

# The Parish Pump

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The Journal of The Marden Society

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## MILESTONES & WAYMARKERS

*The* Romans laid good metalled roads to move soldiers and supplies quickly across their Empire: they measured distance to aid timing and efficiency, marking every thousandth double-step with a large cylindrical stone. 17 still survive in the UK. The Latin for thousand was 'mills' and the distance was 1618 yards; the eventual British standard mile was 1760 yards, although 'long' miles also existed into the 19th century. After Roman times, roads developed to meet local community needs: in 1555, an Act of Parliament made local parishes (or often townships in the North) responsible for their upkeep and boundary markers became important. In 1697, the Justices were ordered to erect guideposts at cross-highways and on the moors.

At this time, travel by road was slow and difficult. The sunken lanes became quagmires in wet weather and were drowned. It took 16 days to cover the 400 miles from London to Edinburgh. So Turnpike Trusts were set up, by Acts of Parliament, from 1706 to the 1840s. Groups of local worthies raised money to build stretches of road and then charged the users tolls to pay for it - just like the 'M6 Toll' today. The name 'turnpike' comes from the spiked barrier at the Toll Gate or Booth. The poor bitterly resented having to pay to use the roads and there were anti-turnpike riots.



From 1767, mileposts were compulsory on all turnpikes, not only to inform travellers of direction and distances, but also to help coaches keep to schedule and for charging for changes of horses at the coaching inns. The distances were also used to calculate postal charges before the uniform postal rate was introduced in 1840. At the height of the turnpike era, there were 20,000 miles of roads with mileposts.

From the 1840s, rail travel superseded roads and many turnpike trusts were wound up. In 1888, the new County Councils were given responsibility for main roads and rural district councils for minor routes. As faster motorised transport developed so the importance of the mileposts waned.

'Milestone is a generic term, including mileposts made of cast iron. Such waymarkers are fast disappearing; around 9000 are thought to survive in the UK. Most were removed or defaced in World War II to baffle potential German invaders and not all were replaced afterwards. Many have been demolished as roads have been widened, or been victims of collision damage, or have been smashed by hedge-cutters or flails

*Courtesy of The Milestone Society*

*Picture shows a Marden milestone on Goudhurst Road*

My personal collection of Parish Pumps goes back to 1990 and looking through them I have found some produced by Graham Tippen that I feel are worth repeating. Graham has given me permission to use them and I have given them the title, "Graham's Reminiscences". This is the first one.

*EDITH DAVIS -Editor.*



## **MARDEN CARNIVAL WEEKS**

**Yes**, for a few years, starting in 1962, Marden had not just a village fete but also a whole week of carnival fun! As the glossy 40-page programme for 1963 says, "This was an unqualified success and was the forerunner of this year's even more ambitious Carnival Week."

The excitement started on the Monday night, 22nd July, with the Carnival Variety Show in the Memorial Hall and, as the highlight of the evening, the coronation of the Carnival Queen. The winner had actually been chosen at a dance at the end of March and the result kept in a sealed envelope until the coronation. The three finalists in 1963 eagerly awaiting the result were Brenda Mills, Pat Smith and Mary Boorman. Mary was declared the winner, to reign for the rest of the week. (I wonder where they all are all now?).

As the week progressed, she presided over an Old Tyme Dance for "Young and Old alike" with Cecil Stockbridge and his band on the Tuesday night, on Wednesday a Car Rally followed by a display of Go-Karting and a Barbecue, Bingo and music by the "fabulous" Zephyrs all in the open air of the fete field. Thursday saw what was, for us teenagers, one of the highlights - professional wrestling. The stars we saw most Saturday afternoons on ITV (who remembers Kent Walton?) were in Marden, in person. Black Kwango fought Dangerous Danny Lynch and Johnny Czeslaw was matched against Ray Fury. Tickets were from 3/6 to 7/6 ringside. Us kids crept in under the tent for nothing.

By Friday night, Acid House parties had nothing on the Marden scene, as the Clyde Valley Stompers, plus two support bands, played jazz all night from 10.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. Tickets cost £1 including breakfast!! Those still on their feet were invited to have a Danish Meal at the Unicorn Hotel. If you still had strength for more, the Saturday of Carnival Week, the real day had finally arrived.

Now the fun really started. More about this next time.

© GRAHAM TIPPEN (PP-1991)

*Now we don't even have the Village Fete. The last one was in 2001.  
Organized by The Chantry Road Action Group, it was held in the Recreation field.*

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

I hope everyone has enjoyed a good summer. Now into autumn we start the first of our talks on Wednesday September 22nd with Angela Mutana on the subject of Benjamin Harrison – Ightham Grocer and Archaeologist.

Benjamin was a 19th century self educated man who was fascinated by the signs of Stone Age and Neolithic man in west Kent and made some important finds, some of which Angela hopes to bring with her on the 22nd. Many eminent archaeologists were able to use his research to further their own work.

At a later date the Marden Society hopes to join with the History Society and the library with a talk on the Marden Hoard, now in the possession of the Maidstone Museum. Anyone who visited the Roman village being excavated at East Farleigh will soon realise how much history still lies under our feet.

I hope many of you will be able to come along to the Memorial Hall, the Old School Room, at 8pm on September 22nd to enjoy Angela's talk. Coffee, tea and refreshments, and a raffle. Everyone is welcome.

*MAUREEN CLAYTON-Chairman*

## THE MARDEN VINEYARD COMPETITION

### **Win a bottle of Fizz and a Private Tour !**

As harvest approaches we are starting to think about the size of crop we might achieve. Members of the Wine Club are invited to guess the weight of the 2010 harvest in tonnes and the closest answer will win a tour of the vineyard and winery plus a bottle of fizz (I'm afraid ours is not ready yet so we'll have to make do with Champagne).

To make the task easier we can tell you that last year we brought in 3 tonnes having pruned for quality rather than quantity. This year as the vines become established we are looking to increase this by three to four times. Our estimate is that we should get between 8 and 12 tonnes.

Email your answer to [nmh@herberthall.co.uk](mailto:nmh@herberthall.co.uk) Please go to two decimal places (eg: 8.56 tonnes or 10.64 tonnes) so that we avoid too many people coming up with the same figure. Any questions just call or email. The winner will be announced after the harvest. Good Luck!

*NICK HALL*

## JACKDAWS AT THE MEMORIAL HALL

**E**ver since the Jackdaws were evicted from the church tower, the village Jackdaws have been nesting where they can find an available space. I have seen them around the chimneys at Hinds, opposite the Library but this year two families have taken over the old chimneys at the Memorial Hall. Their calls are frequently heard around Bramley Court. We have a perfect view of the chimneys from our kitchen window and I have been able to watch them. Bird watching is very addictive especially if you have some binoculars handy!



During last winter they, like all the other birds visiting the feeders put out, not only by us but also by our neighbours, were often in the garden. They were more interested in the fat balls that our neighbour put out and they would even get onto the feeder itself. They picked up any pieces they dropped although the Collared Doves and Chaffinches managed to pick up any remaining morsels.

According to the BTO Bird book, they have only one brood of 4-6 eggs. When the young hatched I watched as the adults flew to and fro with food, which according to the BTO Bird book, are invertebrates but the most young I saw was what appeared to be only one per family. Certainly, when they were all under the feeder the most Jackdaws, including the young that I saw at one time was six. It is a fact, possibly because of the cramped conditions say, in a chimney, that so few young Jackdaws survive the nest.

At the time of writing the youngsters are still living at home with mum and dad and have regular little skirmishes with the two young Magpies who are also on the lookout for little nibbles. They are very nervous of the Jackdaws. On another BirdWatch subject; after two years of seeing almost no Greenfinches because of a deadly virus, we are delighted to see that they are now around the gardens in large numbers, with as many as six on one feeder.

*EDITH DAVIS*

**ADVANCE NOTICE NOTICE OF MEETING ON 24 NOVEMBER**

**AT 8 PM IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, OLD SCHOOLROOM**

**Chris Wade : A walk around the Saxon Shore Way - Part 2**

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



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

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