

The Parish Pump

The Journal of The Marden Society

November 2009

Discovering the World of Bats with Shirley Thompson

Why do we use the word 'batty' to mean mad? Bats are certainly not mad. In fact they are mammals with a very similar skeletal frame to us. Just their fingers are so much longer with their wings coming down to their tails and having a claw on their thumbs for their hanging act. They have live



young, suckle them and make very caring mothers. Shirley Thompson, our speaker, has been involved with bats for

over 25 years and is a fount of knowledge covering the 1000+ species that live worldwide. These also have varying diets – from fruit and vegetables to insects. Even the vampire bats will regurgitate some of their bloody meal to another who is hungry. Fruit and vegetable eating bats have larger noses to sniff out their menu and can be quite a pest to farmers in some areas.

Our insect eaters have large teeth to enable them to crunch through the hard shell cases. Shirley likened their ultra-sonic system to sending out shouts and getting the echo back. This is what you hear on a bat locator.

Habitats vary during the year, with cool places needed in winter (trees or caves), where they have the ability to drop their temperatures to conserve energy. Houses are only used for a short time, often for maternity roosts with females only. Bats produce one offspring at a time and then not every year. Mating occurs in the autumn and the live sperm is carried inside the mothers to be until the spring.

We were even introduced to Doris, a rescued pipistrelle, who uttered audible grumbling shouts, but loved being stroked by her carer. With wings folded she would fit into a matchbox. I now know how to tell if the droppings on top of my wheelie bin belong to mice or bats. If bats are guilty their droppings will crumble to powder because of their diet of insects. It is a fact that by protecting bats



in lofts there are now safer chemicals used for woodworm treatment. The Kent Bat Group will give advice to any homeowners or builders that have cause to need it; likewise for people finding stray bats.

We need to keep our hedgerows for the sake of many animals, but bats also need them to fly from one roost to

another My most vivid bat memory is when our Burmese cat brought in a dead long-eared bat, but inside the bat's mouth was a live wriggling earwig. What better example of a food Chain can you get?

But no, the cat did not eat the bat. I'm sure many of us enjoy the twilight sight of a bat circling and swooping around.

*Bats pictured: Left - Brown long-eared
Right - Pipistrelle. Both in flight.*

EUNICE DOSWELL

REMINDER FOR THE AGM ON 27 JANUARY 2010

Please remember that nominations for the election of Officers and to the Executive Committee shall be in writing to the Honorary Secretary seven days before each Annual General Meeting (the next one is on 27 January 2010).

These shall be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained.

Nominees, their proposers and seconders must all be fully paid up Members as at the date of such nomination. shall, if necessary, take place to determine the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee. Please note, that at this AGM, we are particularly looking for nominations for the post of Secretary.

MAUREEN CLAYTON

A WEEKLY PAGE FOR WOMEN.....cont'd

Here are some more money and labour saving tips from the Parish Magazine of December 1956...

Wednesday:

For burns and scalds- Scrape raw potatoes or peel thinly, cover the affected parts with the peel and bind tight. Repeat when dry. Next day all pain will be gone... *(Not sure if they'd recommend this at the Medical Centre!)*

For the feet- ...a stout hatbox with one side cut away makes a good foot cradle.

Thursday's cooking-

Egg substitute- I find a tablespoon of custard powder, mixed to a fairly thick consistency with milk, and thin breadcrumbs in the usual way, a good substitute for an egg for coating fish .

An old fowl- Fill the inside with veal stuffing and the neck with sausage meat. Tie firmly in a cloth and simmer gently in water, to nearly cover, for three hours. Take from stew-pan and remove cloth. Place in a baking tin with a rasher of fat bacon on breast and brown gently in oven. It will be tender and tasty and the liquor makes excellent soup.

Friday's Household

For your car- Why waste money and time going to the garage for what is indispensable - distilled water for the battery? After you have defrosted your fridge, keep this pure water and pour it from the drip tray into your distilled water bottle.

JANE STEVENS

NEW MARDEN SOCIETY TEA TOWEL

After about five years since the last Marden Society Tea Towel, the Committee has decided to produce a new one. We know how popular the one with village scenes was, so a design based on the Marden Village Sign has been chosen.

The proofs have been received and approved and the order confirmed, for a first print of 200 towels. The price agreed by the Committee will be a reasonable £3 for each individually wrapped Tea Towel. It is hoped that they will be available in time for Christmas.

ROBERT WHITE

I am indebted to Mike Judd for putting me right about when Robert took over the Headship of the National School. He was, in fact the third to hold the post, the two previous having stayed only four years each. When aged only 24 Robert and his wife Priscilla were appointed Master and Mistress of Marden National School, in 1868. Mrs White gave up her position when they started a family although she continued to teach needlework. By the time of the 1881 census Robert and his family were well established at the School House and School but the passing of the 1870 Elementary Education Act would have brought some changes to his work. For instance the Act forbade the teaching of the catechism in the new 'state' schools. Education was to be non-denominational. The Act laid the foundations of English elementary education. The state became increasingly involved and after 1880 attendance was made compulsory for children until they were twelve years old. It also came about due to

demands for reform from industrialists who feared Britain's status in world trade was being threatened by the lack of an effective education system. Unfortunately the old School Log Book appears to have been lost so we are not able to see how Robert coped with all the changes. They must have been quite exciting times for such a man as he appears to have been.

He and his staff were obviously giving satisfactory service because there is a copy of the letter that Robert received from the Clerk to the new Board, Thomas Fowle, saying that they were all being offered their places at the new School.



The Old School House

EDITH DAVIS

Garden BirdWatch

This is one of my occasional articles on Garden birds. Since I was quite young and saw a picture of children beating a Wren, I have wondered why such a wicked thing was done to a tiny, harmless bird. Just recently I came upon this article about Wren folklore by Mike Toms of the BTO that you might find as interesting (and unfathomable) as I. "There is a great deal of folklore associated with the Wren, much of it of a related and relatively modern nature. The Latin name of the Wren is 'Troglodytes' which we typically translate as 'cave dweller'. One particularly interesting aspect of Wren folklore is that the bird is sometimes regarded as being masculine and sometimes feminine. 'The Robin and the Wren, are God's cock and hen' is a good recent example of a feminine association, as are the names 'jenny Wren' and 'Kitty Wren'. The association with kingship appears in some of the chants associated with the custom of Wren Hunts (see below) and with a legend that sees the Wren elected king of all birds. The tradition of 'Hunting the Wren, still played out in parts of Ireland, shows a commonality across



various parts of western Britain and Ireland. Curiously, the custom varies in its origins and enactments in the different regions.

The central focus, however, revolves around groups of boys going out into the countryside to capture or kill a Wren. This is then paraded around the village where the boys demand rewards for their actions (it sounds a bit like the American custom of trick or treat). In parts of Ireland the hunt took place on St. Stephen's Day (December 26th); the Wren taken alive and tied to a pole. As the Wren is paraded around the houses, the boys chant *'The wren, the wren, the king of all birds, St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze; Come, give us a bumper, or give us a cake, or give us a copper, for Charity's sake.'* It is believed that this apparent victimisation stems from the Wren, at some time in the past, having betrayed the Irish to their enemies by tapping on a drum. It is clear from such folklore that the Wren has a special association with Man, hardly surprising given its resilience and character"



EDITH DAVIS

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2009
AT 8PM IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, OLD SCHOOLROOM**

**Richard Filmer
Old Ashford**

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



For details of Membership please contact the Hon. Secretary Edith Davis on 01622 831904