



# Despatches

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## Inside this issue:

Introduction	1
Air crash 1930	2
From the pump	4
Odd spot	5
Meet the MHG	5
Book Review and offer	6
Fundraiser Hog Roast	6

## Archive content:

- 3,600 photographs and documents
- 1,264 Poor Law records from 1654-1843
- 1,500 Cemetery records
- 1841 Census
- 1851 Census
- Parish records from 1859: Baptisms, Marriages and Burials

## Coming:

- 1841 Tithe data
- 34 trade directories
- Maidstone Journal extracts from 1831-1846

## An introduction from the Chairman

The Marden History Group was hatched by a small group of villagers engaged in preparing a 'Village Design Statement' for planning purposes in 1998.

An early initiative was to make a video called 'Marden - A Wealden Village' - producing the funds to enable the group to expand its work and attract local talent.

In time, the available storage capacity in a stable and caravan, and the inability to exhibit the 'History Collection' artefacts was proving inadequate. Towards the end of 2007 an agreement was reached with the Kent County Council to rent part of the village's splendidly located library.

The Heritage Centre established therein, with funds received from the National Lottery, Parish, Borough, County Council and Kent Archaeological Society, was opened by the Rt.

Hon Ann Widdecombe MP in February 2008.

It is staffed during the 18 hours the library is open per week by some of our 50 volunteers, who as researchers and supporters, also give their time and expertise in organising the four annual exhibitions. They catalogue, transcribe, research, publish, print material and more. Our website enables the group to reach out to the rest of the world.

The running costs are about £2,000 annually. Staff do not pay subscriptions, they pay in kind although some make donations. Funds are raised through the sale of copies of the History Collection publications as well as through the annual fund raising event.

In April 2009 the Group joined with the local church, St Michael and All Angels, to raise funds for the Heritage Centre and the fabric of our splendid Marden Church.



## Fatal crash at the Great Pagehurst Farm landing strip:



**From the Kent Messenger,  
Monday, February 10, 1930**

The tragic fate of a young honeymoon couple returning home from Paris was a horrifying feature of the disaster which overtook a French Aircraft, at Marden, on Monday.

The aircraft, flying to Croydon from Paris, was noticed to be in difficulties through engine trouble, just before one o'clock, and in an attempt to land at the emergency aerodrome, about two miles from the village the aircraft appeared to lose flying speed, and crashed on its nose. As it hit the ground one of the petrol tanks exploded, and the aircraft was immediately ablaze.

Four of the people who got clear were assisted by farm workers and others who rushed to the spot, but it was impossible to rescue the other two people, who were burnt to death.

The injured were removed to the West Kent General Hospital in the St. John Ambulance after receiving medical attention, and the two bodies were recovered by the police after the flames had died down.

Dead: Mr and Mrs A. A. Hodges, 4 Alexandra Road, Sheerness. Injured: M. Nevot pilot, Le Bourget, Paris (head and face injuries); M. Lesoffier mechanic, Paris (fractured ribs and internal injuries); M. Al-beaux mechanic, Paris (fractured left ankle and injury to left ?); Mr. Curson 31 Clifford Avenue, Ings Road, Hull (injuries to right ?, head and shock)

Mr and Mrs Hodges had only been married five days, and had been spending part of their honeymoon at the Bergere Hotel, Paris. They were returning to London to complete their holiday before the bridegroom, a Naval officer, returned to duty.

Mr. Curson had a miraculous escape, he was employed at the Paris office of Thomas Cook and Son, the tourist agents, and was on his way to the head office of the firm in London.

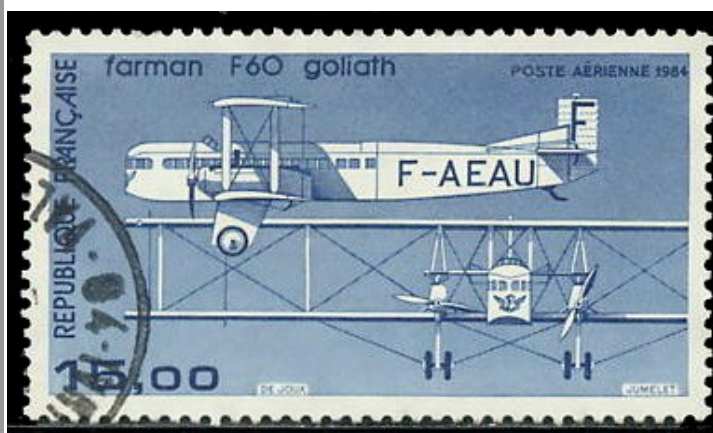
### EYE WITNESSES AND SURVIVORS' STORIES

One eye witness heard the engine misfire and saw it land. He immediately raced to the scene of the catastrophe, covering the nine miles from his home in less than half-an-hour. Supt. Dunk and Corporal Skinner were in charge, and when they arrived at the aerodrome they found that Dr. Kirkman, of Staplehurst, with his lady assistant, Dr McCabe, together with Dr J Adam of Marden, had arrived and were attending to the injured. Two of these had been removed to a house near by, one was lying on a gate on the ground, and the fourth was in an outhouse. They had been kept warm with hot water bottles and rugs supplied by the owner of the farm - in fact, everything possible was done for the unfortunate men pending the arrival of the doctors and ambulance. On the journey back to the hospital in the loaded ambulance Mr Curson told Superintendent Dunk that some time before the crash he received the impression that things were not going as they should, and that something fell off the back of the machine. The pilot was doing all he could to ensure a safe landing when the air liner seemed to rise a little way, then suddenly nose dived and the crash came. Mr Curson became aware of the accident, as though it had happened in the dream. 'I was in a semi-conscious state' he added, and said 'It's only a dream' when suddenly there came the realisation that it had actually occurred and I was in a tight corner. I had just sufficient willpower to exert my little remaining strength and scramble somehow out of the machine. I remember several people rushing across the field and dragging me away from the debris. Then I remembered no more'

### A GRAPHIC STORY

Driver Skinner said Curson told him that something seemed to go wrong with the rudder when the machine was in the air. The pilot warned the passengers that he was going to make a forced landing. There was no panic. The machine made a nose-dive, rose a little way, then descended again, and hit the ground at a fairly steep angle. After the crash it burst into flames.

Mr Curson said to a rescuer : 'The machine apparently was experiencing difficulty in its balance, and the pilot was making desperate efforts to land, when the ground seemed to rush up to us and the next moment there was a deafening explosion and we



were enveloped in a blinding flame and suffocating smoke.

'Although temporarily blinded I managed to crawl through the cabin window and succeeded in getting myself clear of the plane. There was not an earthly chance for anyone to help. Within a few minutes we were in blazing flames.'

Mr Curson had only confused impressions of what happened, but he did not lose consciousness.

'I felt it getting rather hot', he said, 'and knowing that the flames would soon reach me I made a great effort,'

He was very shaky and unable to give a consecutive account of what happened.

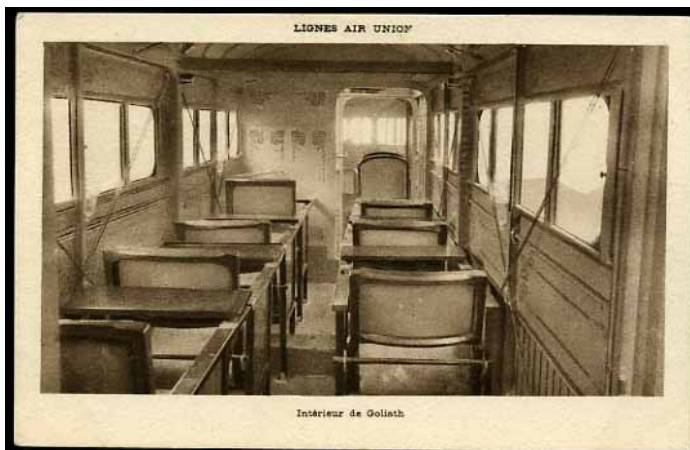
Mr Curson is aged about 40 and was on his way to the London office of Messrs. Cook and Son, to whose branch in Paris he is attached.

The pilot and mechanics, who were all stationed at Le Bourget Aerodrome near Paris - the French Croydon - are not as yet in a fit condition to be interviewed, as they, like the Englishman, are suffering from exposure and shock.

#### FIRST DISASTER AT MARDEN

The disaster is the first fatal one to occur at the Marden Aerodrome. The ground, which is part of Great Pagehurst Farm, belonging to Mr J. Strang, was brought into use as an aerodrome during the war, and has since been continued as an emergency landing ground.

Mr Pearson, a workman at Pagehurst Farm, said :



Interior of a Farman Goliath F63

'Hearing an aeroplane, I ran out of my house to see if it was alighting. It was within two hundred yards and looked as though it would make a perfect landing. It was too low and I could almost have touched it and I could easily distinguish the passengers in the plane.'

'The engine had apparently stopped and then the plane suddenly dropped to the ground. The wheels struck the ground with terrific force, and the plane tipped to one side. The crash was followed by an explosion and the machine was immediately in flames'

Workmen hurried to the scene, and by improvising stretchers out of gates and hurdles carried those who had escaped to the adjoining farm.

On enquiry at the hospital later in the afternoon a 'Kent Messenger' representative was informed that the mechanic, Lesoffier, was in a somewhat serious condition. His colleague, Albeaux, having had his injured limb treated, was chatty and vivacious.



Air Union was a French airline established 1 January 1923 as the result of a merger between the airlines Compagnie des Messageries Aériennes and Grands Express Aériens.

Air Union was merged with four other French airlines to become **Air France** on 7 October 1933

**A photograph of F-FHMY, the Farman Goliath F63 that was destroyed at Marden.**

A very brief video of F-FHMY? is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJBf0Xf0XNA&feature=related>



The Marden Society was formed in the 1970s in response to concerns about a particular development near the village. After that was successfully resolved the Society has gone on to both represent the views of the village, as far as it is able, and to promote interest in Marden, in Kent and in the countryside in general.

## An article from *The Parish Pump*, newsletter of the Marden Society

### MARDEN SOCIETY

*In a return visit, Graham Tippen enlightened and entertained us with more anecdotes and information about Marden in the not so distant past – aided and abetted by several of the audience adding their memories.*

Once again we started from the station (would it be libel to call him a train anorak?) This really was once a hub of industry with sidings for good wagons, a signal box, goods shed and more sidings to allow the express trains to go through. And who was it driving the horse and wagon away from the station? It was Henry Dukes, wagoner for James Day. Many a Sunday School outing had a train just for them, to take everyone to Margate or suchlike. Even for a day trip you wouldn't forget to send a post card home. Moving on to the High Street we saw a picture of Crowhurst's in all its glory with a colonnade at the front. A former Post Office was in The Old Sweet Shop before it moved to its present position. What a resplendent array of post boys and men there once was. The Tippen family were an important presence in this area, running the Post Office, selling bikes and motor bikes, mending watches and running a haulage company. During the war and the

blackout, the lamp posts in the main streets were painted white so that you wouldn't walk into them. The choice of shops provided practically everything you could need and the variety of pubs allowed for very long pub-crawls! We were introduced to several 'characters' from the past. Jimmy Ruffell, who lived behind the workhouse (site of the Allens) in a small building which had been the mortuary. 'Fishy' Collins (another uncle) was a milkman, but preferred to spend his time shooting and fishing. With the advent of winter on went the layer of goose fat covered with a layer of brown paper. I hadn't believed that this was so recent a habit. For sports there was James Seymour of Howlands, who was the first professional cricketer. He was given a testimonial match by Kent and, to avoid paying tax on this, had to take his case to the House of Lords – which he won. Regular matches were played between Kent and Marden in our village. Keeping work in the village, the farmer George Holiday of Stonepit Farm always employed local pickers for his hops. Graham ended on a note of glory – Marden Fruit Show being the largest of its kind in Europe and his father's lorries taking fruit to Selfridges and Harrods.

*Eunice Doswell January 2007*

### About the presenter...



*I was asked to write an introduction to my family in about 100 words. For a family that have been around the Weald of Kent since before the Armada, that's quite a tall order! The earliest connection I have is an Elizabeth Typpen of Cranbrook in 1563. In Marden, James Tippen, a clockmaker, came here in the 1820s; there were other Tippen clockmakers in Headcorn, Lenham and Yalding. At the turn of the 20th Century, we also ran the Post Office and, later, a garage and haulage business*

*from the Old Market. If you telephoned Marden I, the answer was "Tippen's of Marden". At that time, my grandfather served on the first Marden Parish Council, later followed by my father and uncle. I was elected to the council in 1984 and served for 20 years until 2004 when my wife took over the seat I vacated, a tradition of service to Marden that no other family can match.*

© Graham Tippen 2009

## Odd Spot

### WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Trawling through the baptism records it seems that not only do our superstars of today choose unusual names for their children, but this has happened down through the ages.

In 1587 and 1588 the Ersdens named their children **Suretruste** and **Morefruite** – I don't know if the latter name is a boast or a cry of desperation. In 1886 a laundryman had the imagination to name his daughter **Crystal Bell**, but just before that Harry Brown, the postman and his wife seem to have run out of imagination when presented with twins –

these were called **Rose Daisy** and **Daisy Rose**. The 1640s saw the baptism of **Grissell Cornell** (I hope she made no noise when she was anointed), **Lybona Cornhill** and **Bethensell Cunney**. The Day family were represented with unusual names such as **Jarvite Daie** in 1578 and **Sibery Day** three hundred years later. **Genteela Lee** was a traveller; I do hope that she really was a gentle girl. Lastly we have John and Alice Jessop; whatever possessed them to call a son **Passwater**? Any civilised ideas would be interesting to hear.

*Eunice Doswell August 2009*



## Exhibitions at the Heritage Centre

Since opening unofficially in November 2007, followed by an official opening in February 2008, a series of exhibitions have been organised to show a variety of aspects of the life of the village.

The first exhibition was on the People of Marden, with a further display on this subject in December.

In May 2008 Summer in Marden was shown, followed by Autumn and finally Winter in Marden. These displays showed the changing face of the countryside and the work on the farms

throughout the year and seasons.

2009 has seen Spring in Marden, followed by Transport in Marden and Commerce in Marden.

On 10th October there will be a Descendants' Day exhibition in the Memorial Hall, material from this then being used for an autumn exhibition in the Heritage Centre. 16 families will be showing family material on Descendants' Day.

## Meet the MHG: A snapshot of the Committee Chairman



**DAVID MCFARLAND** – Born in Liverpool in 1936 and lived in Nottingham, Blackpool and N. Ireland until 1960. Pharmacist and pharmaceutical representative in Kent until 1964. Probation Officer in Gravesend and Maidstone until 1982. Then commuted to London and managed Home Office sponsored Building Co. employing and training offenders until 1985. Chief Probation Officer of Tower Hamlets and Hackney until 1989. Managed special Home Office crime prevention enterprise in Tower Hamlets until 1994. Retired and then returned to work part-time as a probation officer in offices and prisons until 2001. Deputy Chairman/Chairman/President of Maidstone Victim Support Group 1986 – 2006. Member of the Independent Monitoring Board at Blantyre House Prison. Present Chairman of Marden History Group.

## MARDEN HISTORY GROUP

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### This issue's reduced price offer for members:

#### MEMORIES OF MARDEN by our evacuees 1939-1944

"On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 we left Plumstead Central School in south-east London and walked the short distance to the railway station..." Thus begins Hazel Read's (née Smith) story, one of ten memoirs in this issue's offer publication. Sixty-five years later to the day, 22 former evacuees returned to Marden to enjoy once again the village's hospitality.



"History was being made around us even though we were supposed to be in a safe place. In May 1940 trains full of servicemen just rescued from Dunkirk stopped outside Marden station. Looking dirty and bedraggled, soldiers smiled and waved to us and threw cards and letters to their families for us to post as we walked down the road beside the embankment".

"MEMORIES OF MARDEN by our evacuees 1939-1944" edited by Chris Gosling, 26 pages A4 illustrated in B/W and colour. Normal price £5.00, **offer price £4.50**. Pick yours up from the Heritage Centre (bring your membership ID) or order from the Selby Oast address (please add £1.00 P and P). Sterling cheques made payable to "Marden History Group" please.

### Fundraiser: Hog Roast

**Date: Sunday 13th September, 2009.**

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?q=TN12+9DH>

The History Group organised its first major fund raising event on September 13th, with a Hog Roast at Selby Oast, home of the Chairman of the Society, David McFarland and his wife, Evalyn. The weather was surprisingly hot and sunny and over a hundred people supported the event, enjoying the late autumn weather, the excellent music, and the company of others. Live music was presented by Jasmin and Sound Cheque, plus the ReSessions.

The salads, strawberries and cream etc were provided by members of the Society, with plenty for everyone.

The raffle was a great success - many prizes to be won! The whole afternoon was very successful, a

tribute to the hosts and the work put in by members of the Society.

The resultant profit will help towards the costs of maintaining the Heritage Centre in the library, manned entirely by volunteers.



### Marden History Group

The Marden History Group aims to seek, preserve, inspire and transmit knowledge of the history of the village of Marden. It is a working group of eight who meet each month to plan the work, aided by a group of volunteers working on a variety of projects.

**Disclaimer** - All information in this newsletter is given in good faith and to the best of our knowledge is correct, however we cannot be held responsible or liable for its accuracy.

