

The Parish Pump

The Journal of The Marden Society

May 2010

Archaeology In Marden

First, the History bit.

It is hard to picture the former iron industry in today's countryside of small fields, woodlands and steep, narrow, gill valleys. But in this landscape exist all the necessary raw materials that allowed iron to be smelted for over 2,000 years. The Wealden geology of sands and clays yielded the iron ore, as well as the stone and brick to build the furnaces; the woodland provided the charcoal fuel; and the numerous small streams and valleys ensured water power for the bellows and hammers of the forges and furnaces. The surrounding countryside of Marden certainly had all of that.

For two periods - in the first two centuries of the Roman occupation, and during Tudor and early-Stuart times - the Weald was the main iron-producing region in Britain. Although iron furnaces were found at nearby Goudhurst and Horsmonden, no evidence had ever been found at Marden for such a thing. Marden, at that time was part of the Wealden Forest; an abundance of trees being essential for the production of charcoal, used in the smelting of iron ore.

Jubilee House at West End was built, according to the stone tablet shown on the upper front wall, in 1887, presumably to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. During routine maintenance at the rear of No 1 Jubilee House in 2001, the then owner, Mr George Clegg uncovered pottery, which he had the foresight to take to Maidstone Museum for identification. Although the original identification, Iron Age, was later amended to being Medieval 11th C, the site was judged to be sufficiently important to justify an organized excavation, which was carried out by a small team from the Maidstone Archaeology Group in August 2001. The pit dug was a cubic metre being limited by surrounding features.

The finds, apart from pottery included slag, clinker and the iron base of the furnace. The construction of Marden Church in its present form began about this time and the iron produced in the area of the excavation would possibly have been used in the church.

So, where are the remains of iron production? Building stone was too valuable in the Weald to be left unused, so the works were dismantled, and the woods grew back over the former sites. Only the tell-tale waste, called slag, from the smelting process, and some of the hammer and furnace ponds are left to remind us of a once-great Wealden industry. I am convinced that this is the site of the long-lost Marden Furnace and that the nearby pond was a part of it. It seems inconceivable that Marden would not have followed in the wake of Goudhurst and Horsmonden in having its own furnace.

Who knows, if only the opportunity could arise, how much more evidence would come to light at West End?

I am grateful to Trevor Simmons, a member of the Maidstone Archaeology Group living in Marden, for letting me see the Report on the Investigation. He has let my imagination wander freely over this exciting missing piece of Marden History.

The History of English Cheeses

What a humorous man of many parts was our speaker Mr Marsh (not all working says his wife!) He is an expert on lime mortar used in historic buildings. However mortar was not his subject for the evening but CHEESE – the last bastion to fall for many would-be dieters.

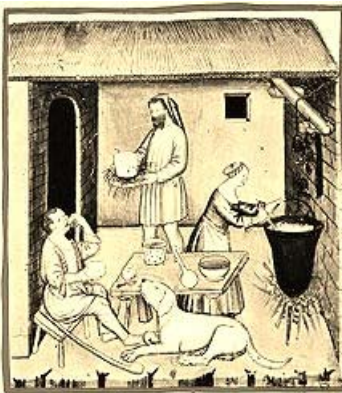
Our country is not self-sufficient in cheese production; but did you realise that we have over 700 different cheeses in the UK? Many of these are available at Farmers' Markets and local outlets.

Cheese comes in many types :-

1. Hard
2. Soft
3. Blue
4. Herb
5. Fruit
6. Smoked
7. and just plain wacky

Our nearest cheese Mecca is the Borough Market in Southwark, London.

Cheese making goes back far into history. When times were good, this was a food which could be made and stored for poorer times. Egyptians put goat's milk into a cloth, pressed it in a clay mould and covered it with animal fat. Evidence of cheese making can be seen on tomb murals. The Roman Army travelled with the so called 'Dark supplies of cheese. In Ages' were a powerhouse for developing food techniques. They made cheeses, the latter being made in large wooden vats. Later on, these techniques with scientists contributed to the industry being 'Masters of Mould' and Louis Pasteur discovering pasteurisation. The coming of the railways had made distribution of a variety of cheeses much easier.



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Some facts

- Stilton is 50% fat
- to be more diet-friendly the whey is used to make quark
- It is a good source of calcium

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- 4 ozs of cheese gives the same protein as a medium sized steak
- cheddar makes up 50% of the cheese market
- the custom of rolling wheels of cheese down a hill in Gloucestershire has now been banned under Health and Safety rules

Recommendations

- ✓ Lancashire cheese is good for cooking
- ✓ Applewood smoked cheddar is glorious grated over spaghetti bolognaise

We finished the evening stimulating our taste buds with a sampling of several different cheeses.

EUNICE DOSWELL

The May Meeting

Our May Speaker is Ted Hobday of the Brogdale Farm, home of the National Fruit Collections, one of the largest fruit collections in the world, whose purpose is to protect plant genetic resources for the future. Ted's talk will be about the Collection including history, facts and stories including information on the different varieties. Ted will be happy to answer questions regarding the National Fruit Collection and general horticultural questions. Everyone is welcome.

We have an extra event on Tuesday June 22nd, when Nick Hall will conduct a tour of his Vineyard and Winery. The tour should last just over an hour, starting at 6.30pm. Not sure of the meeting point yet so please contact me if you are interested in going along - everyone is welcome.

After the tour anyone who wants to join some of us for a drink/meal at a local hostelry is very welcome.

MAUREEN CLAYTON - Chairman

REMEMBER , NO MEETING IN JULY

Can you help?

At this year's AGM Edith Davis retired as the Society Secretary after 22 years. Sadly no successor came forward and the Committee has been managing without this important Member. The job is not onerous and consists of keeping the work of the Society/Committee running smoothly. You will be expected to record the Minutes of the bi-monthly Committee Meetings and deal with incoming correspondence with replies as decided by the Committee. All expenses are paid.

Edith will be happy to advise any volunteer for the post. To volunteer please contact the Chairman on 01622-831529

ROBERT WHITE

WE left Robert settling into his new premises, the newly built Marden Board Schools boys' Dept. and the Board School house. Perhaps it will be fruitful to look at Robert's life before he came to Marden. Julia Raines, one of his g-granddaughters, has provided these records. We know that Charlotte his mother, was unmarried when he was born in 1845 at Godstone Station, possibly a school that later had a chapel built. Robert aged 5 is shown in the 1851 Census, as living at Blindley Heath, Godstone with his grandparents, Henry and Hannah White; Charlotte was a house servant at Oxted. Ten years later in 1861, Robert aged 15 is still living at Godstone with his grandparents and their son (Robert's uncle) James 29. Robert is a pupil teacher.

The marriage certificate that Julia has copied shows that Robert and Priscilla were married at St Paul's Church, Dorking in December 1868. Robert is 23 and Priscilla, is 30. The following year, they are in place as Schoolmaster and Mistress of Marden National School.

The School Log shows that in 1897, 12 July the girls moved to the new Board School with Headmistress Miss L E Lloyd.

By 1898, Robert was firmly in charge and on 22 April he, "cautioned all the boys against their usual spring cruelty of taking birds' eggs & nests of young - also of the penalties that might be inflicted under "The Wild Birds' Protection Act" if detected in breaking the same by the policeman or farmer".

His ex-pupils included Mike of him with fond bearded man, Robert earned and because of his genial 'Daddy White' by his pupils. him on the right, with a At home in 1891, Robert's his son Robert Thomas (22)



Judd's father who spoke amusement. A short, both respect and affection personality, he was called, This photograph shows boys' class.

children are growing up; is an elementary schoolmaster in Holborn, London. Priscilla Louise (19) is an assistant schoolmistress and Edna Gertrude (17) an apprentice milliner in Maidstone. Only Charles (15) and Alice (13) are still at school.

EDITH DAVIS

ADVANCE NOTICE

22 September

Angela Mutana

Benjamin Harris - Ightham Grocer & Archaeologist

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