

This is another threatened “red data list” bird, having declined by over 50% between 1995 and 2008, however it is at the northern edge of its range in Britain and is now only found in the south-east. You are never likely to see one, as they hide in thorny scrub or bushes, and if you did it is a classic LBJ or “Little Brown Job”, plain and insignificant. However its song is something else, being both loud and rich. One study showed the song of a male was composed of 250 different phrases, and each song performance is a unique combination, never repeated. It has been celebrated in many songs and poems, especially in Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale”, one which apparently sang on Hampstead Heath in 1819, but as for Berkeley Square..... I’m not so sure.

Steve McArragher

### HOPPING DOWN IN MARDEN – PART 1

*With the hopping season almost upon us, these are the reminiscences of an “Old Mardonian” who we will call Jack.*

The first documented use of hops in beer was in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, though Hildegard of Bingen (Germany) is acknowledged as the first verified documented user of hops in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Germany is still the largest producer of hops (followed by the US and China), they really do like their beer!



Young Jack began work at 10, helping to supplement the family income, at George Hollidays’s Stonepit farm. He had to fill half a bin and picked 8 bushels daily, being paid 10d per bushel, and the hops were dried in what is now Selby Oast. He then helped Bert Burr at Bridgehurst Farm, just opposite from where he lived, by pushing hops into the hop pockets (an extra thank you was a small glass of beer).

In 1960 he started working for the Hall family, and has worked for them ever since. The first Herbert Hall family moved to Marden from Heathfield around 1897/8. Herbert Ernest Hall (John’s father, born 1897) was (so the story goes) given Puttlands farm in Paddock Wood as a wedding present; it is now the site of the vets’ surgery. Now they only grow 2 acres of organic hops, which are mainly used by an Oxfordshire brewery, though some have found their way to the USA and into Prince Charles’ organic Cornish beer. Their Oast at Little Mill Farm was built in 1895 for T&G Oyster, but bought by the Halls in 1926. Hop farms were everywhere, e.g. Poultry Farm, which was prior to 1897 known as Dumpty’s Farm. Also there was Will Day at Marden Thorn, Harry Thompsett, Alec Jenner in Sheephurst Lane, the Collins in Sherenden Lane (who until recently grew 5 acres and dried them in Beal Farm Oast); it was a very big local business. *To be continued...*

*Mo, Steve and an “Old Mardonian”*

We have 3 talks still to come in the autumn –

**28<sup>th</sup> September: Wilf Lower on “Medway - Tales from the Divided River”.** Tales of courage and achievement from the Medway, and of some interesting people who have used this important waterway. We have heard Wilf before and he is very entertaining.

**26<sup>th</sup> October: Local speaker Imogen Wedd on the medieval practice of “Gavelkind Inheritance”.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> November: Col. Peter Cook, another Marden resident on “Our County Regiment”**

All meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Vestry Hal, with Tea and Coffee and a raffle.

### MAY TALK – THE HUGUENOTS IN KENT by Amy Dimmock

The Huguenots were a Calvinistic Protestant group that did not sit well with the Catholic King in France during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in summer 1572 almost 10,000 Huguenots were killed in Paris and other cities. This pattern of warfare, followed by brief periods of peace, continued for nearly another quarter-century until the Edict of Nantes, signed by Henry IV in 1598, allowed them to practice their religion in safety. However this did not last and was revoked in 1685 by the Edict of Fontainebleau, signed by Louis XIV, which abolished legal recognition of Protestantism. This meant that officially they had to convert to Catholicism: they could try and hide but leaving the country was forbidden, as was continuing with their occupations. Around three quarters of them converted or were killed, but some 500,000 fled France, of which the largest group, around 100,000 went to the Netherlands, while some 50,000 came to England, 10,000 to Ireland and others to South Africa and other places.



Most of the English Huguenot refugees arrived in Kent. Sandwich turned them out, so the majority settled in Canterbury, bringing with them their weaving and woollen making skills. The Weavers, a half-timbered house by the river (now a restaurant), was the site of a Huguenot weaving school from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to about 1830. In the late 1700s John Calloway, Master of the City Silk Weavers, developed “Canterbury Muslin”, a combination of silk and cotton.

They produced beautiful designs on their cloth using lined and squared paper to ensure complete accuracy. However fashions changed and by 1800 the industry was in decline with only 10 weavers left. Many Huguenots moved on to London especially Shoreditch and established a silk weaving industry in and around Spitalfields. They were forbidden to make cloths already being made in England as suspicion was rife about these talented refugees, but as England was Protestant at this time, there was no conflict of religion. As the families were forced to escape with nothing, the only things they could bring were seeds or bulbs, so they went into the horticulture trade. They brought over many of the seeds we think of as indigenous, such as carrots, celery and cauliflowers. Faversham was also a town that attracted the Huguenots where they worked in the gun powder mills, but many were killed in the 1703 gunpowder explosion. There was also a Huguenot and Walloon settlement in Maidstone, making paper and cloth, and St. Faith's Church became known as the Strangers' Church.

Many Huguenot families became very successful. The DeLawn family specialised in the apothecary business and Gideon helped form the Society of Apothecaries. He formulated a patent medicine, which made the family fortune. The Minnae family arrived in 1686, after a dramatic and terrifying escape from France. Isaac established a family bank, which eventually became part of RBS. The French Hospital was founded in 1718 in London to support Huguenots in need. In 1959 it moved to Rochester and now consists of Alms Houses available for rent by Huguenot descendants. The Museum was opened above the Tourist Centre in Rochester last year and a guided tour is available. *Mo Clayton*

### SUMMER OUTING TO LULLINGSTONE CASTLE ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

This proved a very successful and enjoyable day out. Twenty of us shared cars and while several lunched in the pub, some picnicked by the River Darent, and some outside the castle. There was plenty to see – ducks and geese squabbling for any crumbs we might drop, plus a gypsy horse and trap practising along the road, followed by the horse being ridden bare back through Eynsford ford. And the threatened rain held off for us.



The ancient Manor of Lullingstone was mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, and over the next 900 years has been owned by just five families: First we were given a guided tour of the church of St Botolph, named after a 7<sup>th</sup> century Saxon abbot, the patron saint of wayfarers. The church has Norman foundations, but its flint walls date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The North Chapel was added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to take the tomb of Sir John Peche, and the wooden rood screen also dates from this period, carved with Tudor Roses, pomegranates (for Catherine of Aragon) and peach stones, perhaps a pun on Sir John's name? The walls were raised in red brick in 1726 to accommodate a superb moulded ceiling. Finally the marble font is stained

with rust, caused by former First World War soldiers bringing back Holy Water from the River Jordan in metal drinking flasks.



Then on to the Manor House (not really a castle) which was built by Sir John Peche in 1497; originally moated and with two gatehouses of which only the outer one survives. Sir John was an important courtier of Henry VII and became his champion joustier. He also accompanied Henry VIII to the "Field of the Cloth of Gold", and Henry visited Lullingstone on several occasions. Queen Anne was another Royal visitor, entertained by Sir Percyvall Hart, and

had her own bath-house in the grounds. The current Queen Anne façade dates from this period. Queen Anne was a substantial lady, and the treads in the Grand Staircase were made particularly shallow to help her get upstairs to bed. So when we went up the staircase we were warned not to lean on the balustrade which is now not very strong! Upstairs in the State Drawing Room was a small exhibition of silk items, produced from the Lullingstone Silk Farm, run by Lady Zoe Hart-Dyke from 1932 to 1956. At one time the silk worms were all bred and raised within the house! Lullingstone silk was used for our present Queen's wedding dress and Coronation robes.

Finally we were treated to a tour by Tom Hart-Dyke of his World Garden. The story of Tom and his companion's capture in 2000 by guerrillas in Colombia while on an orchid hunting expedition is well known. When told they were to be executed next day, to occupy his mind he spent the night planning his World Garden, intended to show where many of our well-loved plants originate from. Fortunately for him (and us) his captors did not execute them and they were eventually released.



Planting began in 2004 and was completed in 2005. A highlight is the National collection of eucalyptus in the Australian border, which was nearly wiped out along with many other plants by the cold winter of 2009-10. However Tom replanted and the garden certainly looked very lush and mature in 2016. His enthusiasm is contagious and many of his specialist plants in the cactus house were at their best. These include such delights as the "dog poo plant" which really does smell of.... and the "Mother-in-Law's cushion". He has also just opened an orchid house, so it was a varied and satisfying trip, and he sold us a few plants too!

*Steve McArragher*

### ... AND A NIGHTINGALE SANG IN.....ALBION ROAD!

Yes Mo and I were treated to the beautiful song of a nightingale most evenings in June, usually around 10 p.m. Most likely a male calling for a mate or defending his territory, he will have arrived in April, and leave by the end of September for central Africa.