

"sedges have edges but rushes a- round!"
The smaller pond is shaded by a Wild Service or Chequer tree, which also blooms in May.

So do go along and visit in May and beyond, perhaps with the Walking Group on Wednesday 6th May. They will meet outside the Library at 09.45.

But do be careful of the green leafy plant which grows in some of the ditches by the ponds (and along the roads around). This is Hemlock Water Dropwort which as its name suggests is fairly poisonous, so don't try putting it in your salads!

And don't forget that Victoria Golding, a KWT Trustee, will tell us much more of Marden Meadow's history at our September meeting.

Steve McArragher

FUTURE TALKS PROGRAMME

The meetings from March to May will be held in the Old School Room, Memorial Hall. Meetings from September to November will be in the Vestry Hall.

<i>May's talk is the last in the Memorial Hall</i>		
Wed 27th May	Tim Whittle	The PLUTO Pipeline
Thursday 25th June	Outing	Three hour Medwaycruise
<i>Talks from September onwards will be held in the Vestry Hall</i>		
Wednesday 23rd September	Victoria Golding	Kent's Coronation Meadow
Wednesday 28th October	Brian Rance	Walking Through Kent and East Sussex
Wednesday 25th November	Steve McArragher	The Life of Sir Marcus Samuel

For detailed information about the village don't forget to visit the Marden Society's website at www.mardensociety.org.uk

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

The Parish Pump

The Journal of the Marden Society **May 2015**

We welcome your views and contributions. Perhaps some of your memories of Marden, or fresh impressions if you are new to the village.

Please contact Mo on 01622 831529 or tillergirl2913@aol.com

SUMMER OUTING.

Carol has arranged a trip on the River Medway aboard the Kentish Lady on Thursday 25th June, starting at 6.00pm until 9.00pm.

The Kentish Lady is underneath the Archbishop's Palace in Maidstone, with plenty of nearby parking.

The cost is £21, which includes a fish and chip supper. We need full payment by the end of May so please see any committee member, e-mail tillergirl2913@aol.com or phone 01622 831529 to book. Payments in cash or cheques to Mrs M A Clayton at 7 Jewell Grove, Marden.

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE GREENHOUSE.

On Good Friday I was strolling down the garden toward my greenhouse and to my surprise heard a loud beating of wings and saw a large kestrel frantically trying to find a way out as it heard me approach. He hit the sides, the back, and top of the greenhouse, losing several of his feathers in the process.

I fully opened the door and he flew out, straight towards a tree occupied by several crows. They scattered in seconds as the kestrel flew towards them. On entering the greenhouse I heard some frantic beating of wings and noticed a collared dove, injured and desperately trying to find a way out. I did my best to guide him towards the

door and then left him to his own devices. Several times that afternoon I went back to the greenhouse and all was quiet.

At the end of the afternoon, just about to close the greenhouse, once again I heard frantic wings beating against the glass – the collared dove was still there and still just about alive.

I 'whooshed' him towards the door, and as he flew out to freedom it was clear that he had lost all the feathers on his back (which was bloody) and most of his tail feathers.

How long he survived I have no idea but the attack was brutal

Mo Clayton

MARDEN SOCIETY TALK.

What a joy was this brilliant audio-visual show starting with the dawn chorus over Mote Park. Simon Ginnaw is a Country Park Ranger and also the Youth and Children's Officer for Wildlife. He has been recording the wildlife for eleven years in this 'green eye of an urban sprawl', which has 16 million visitors per year.



Mote Park has been home to 148 species of birds, 32 mammals, 26 butterflies and has oak trees which are 250 years old.



Engraving by Johannes Kip, 1750. Reproduced courtesy of the Centre for Kentish Studies

The original ragstone Mote House belonged to the Woodvilles who sent knights to fight at the Battle of Crecy. It was the holiday home for Elizabeth Woodville, 'the White Queen' and had the oldest deer park in Kent. Later it was

held by the Marsham family, Lord Romney. The gardens here were also spectacular laid out in the Anglo-Dutch style in 1690. In the time of George III the estate covered 760 acres including the whole of the Shepway estate as far as The Wheatsheaf pub. The king reviewed the Kent Volunteers here with Prime Minister William Pitt, when they were ready to fight Napoleon. A Doric style temple records this event.

Mote means 'meeting place'. The present house was built by the same architect who designed Dartmoor prison. Mote Park was bought by Maidstone Borough Council for £50,000 in 1929. It has survived the vicissitudes and joys of the presence of modern day troops, four bombings, The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, abandonment, the Cheshire Homes; until in 2008 it arose like a phoenix as Audley Court – luxurious retirement homes.



So back to wildlife. Glorious photos showed us the progression of bird visitors throughout the year as well as the resident ones. Night life is there with owls and bats. The lake holds bream, roach, perch, carp and pike whilst above water are between 14 and 20 swans with one resident nesting pair. Unfortunately the foxes are very partial to cygnets; and depending on your

feelings you might be fortunate or unfortunate enough to encounter an adder. The Long Valley is a wildflower meadow where thistles are nectar rich, whilst wood anemones carpet the ancient woodland. Autumn brings the rich colour of the leaves and a multitude of fungi until the coming of the redwings which is the harbinger of Winter.



Eunice Doswell

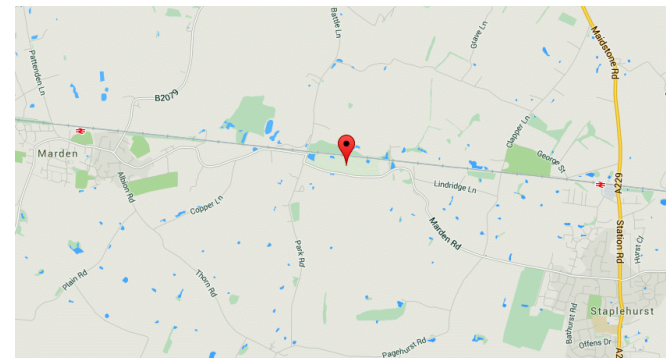
MARDEN MEADOW – OUR JEWEL IN THE WILDLIFE CROWN

Most of us often drive past Marden Meadow on our way to Staplehurst or beyond, but we should stop and take the time to look around, and May is one of the best times to visit.

Marden Meadow is an excellent example of an unimproved hay meadow, and reminds visitors of just how much of this

classic English landscape has been lost. The main field nearest to the bridge was purchased many years ago by Kent Wildlife Trust, and the other two fields added in 1999 creating a 6.4 hectare reserve. The newer fields had been fertilised but are now being restored by KWT using hay and seed from the main field. It was chosen as Kent's "Coronation Meadow" as part of the Coronation Meadows project inspired by HRH, Prince of Wales as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation. The star flowers of course are the Green-winged Orchids which can be seen in their thousands during May, generally at their peak in the first or second week, but there are also the tiny rare Adders Tongue ferns. These are hard to spot but once you know where to look there are lots of them. Later in the year you can see Pepper Saxifrage, Dyers Greenweed (which has yellow flowers but was used to make a green dye) and Yellow Rattle which is a parasitic plant amongst the abundant buttercups, daisies and vetches.

There are several ponds, the smaller one by the road often having an abundant show of rare Water Violet. KWT are trying to reduce run-off of winter salt water from the road to encourage this. The other ponds have stands of bulrush and some rare sedges. And if you can't tell your sedges from your rushes, remember that



Marden Meadow is halfway between Marden & Staplehurst, just south of the railway next to Battle Lane