

Who do you think WE are?



The Marden History Group and Heritage Centre won the inaugural overall Community Archive of the Year title.
Dr Nick Barratt, David McFarland and Eunice Doswell with the award certificate



This booklet has been prepared by Roger and Jenny Mallion as a permanent record of the 'Who do you think WE are?' exhibition held in Marden Library and Heritage Centre.

Opened by Kent County Councillor Paulina Stockell on 21st November 2015

MARDEN HISTORY GROUP AND HERITAGE CENTRE

Award for village history group

Marden History Group has won a national award for its community archive.

Some 63 submissions from across the country were entered into six categories of the competition, run by the National Community Archives and Heritage Group (CAHG) supported by the Archives and Records Association, UK and Ireland.

The history group won the inaugural overall Community Archive of the Year title.

In addition to the award, the work of the volunteers at Marden's Heritage Centre was also recognised with the prize for the Most Interesting Community Archive for solving the location of the Marden Bronze Age hoard.

The announcements were made at the CAHG's 6th annual Conference in London.

Marden History Group chairman David McFarland made a presentation in support of the submission and was joined by archaeologist John Smythe, who displayed items from the Bronze Age hoard to the conference members.

CAHG chairman Laura Cotton, who was also chairman of the competition judges, said:

"The Marden story was inspirational. The enthusiasm and dedication of the Marden volunteers leapt from the submission; their achievement in opening and running the heritage centre was substantial. "Mr McFarland said: "We are just a village, but we believe we may be the only such centre in the UK to operate in this way and be open for 18 hours each week."

The following evening, John Chambers, Laura Cotton and Marie Owens of CAHG, and family historian Dr Nick Barratt visited the Marden Heritage Centre, where Dr Barratt presented the awards.

The guests, and members and history group volunteers were joined by Cllr Paulina Stockell and parish councillor Dorothy Reed for a celebration.

KCC, Marden Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council were instrumental in funding the original 2008 set up of the Heritage Centre, which is based in the library.

Time Line

1998 Village Design Statement

A motley group of members of the Marden Society had gathered to prepare a village design statement in the Scout hut, by kind permission of Ian Grimes. This became Marden 2000, for the local authority. This group was chaired by Richard Wells, now in Bexhill. David McFarland, Maria Brown and Kevin McCann elected to focus on the history of the village.

They had such a good time together that after the completion of the statement they carried on seeking and collecting information, using Phill Highwood's and Peggy Skelton's book "A Wealden Village, Marden" and, visiting Maidstone library and for the first time using microfiche.

1999 Marden Society History Group Exhibition

As the self-described Marden Society History Group, they put on their first exhibition in the Memorial Hall, with the help of Ian Newton. Ian was a technical man, computers, photography, etc.

The exhibition was quite amateurish but successful in attracting villagers, some of whom joined them, bringing different skills and enthusiasm. These included Eunice Doswell and Chris and Marie Gosling.

2000 Gypsies and Historical Artefacts

They had, as the Marden Society History Group, obtained a rural revival grant of £1,500, thanks to Maria Brown. They embarked on filming the life, times and people of Marden, thanks to Chris Gosling, Ian Newton, Kevin Pert and Robin Judd. They also embarked on some research with regard to gypsy families in the area who habitually came down to Thorn Farm in the autumn to pick apples and hops. One family called Gudgeon had been coming as a family since before the First World War. Because of the sale of Thorn Farm their days in Kent were coming to an end.

They also started collecting artefacts relevant to the village which were stored in the stables and caravan at Selby Oast, later joined by Stilebridge Farmhouse.

2001 Video – “Marden – A Wealden Village”

The video of “Marden – A Wealden Village” was launched on 3 February 2001. Its sales were good and provided the group with a good bank balance that ensured its financial viability, a viability that Richard Adam has overseen ever since. Kevin Pert and David McFarland were interviewed by BBC Radio Kent on 4 March 2001.

2002 First Publication ‘The Fallen of Marden 1918’

By 2002 the Marden Society History Group had grown. They were joined by Robert Hooker, Mike Hargreaves, Trevor Simmons, Colin Whittle, Catherine Alderson and Jane Cunningham. The first of many future publications ‘The Fallen of Marden 1914-1918’ by Chris and Marie Gosling was the start of many other publications.

2003 The Marden map

With the help of 18 local artists, professional and amateur, they created the Marden map, designed by Mark Fisher and Vic Symonds, still on sale.

2004 First ‘Saints & Sinners’ cricket match.

Robin Judd, the owner of Southons field, Keith Rockledge, landlord of the Unicorn public house and David McFarland, Chairman of the History Group, organised a cricket match between the pub (the Sinners) against the church (the Saints) held on 4 July 2004. This was the start of an annual cricket match that in 2015 raised over £20,000 in aid of cancer and leukaemia.

‘Marden Scrubbers’

The ‘Marden Scrubbers’ i.e. **respectable** members of the History Group, created the graveyard map which, identifies the names and locations of the existing gravestones.

All the accumulated artefacts and records were stored privately. It became time to explore the possibility of having a permanent home for the collection. The KCC in

the form of Katy Hill and Lynn Catt were approached with regard to building on the end of the library, on the vacant land between it and the public toilets. Although this was approved in principal, the opportunity to obtain the funds to add to a public building was not possible. Katy Hill suggested they rent part of the library. They embarked on the exploration of local heritage centres/museums etc. for ideas.

2005 The Marden stocks

Nigel Cox, restored the stocks located in the churchyard.

2006 Search for a location, design and furnishings for Heritage Centre

There was some dispute as to where they should locate the Heritage Centre, some favoured the Memorial Hall. They did not consider that the Memorial Hall could compare with sharing part of the library in respect of its site, locality and atmosphere. They also felt that it could support the library with its declining footfall. They started to design the Heritage Centre, contacting companies who could possibly provide them with carpets, electrics, furniture, blinds and display boards. They were fortunate to find local people able to provide everything, apart from Hillary's the blind manufacturers. Nigel Cox was of great help in designing and setting up the display boards.

Kent, Maidstone and Parish Councillors were generous and provided them with the £3,500 which prompted Awards for all to give them the remaining £10,000 required. They were fortunate to work with such helpful KCC library staff both local and county. These included Katy Hill, Lyn Catt and Gina. Stuart Blyth and Rob Ilingworth from Kent Archives also advised the group.

David McFarland and Vic Symonds created the now Marden History Group logo.

2007 Heritage Centre opens

The Heritage Centre opened for business on 24 November 2007.

Search for WWII siren and K6 red telephone box.

The group set out, in particular Colin Whittle, to search for a red telephone box and a World War II air raid siren to fit on the existing siren post, used during the war and later by the Fire Brigade. It was about to be excavated for the new development in the Old Market.

2008 Heritage Centre officially opened by Ann Widdecombe MP

Ann Widdecombe formally opened the centre on 23 February 2008. Some fun emanated from David McFarland introducing Ann Widdecombe to their patron Sir Nicholas Fenn, whom he described as having "something of the knight" about him. They had by this time obtained the services of many volunteers who helped them keep the Heritage Centre open during the 18 hours per week that the library was open.

Search for Marden Bronze Age hoard

Contact was made with John Smythe, an amateur archaeologist, who with the help of Trevor Simmons one of the members, started looking for the disputed site of the

Marden Bronze Age Hoard, thought to be located in Chainhurst, more specifically on Reed Court Farm.

Friends of Marden's Heritage formed

Sir Nick Fenn, the History Group's patron, James Robertson, vicar of Marden church, together with David McFarland worked on producing the Friends of Marden's Heritage. Both the church and the History Group had individually, sort to produce their own friends group. Thanks to Nick Fenn this was discovered before it was too late. The FOMH was designed to raise money for the maintenance of the Heritage Centre and for the maintenance of the fabric of the church.

They were fortunate to find a stationery company, Phoenix located in Parkwood who provide the History Group and Heritage Centre with their stationery needs at a reduced cost.

Descendants Day event

Catherine Alderson organised a Descendants Day event in the Memorial Hall where 20 Marden families exhibited their family memorabilia. This was a resounding success and it was fascinating to see different families recognising information they had in common.

2009 'Archive of the Year' Award, Family History magazine

They were awarded the 'Archive of the Year' by the Family History magazine. A presentation was held in the Heritage Centre.

The Walker Organ

Ken Jenner approached the group with regard to the old church organ – the Walker organ – that had been installed in his oast years before. He now wished to move it as they were developing the oast as a home for their son. They arranged that Peter Hall would take it to put in his oast and that Julian Hopper, its owner and mechanic, would dismantle it and start to re-erect it. Its history is the subject of a booklet on sale in the Heritage Centre named "The Itinerant Walker Organ and Peripatetic Julian Hopper".

The Snachell grandfather clock

The group were approached by Dorothy Moorcroft, who lived in the West Country, and had inherited a Snachell grandfather clock built in Marden, which she loaned to them and which they arranged with Marden Parish Council to install in the Allens. Bill Fisher restored it.

2010 First firing of World War II air raid siren

On the second Sunday in September, at the History Group hog roast, Colin Whittle fired the siren for the first time with the help of a generator. This preceded the fly past of a Battle of Britain memorial flight Spitfire that circled Selby Oast four times.

Work with the Parliamentary Archives

The Parliamentary Archives made contact with the group via the Centre for Kentish Studies. This resulted in visiting the archives in the Victoria Tower in the Houses of Parliament, and a series of workshops in the library and Heritage Centre, together with representatives from the Centre for Kentish Studies and people from

Headcorn, Staplehurst and Paddock Wood. The purpose was to study the effect of the coming of the railway in 1842 from London to Dover on the land, people and the economy of the area. Springing from this activity they made the acquaintance of Vince from Paddock Wood and Alan Baum from Staplehurst who joined the group as very valuable Heritage Centre volunteers.

Completion of cemetery records

Marie and Chris Gosling completed the cemetery records to complement their work with the 'Scrubbers' in producing the graveyard map.

2011 Oral history

Penny Day took over the Oral History task which included Ann Farebrother and Sue Fry.

World War II siren and K6 red telephone box obtained

An application was submitted for planning permission for the air raid siren and telephone box on 13 June 2011. The group were most grateful for Colin Whittle's work in finding the siren and the red telephone box, and the Ministry of Defence for donating the siren; Appledore Developments for excavating the siren post in the Old Market next to the Unicorn; Homeleigh for transporting the red telephone box from Benenden; Bonnie the Parish Clerk who ensured that it was donated to us; Peter Hall for storing it and the siren post; John Ingram the surveyor from Lambert & Foster for his help in drawing up the plans; and Robert Day and Lenny Furnell for transporting the siren post and for storing the PLUTO pipeline, which is considered to be one of history's greatest feats of military engineering. Mo Gilles-Coates of P&P Signs has created a Banner recording this and it is placed inside the Red Telephone Box.

We were joined for nine months by Gianluca Giannico, a history graduate from Pisa University. He proved to be very intelligent, reliable, innovative and pleasant young man.

The Library & Heritage Centre annual Lecture - Bronze Age Hoard

John Smythe gave an illustrated talk (i.e. the annual lecture) at the Vestry Hall on 30 November about the Marden Hoard. This was attended by about 50 people. The Hoard was on show, thanks to Maidstone Museum and Giles Guthrie.

2012 Awarded National Community Archive of the Year

We won the National Community Archive of the Year competition, sponsored by the Archives & Records Association, and their sub group Community Archives & Heritage Centre. Eunice Doswell submitted the application. This required our preparing a presentation for their AGM in University College London in June. Ian Newton had produced a PowerPoint presentation which was a great asset in our presentation which took about 13 minutes. There was an audience of 250 people in the lecture room. John Smythe made a contribution about our work with the Marden Hoard. This award apparently earned us the accolade of 'a centre of excellence'. On the following day, in the Heritage Centre, we were presented with a plaque by Dr Nick Barrett.

Maria Brown, Parish Councillor, completed the application for planning permission for the installation of the siren, red telephone box and PLUTO.

2013 Electrical system installed in library to fire siren

Colin Whittle, with the support of Kent County Council, installed the electrical system on 25 to 30 October in the library, to enable us to connect to the siren in order to fire it.

It was agreed that the chair of the Marden History Group would also clear the vicar's garden of rubbish at the same time as they clean the graveyard. The latter emanated from the chair meeting John Hall when he was cutting the grass round the church as the 'Scrubbers' were cleaning the gravestones. John Hall jokingly asked if the chair could clear up his empty gin bottles when he had finished cutting the grass.

The History Group was involved with villagers in trying to prevent the loss of the Marden cricket ground for development. The cricket ground had been part of village history since the early 1920's.

The task to co-ordinate the work of the Heritage Centre when so many volunteers were involved did become quite demanding, and with the help of Nicola, we worked on a job description for a paid co-ordinator. Unfortunately we failed to obtain the necessary funds to pursue this idea for the time being.

2014 Hercules, a descendent of a WWI war horse, visited Marden Primary School

Helena from BBC South East contacted us. They wished to bring the descendent of a war horse to visit the village primary school, to commemorate the First World War. The horse Hercules duly arrived in all his glory on 24 April, much to the interest of the school children and others present. As a consequence the chair and Penny Day were invited to Folkestone on 4 August to help the BBC as guides at the harbour. Hercules was there, asleep for most of the time.

Red telephone box and WWII siren installed

On 15 October Full Circle completed the restoration of the red telephone box. On 18 October Tomkinsons' men transported the telephone box to its present site, and with the help of the local firemen and Duncan Simmons it was installed. The World War II siren was also installed with the assistance of our local firemen and Homeleigh. This is all recorded in a booklet published 'The World War II siren and red telephone box'.

WWII siren fired for the first official time on Remembrance Sunday 9 November 2014.

The History Group offered to install broken mounting block on the Heritage Centre site.

2015 Friends of Marden's Heritage, Musical Picnic in the Park

6 June fired siren to coincide with the anniversary of D-day, and the Big Musical Picnic in the Park, organised by the Friends of Marden's Heritage and Mo from P&P Signs who arranged the music.

School visits

The school visits to the Library and Heritage Centre have taken place on an annual basis for over five years. Contributions from Jan Bedford, KCC; Sam Smith,

independent consultant; Rob Illingworth, KCC Libraries, Registration & Archives together with Jean Robertson and Laura Cox from the History Group added to the knowledge of over 57 children this year.

Defibrillator

The group speculated on the possibility of using the K6 red telephone box to provide a base for a defibrillator. Contact was made with the Community Heartbeat Trust on the recommendation of SECAMB (South East Coast Ambulance Trust). The group worked closely with the Air Ambulance, Fire Brigade, SECAMB, the medical centre, the Community Warden and the Parish Council. This community effort resulted in the defibrillator being attached to the K6 red telephone box on Saturday 10 October by Matt Rhodes from the Fire Brigade, and his father. A donation of £1,975 was received from a Marden resident who wished to remain anonymous, thus enabling the group to bring this to fruition.

Ploughing Matches

The group exhibited at Weald of Kent Ploughing Match on 19 September, and again at the National Ploughing Championships on 10 and 11 October, when Ian Newton and Andrew Lyon were the official photographers and where Catherine Alderson staffed the exhibition for the two days, with help from volunteers. Thanks also to Collin Whittle who erected the gazebo and Laura Cox who organised the exhibition. On 29 September two Americans visited the Heritage Centre to discover that Laura Cox, group secretary, lived in the home that one of their ancestors had rented in the 18th century. She was able to take them home, entertain them and share their accumulated knowledge of the Pettit family

Siren fired Remembrance Day, 8 November 2015

The siren was fired on 8 November, Remembrance Day, after the church service in cooperation with the Royal British Legion. Music from WWI and WWII featured, including Vera Lynn, The Squadronaires and Lili Marlene with the help of Tony Jenes.

Further to this CAHG are

arranging more publicity at an event at the Library and Heritage Centre on Thursday 28th June at 6.30. Dr Nick Barratt will be the celebrity attending.

EMIGRATION

We know from the parish records and from the censuses that people came from other parts of Kent and the British Isles to settle in Marden, often as a result of seeking work. Equally we know, from correspondence from their present day descendants, that other's moved away from Marden when times were hard to seek their fortunes overseas. In the early 1840s there were particularly bad harvests and there wasn't room in the workhouses for all the needy. So families



were encouraged to emigrate. In 1841 £100 was to be raised by the churchwardens & overseers "to contribute or defray the expenses of poor persons having settlements in this parish & being willing to emigrate, to be paid out of the rates raised for the relief of the poor".

The Bartletts

Whether or not Richard Bartlett and Lydia Quested, who were married in 1838, were in receipt on such funds we do not know, but they arrived in Australia on Boxing Day 1841. Richard was born in Marden and his parents, Richard and Ann Bartlett, who we know had been in Marden Workhouse in the early 1800s, both died in 1841. This may be the reason, together with extreme poverty and memories of the Workhouse that caused the couple and their young daughter to emigrate. We will never know, but the story of Richard and Lydia Bartlett's life in Australia is told by their descendant Ronald Bartlett.

Richard Swan, deported to Van Diemen's Land

We have a very detailed description of Richard Swan, a young Marden man, who was convicted at Maidstone Quarter Sessions to 15 years hard labour for stabbing and wounding, and was then transported to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1842. He was 5ft 6in, had hazel eyes, his hair was black, and so were his eyebrows and whiskers. He had an oval head with a fresh complexion, a long nose, a small mouth and his chin was long and dimpled. There was a scar over his left eye and scars on both hands. Richard Swan's life is described by his descendant Lance J. Swan of Gwandalan, Tasmania.

THE WEBSITE

The History Group Website has membership from all over the world. There have been many hits throughout the World on the Website

Recorded in December 2008 - 4498 hits, 145 per day, with 155 on Christmas day.

Recorded between 1st July and 19th July 2008 – 21,000 hits 1897 visits averaging 98 per day

These two records showed hits were from New Zealand, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Russia, Denmark, also Brazil, Syria, Taiwan, Lithuania and USA.

Emails have also been received from over the world:

The Potter family from America, David Fletcher from Virginia USA and Jan London from New Zealand

June Quigley sent thanks re managing to record several generations re Website - Tasmania

Potter family sent photos – America

Swan family researched 5 generations - Australia

David Fletcher, Mapleston descendant sent 81 doc re Marden – Virginia USA

Mrs Morecroft researching the Excel family donated a 'Marden Snashall' Clock (1850).

This was restored into working order by Bill Flisher and placed in the Allens. A ceremony and Plaque was held in Jan 2010 when the owners Mr Charles Excell and Mrs Christine Morecroft were invited to attend.

Visitors to the Heritage Centre from abroad

June Fawcett- Australia visited May 2007

Sharp Brothers - America visited Autumn 2011

An Australian visitor who lived in Marden Copt Hall as a child

Others have visited and will be recorded in our Diaries

Members

For just **£12** per annum you can become a Member of the Marden History Group. By doing so, you not only support the work of the History Group, you also receive a range of online benefits, which you can take advantage of regardless of your location:

- Full access to all the transcribed records in the Marden History Archives. All the details are there, so there is no need to pay us to do your searches.
- Access to all the images in the Archives
- Images are constantly being uploaded – if you cannot find something please ask.
- “Despatches” our email newsletter twice a year – keep up to date with the latest news from the Marden History Group and Heritage Centre.
- Access to our archive of past issues of “Despatches”



WHAT IS IN THE ARCHIVES?

- Parish records – Baptisms, Marriages, Burials
- Catalogue – details of all the material we hold in the Heritage Centre: photographs, press cuttings, artefacts, documents etc. – over 4,000 records and more being added continually.
- 1,264 Poor Law Records. We only hold transcriptions, not copies of the original records.
- 1,500 cemetery records
- Medieval Wills – shortened transcriptions giving the main details.
- Censuses – 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1981, 1891, 1901.

Coming soon.... 1911 census, tithe information, trade directories, extracts from the Maidstone Journal.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

Contact our Membership Secretary- email: membership@mardenhistory.org.uk. It couldn't be easier



Thanks to all our Volunteers who do such a spectacular job in keeping the Heritage Centre open, Researching, supporting us, advising us and overseeing the whole History Group.

YOU ARE ALL STARS

David McFarland

Laura Cox

Richard Adam

Andrew Lyon

Deirdre Cook

Janet Brewer

Jo Fryer

Mike Judd

Diane Fisher

Jenny Mallion

Sian Burr

Jan Bedford

Ken Jenner

Maria Brown

Mo Clayton

Nigel Cox

Patricia Foskett

Roger Mallion

Roger Eltringham

Robin Judd

Steve McArragher

John Whittle

Jo Watson

Anne Tompson

Sarah Springhall

Shirley Day

Chris Turner

Mark Bateson

Steve Nye

Eunice Doswell

Ian Grimes

Ann Farebrother

Barbara Dubois

Alan Baum

Janet McIntosh

Lynne Abbitt

Catherine Alderson

Vince Greene

Trevor Simmons

Mari Gosling

Jane Cunningham

Kevin White

Michael Hardcastle

Nick Fenn

Penny Day

Patricia Maynard

Jane Stevens

Lorna Eltringham

Barbara Judd

Zubeida Roberts

Yvonne Whittle

Edward Thomas

Ann Coomber

Mick Page

Mike Lutener

Sue Turner

Rob Illingworth

Shirley Porter

Colin Whittle

Ian Newton

Audrey Foord

Carol Hogg

Jan Day

Jean Robertson

Maureen Davies

Chris Gosling

Jane Tipples

Rob Spain

Graham Tippen

Lester Cunningham

Lucy Cross

Michael Hargreaves

Sue Fenn

Peter Minter

Andrew Maynard

Robert Hooker

Colin Coomber

Gianluca Giannico

Kate Spainer

Imogen Wedd

Gill Tarry

Anita Thompson

George Frampton

Jo Sunnucks

John Smyther

Liz Stanley

Janet Jones



Contact us

We are always pleased to hear from people with a connection with, or interest in, Marden.

We have a range of services both online and through the Heritage Centre which can assist you with your own historical and family history research. If you wish, you can join the Marden History Group, either as a volunteer or as a [Member](#).

We also welcome any information you may have about Marden and the people who lived here.

The chairman of the Marden History Group:

Mr David McFarland

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The Exhibition was based upon the need to record the story of Marden's History Group and Heritage Centre

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