parts of it which may be said to be above ground, the rest of it being so deep and miry as to be nearly impassable in wet weather.

The town of Marden, as it is usually called, is situated on it, nearly in the middle of the parish. It is not

paved, and consists of three streets, the houses of which, are but meanly built.

Near the road from Style-bridge to Goudhurst it is very pleasant but towards Hunton and towards Staplehurst much the contrary, being of a very dreary and forlorn aspect. It lies very low and flat, the soil in general a stiff clay, a very heavy tillage land; in winter the lands are exceeding wet and much subject to inundations, and was it not for the manure of their native marle, and the help of chalk and lime brought from the northern hills would be still more unfertile than they were at present, notwithstanding which there are partially dispersed some very rich lands among them, and there were some years ago 300 acres of hop-ground here, which have of late been lessened near 100 acres."

Do you recognise this place from the gloom of our winter?

Next edition—another historian's view

EUNICE DOSWELL

ADVANCE NOTICE

Wednesday 23 March 2011

"All through the Year"

A Folk Performance By Geoff Doel & Mick Lynn

With Slides, Songs and Folk dances illustrating Seasonal Activities

8 pm in The Old School Room, Memorial Hall

The Parish Pump is distributed free to Members of The Marden Society every two months



For details of Membership please contact the Membership Secretary Aileen Hill on 01622 831418