



Despatches

Issue 3

October 2010

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Archive content:

- 4111 photos & documents etc
- Censuses 1841 – 1901
- Baptisms 1559 – 1903 (14852 records) inc Independent 1707 – 1738
- Marriages 1561 – 1950 (3787 records)
- Burials 1561 – 1892 (9957 records)
- Electoral registers 1939 & 1981 (3253 records)
- Cemetery 1932 – 2005 (1490 records)
- Poor Law 1654 – 1836 (1264 records)
- Trade Directories 21 (2384 records)
- Wills 133 medieval, 372 others (many transcribed)
- Tithe data (425 records only)

New:

- More electoral registers
- More Trade Directories

Coming:

- Maidstone Journal extracts – 1831 to 1846
- In time – database of Parish Chest documents
- 1911 census

The Heritage Centre.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF RUNNING A HERITAGE CENTRE

So we will now have been open for 2 years in November and how has it been for us? Well – for the volunteer coming in to open up or close down, they never know what information the diary may hold or who will enter our space in the library. It may be a quiet session when you can get on with research and the ordinary tasks which need doing. OR you might be overwhelmed with visitors from anywhere in the world. Certainly the summer brings a lot of these (good news for The Unicorn serving lunches). This is usually tremendously rewarding for us and hopefully a really pleasant surprise for them too. Some visitors come knowing exactly what they are looking for – and often with “goodies” to add to our archives. Others are fairly new to their research, so this is a challenge for the person on duty to think of all the appropriate resources – regular training is given. I know that my poor old brain keeps getting its dusty corners examined regularly.

So much data about Marden is available that it is a mammoth task to record it all – and this hasn't lessened with time. We are very good with helping with house clearances and spring cleans and more people are realising that the box of old papers in the cupboard might have a

use after all. The number of people that browse our exhibitions & then volunteer that they have a few old photos is amazing. It's frustrating when not all of them appear, but many do and it's a good feeling for the donors/lenders that their history is worthwhile to someone else.

So a visitor may arrive with an object, photo or piece of information; either as a donation or a loan. The first thing that happens is that item acquires a “pink passport”. This travels with it and records the necessary stages it has to go through. Next stage is being catalogued by one of Chris Gosling's team, then Lucy Cross scans it to our computer or Ian Newton may take a photograph. Lastly the item may be returned to its owner or filed in our cabinets, which are fast filling up. Any original donations will need to be protected in acid free materials.

As you can see from this a great deal of organisation and constant refinement of methods is necessary – not easy with a bunch of very willing volunteers but all with varying skills and experiences. Above all they all have their own busy lives to run along side their voluntary work.

To be continued

*The History
of
Marden*

a village in the Weald of Kent



February 4th, 1941: Maidstone Road, Marden

Sheila Wright, who has lived in Marden most of her life, never knew her grandmother, Annie Mayes, or her aunt Ivy. Ivy had recently become engaged when one very cold evening in February 1941 the two women settled down in their house in Maidstone Road for a game of cards with two soldiers and some friends. One was Mrs Driscoll, Sheila's godmother's mother. She lived at The Thorn - and was visiting the Mayes household to play cards while her husband had a drink elsewhere.

The night crew of the local ARP (Air Raid Precautions) were enjoying a quiet glass of beer in the Unicorn when two terrific explosions shook the building. There had been two bomb blasts in the Maidstone Road. Two bombs from a German aircraft which it is thought was experiencing trouble in flying on to London. It had jettisoned the bombs, lightening the aircraft before returning to France. The bombs had landed on the road directly outside Mrs Mayes's house.

The house was completely demolished along with that next door, where Mr Hoad was also killed, although his wife and daughter survived. By good fortune Ted Mayes had married the girl next door just a few weeks before and they no longer lived at the



destroyed houses, probably saving both of their lives. Annie Mayes therefore has the sad distinction of being the only person in the village who had lost her husband in World War I, when he was killed in November 1917, and then herself being killed by the same enemy some 24 years later. She had brought up her children single handed with the aid of her father, Sheila's great grandfather.

Killed at 4 Maidstone Road, Marden

Annie Matilda MAYES

Age 55. Widow of Edward Stanley Mayes, killed in the Great War, commemorated on the memorial plaque in Marden Church

Ivy D MAYES

Age 25. Daughter of Annie Matilda and the late Edward Stanley Mayes.

Alice Dorothy DRISCOLL

Age 44. Wife of George Henry Driscoll of Meldreth, Stanley Road, Marden.

Killed at 3 Maidstone Road, Marden

Christopher Harral HOAD

Age 58.



This picture shows 250kg bombs being "decorated" by Luftwaffe personnel, giving some clue as to the size. The bomb is 64.5 inches tall and its filling is either 60/40

Amatol/TNT, or TNT with a variety of additives including wax, woodmeal, aluminum powder, naphthalene and ammonium nitrate. The weight of the filling is 287lbs, making up 52 percent of the total weight of 548lbs.

German bombers of 1940 would carry from two to ten of these bombs each.



Evidence of this tragedy can be seen today: the new properties which were built on the site are set back from the road and include the Hong Kong Kitchen.

A Life (at Work and Play) by Edward Day MBE. (extract)

I went to Charterhouse at the beginning of the 1939/45 war. We were all issued with gas masks housed in small cardboard boxes.

We were asked in the event of an air raid whether we would like to take cover in the basement of the school buildings or to go out to the small trenches in the grounds when the air raid siren sounded. I opted for the trenches so I could watch the fun!

I hadn't been there very long before the air raid sirens sounded in the night and I made my way across the cricket field to my allocated trench and on the way was challenged by the school Home Guard in the shape of one of the prefects, "Halt!" he yelled. "Halt, who goes there?" (I think he was expecting German parachutists) and on hearing the sound of aero engines miles away we sat there on the side of our trench with our gas masks on sucking and blowing. Trouble was no one told us when to take them off.

Later we did indeed have an air raid during evening prep. A stick of bombs started a mile away and clumped ever closer across the grounds until the last one fell just outside the building where we were working at prep, blowing one of the windows out. Someone went outside and came back in with a piece of shrapnel which was still warm. Happily the school suffered no casualties.

I joined the Charterhouse and Godalming Home Guards and the Cadet Corps and we had good fun rushing round in our battle fatigues firing blank rounds and setting off thunderflashes and wading up the flooded Godalming tank traps across the marshes. Knowing my fear of being under water, the rest of the lads would gang up on me and pitch

me off the bridge into the River Wey. At the school we had spent many days with spades digging tank traps across the valley of the Wey which is adjacent to the school property.

I took charge of the school's war communications and we had field telephones, which we reeled out to and from field exchanges, we also had signalling lamps. I became very proficient in Morse code (20 words per minute) and we used to practice also with the daylight lamps signalling from one hill to another - from the school 8 miles away to the Hogs Back being a favourite. This was 1942/3 and at that time we did not have any radios, just field telephones. Using the telephones I used to organise a running commentary around the course at the annual cross country race.

When I got home in the holidays I joined the local 'Dad's Army' Home Guard and we had to guard the local Collier Street railway bridge at night against German paratroopers. Just what we were supposed to do with them as we were not armed was never made clear. We had one chap on the railway bridge with a whistle and the rest I spent teaching Morse during the night watch in the guard room. Yes 'Dad's Army' indeed.

Father had increased the size of the farming enterprise at the beginning of the 2nd War (WW2) which now comprised Spitzbrook, at Collier Street and 2 1/2 miles away round the West side of Marden Village, Pattenden, Turkey, Gravel Pit and Parsonage Farms.

Father was deeply involved under the direction of the Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, with efforts to persuade country people to plough up cherished grass, be they cricket fields, golf courses or old pastures on the farms and grow



A Life (at Work and Play) by Edward Day MBE. (extract)

more corn and potatoes.

I was at home for the summer holidays in 1940 with a school friend when the Battle of Britain was in full spate over Mid Kent. My school friend and I would go up to the flat roof at Spitzbrook with an ordinance survey map and binoculars. Lying on our backs we would watch the battle overhead, plot the crashes and then go down to our bikes and pedal furiously to get to a wreck before the police and the army arrived to keep the crowds at bay. We built up an extensive accumulation of treasures including parachutes, helmets, belts of ammunition, Verey flares - you name it. In one instance we saw a Spitfire go down just the other side of Marden village - I could take you to the exact spot which is only a few hundred yards from where I live now. Although several villagers were there when we arrived no one was taking any interest in one of the Spitfire's 8 machine guns which was lying apart from the wreckage which was still burning fiercely. It 'weighed a ton' and clearly we couldn't make off with it at the time, so we hid it carefully in the hedge. A week or two later when the wreckage had been removed and the guards withdrawn we returned, wrapped it in a mackintosh and lashed it onto the carrier of my bike. The following ride back through the village drew a lot of comments because I was wobbling as though drunk. We finally got it home and I subsequently donated this and all my other spoils after the war to one of the Battle of Britain museums.

A year or two later the water started coming in the Spitzbrook roof and on inspection we found it was through bullet holes where we had been lying.

Towards the end of the Battle the hop picking started. Most of the hand pickers had just come out of London where they had been experiencing the Blitz. They were very bitter. Another Spitfire crashed in our orchard at the bottom of

Spitzbrook, wounding the young pilot and we had to get there very quickly to prevent a lynching before we were able to assure them that he was British. He died on the way to hospital and for several years the pilot's parents would visit us and the site of the crash.

One day I was leading a horse from Spitzbrook to Marden and a battle started up when we were halfway. A spent bullet hit the horse on his rump and it needed a lot of persuading to stop him fleeing the scene with me in tow. Just before we arrived at our other Pattenden Farm at Marden a dog was similarly struck and took off yelping.

One day I was driving a tractor in the field alongside the railway line at Pattenden and one plane was pursuing another towards me. I leapt off the tractor and took cover in a small footpath arch under the railway line. It is still there and has a street named Barrel Arch Close after it.

The evacuation of our forces from Dunkirk had happened a few months before and the trains full of exhausted troops were queued solid on the upline at Marden as far as one could see. The women of Marden manned the side of the track with tea and other foodstuffs. The troops were not only exhausted but very hungry indeed. I felt privileged to be there although there was little I could do to help.

When the train in the queue moved on, several rifles and caps were found discarded on the edge of the track.

During the war the government had created The Women's Land Army who volunteered to work on farms to replace the many men who had gone to the war. They wore green britches and red jerseys from memory. What a happy hunting ground when in my mid teens I came home from school for the holidays and found half a dozen fit and beautiful Land Girls working in the fields. Here I found my first girl friend, Evelyn, and ventured my first kiss.

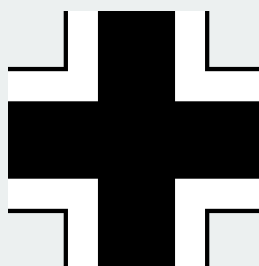
Extracts from Marden History Group publication:

A Life (at Work and Play) by Edward Day MBE.

A fully illustrated account of the incredibly varied life of a farmer who won the King's Cup.

75 pages A4, with colour/BW photographs. £12.50.

The deadly duel over Kent—Summer 1940



Tactics

Keith Park

1915 Suvla Bay veteran (see Despatches issue 2) and in 1940 the CO of RAF 11 Group Fighter Command (covering London & the South East)
15 Jun 1892 – 6 Feb 1975

<http://www.sirkeithpark.com/biography.aspx>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Park

New London memorial: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-11321798>

Albert Kesselring

CO of Luftwaffe Luftflotte 2
(attacking London & the South East
from occupied NW Europe)
Nov 20 1885–Jul 16 1960

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/bob1940/luftflottell.html>

<http://snipurl.com/1d58rl>



Design



Reginald Mitchell — Spitfire designer

20 May 1895 – 11 Jun 1937

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R._J._Mitchell

Sydney Camm — Hurricane designer

5 Aug 1893 – 12 Mar 1966

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney_Camm

Henry Royce — initiator of the Merlin engine development

27 Mar 1863 – 22 Apr 1933

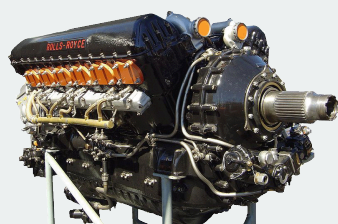
<http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Aerospace/Rolls-Royce/>

Wilhelm 'Willy' Emil Messerschmitt

— Messerschmitt Bf 109 designer

Jun 26, 1898 – Sep 15, 1978

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy_Messerschmitt



Power

Spitfire vs Me 109

<http://www.spitfireperformance.com/spit1vrs109e.html>

100 octane fuel

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aircraft_of_the_Battle_of_Britain#100_octane_aviation_fuel



Rolls Royce Merlin III

1,310 hp (977 kW) at 3,000 rpm at 9,000 ft (2,700 m) with 100 octane fuel and +12 psi boost http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolls-Royce_Merlin

Daimler DB 601a

Up to 1,020 PS (750 kW) at 2,400 rpm and 4,500 m altitude, B4 fuel

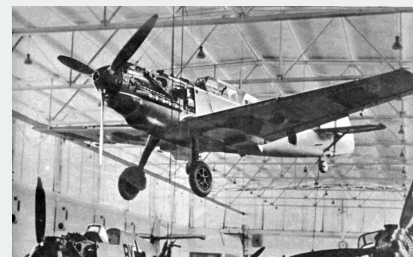
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daimler-Benz_DB_601



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supermarine_Spitfire#Production

Production

<http://war.by-airforce.com/articles/Bf-109.html>



Recommended general references: http://www.amazon.co.uk/Most-Dangerous-Enemy-History-Britain/dp/1845134818/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_2
http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1849162247/ref=pd_luc_sbs_03_01

Franz von Werra



Born on 13 July 1914 in Leuck, Switzerland, Franz von Werra was the seventh and last child of a famous, but poor, family. At the beginning of the century, the aristocratic family name did not protect Baron Leo von Werra, Franz's father, from financial ruin. Indeed, the family's destitution was so severe that not all mouths could be fed and the Baron was forced to entrust three of his children to distant German relatives. The two youngest children, Emma-Charlotte and Franz-Xaver were given to the childless von Haber family who, without their knowledge, bestowed their family name upon

them and, on 26 August 1917, the children became German nationals. Franz-Xaver received a superior education, attending good schools in Sigmaringen and Cologne. By in the early 1930s, inflation had gradually eroded the family wealth. Indeed, in 1932, Franz-Xaver noted in his diary that an egg cost nine million Marks, and the von Habers had to adjust to a new way of life. In 1936, during the reconstruction of the German air force Franz volunteered, reverting to his family name, and became a fighter pilot. Still destitute, Franz had to borrow money from his sister in order to purchase his first officer-candidate's uniform. Injured in a flying accident early in 1939, he recovered just in time to fly during the invasion of Poland. Von Werra was appointed Adjutant on the staff of II./JG 3, on its formation at Zerbst on 1 February 1940. He

participated in the French campaign, initially based at Phillippeville in France, and claimed his first victory on 20 May 1940, when he shot down a RAF Hurricane near Arras. By the conclusion of the French campaign von Werra had four victories to his credit. On 28 August 1940, von Werra gained a measure of notoriety when he returned from a mission over England claiming nine RAF Hurricane fighters shot down over Kent. Although there were no witnesses his success was recognised and much propaganda made of his

feat. It would appear that four victories were confirmed as von Werra's fifth through eighth aerial victories and the remainder credited as ground victories.

His version:

"I was flying as the Kommandeur's wingman as part of the Stabsschwarm when we attacked a formation of about 20 Hawker Hurricanes. Their formation and then ours dispersed and we fought individually I was involved in a dogfight with a Spitfire belonging to a second unit which attacked us just after the start of the combat. The Englishman hit my aircraft, destroying my radio. We lost a great deal of altitude while manoeuvring into a firing position and had descended to 2000 meters before I finally managed to take aim. My adversary was hit and immediately dived. I plunged behind him while firing more bursts, but he did not pull out and crashed three kilometers west of Rochester.

Flying again in the direction of the mouth of the Thames at very low altitude, I noticed six single-engined aircraft on my left. They had their landing gear down and were in a curve, preparing to land. I looked hard and saw ahead and below them a runway half hidden by a cloud of dust. Another formation was landing. At this time, I was only 300-500 meters behind the first group I had seen, so I also put my landing gear down and, with my engine throttled back, positioned myself behind the last aircraft which I identified as a Hurricane. As I circled over the runway like the seventh machine in the landing pattern, I could leisurely observe the airfield's dispersal area with aircraft parked under small trees to the west of the runway I did not see any anti-aircraft defences. My formation began to land. As the first three machines lined up towards the runway and lost altitude, I retracted my wheels, opened up my engine and fired a burst at the aircraft immediately ahead of me. Instantaneously, it fell on fire. Manoeuvring, I placed myself behind the second Englishman and easily shot him down in flames.

I continued to fly in the direction of the runway and then made a climbing turn to gain altitude, finally firing into the dispersal where I could just see the rudder tips of some Hurricanes protruding above the tops of their blast pens. I fired at the first aircraft, but my height did not enable me to aim at the rest. A little further away I saw a bowser with two Hurricanes parked on its right and another on its left. I fired at the bowser which exploded, setting fire to all three aircraft. Keeping at low altitude I made a half-turn away from the installations before carrying out a further attack. This time I tried to destroy the aircraft parked in the blast pens but was unable to observe any hits. The anti-aircraft defences were practically non-existent, with



Jagdgeschwader 3 "Udet"

The Luftwaffe formed II. Gruppe/Jagdgeschwader 3 in Zerbst, Germany, on February 1, 1940. Originally comprised of three staffeln, or squadrons, the group first entered combat on May 15, 1940, during the Belgian occupation. As the German blitzkrieg moved further west into France, the II./JG 3 followed, arriving in Brombos in the northwestern part of the country on June 23. Here the group began fighting the Battle of Britain while flying the Messerschmitt Bf 109E.3 II./JG 3 continued to run sorties throughout the battle and transferred bases to Wierre-au-Bois in August and Arques in September, both near the English Channel.

Franz von Werra

only a few machine-guns opening fire, but I dived towards them and forced the troops to run for shelter. I made two more attacks from different directions and set another aircraft on fire in its pen. That made five Hurricanes on fire on the airfield. A tent (undoubtedly reserved for aircraft maintenance) was also burning. Constant bursts now came up towards me from guns on the edges of the aerodrome, and I carried out my last attack against some of them. I then turned 90° towards the north, joined the mouth of the Thames and re-crossed the English Channel.
(Signed) v. Werra, (Countersigned) Oblt. Sannemann)

Early on Thursday, 5 September 1940, the aircraft of II./JG3 took off from Wierre-au-Bois to fly a fighter-escort mission for bombers attacking Croydon. Once the bombers had released their bombs and were heading back to their French bases, the aircraft of II./JG3 carried out some strafing of ground targets.

Unfortunately, however, the pilots encountered a formation of Spitfires. In the subsequent aerial combat, von Werra's Bf 109 E-4 received hits from friendly fire. He attempted to fly home alone but was pursued by a Spitfire and forced down at Love's Farm, Winchet Hill, near Marden.

The RAF official records states: "*Force landed at Love's Farm, Marden, Kent on 5/9. Markings - + < black outlined in white. Crest: Shield U-shaped, outlined in red, divided into 8 segments coloured black and white. Wing tips and rudder painted white. Camouflage all blue. Fuselage all blue. Spinner divided into alternate black and white sectors. Fitted with DB601A engines made by Mercedes Benz werk nr.10598.*"

Aircraft force landed following fighter action. Condition reported to be very good. Standard armament 2 20mm. cannon and 2 MG17s. No head piece armament for pilot who was taken prisoner. Starboard wing shows many .303 strikes."

There are varying reports of what caused the Messerschmitt to be downed: Werra's opponent in this crucial dogfight was either one 1st Lieutenant Webster of No. 41 Squadron or Basil Gerald 'Stapme' Stapleton of No. 603 Squadron; some reports also credit ground fire from a searchlight installation at Mannington's farm on the Goudhurst Road.

Franz was soon placed under arrest and taken to Headquarters, Kent County Constabulary, in Maidstone, where he was locked in a cell. In the evening, he was handed over to the Army, who escorted him to Maidstone Barracks, where he spent the night. The following morning, guarded by an officer and two soldiers, von Werra was taken by lorry to the PoW interrogation centre at 8 Kensington Palace Gardens, London. For the next two weeks von Werra was interrogated. As he was the first Luftwaffe ace to be captured by the British, he was questioned with great care, but all attempts to obtain significant information were in vain, the interrogation report stating, "Refused to give any details whatsoever. Morale: very high."

On 29 September, von Werra wrote to his sister and in this, his second letter written in captivity, he said, obviously already thinking of escape, "I think I will be close to you even sooner than this stupid letter. Here, all is well, more or less. No reason to worry. See you very soon."

At the beginning of October, von Werra was transferred to the officers' internment camp at Grizedale Hall in the Lake District. After observing the camp routine, he evolved an



THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 5th 1940: Early operations

1000hrs: German bombers are detected approaching at two points, one wave crosses the coast between Dover and Folkestone while the other comes in from the Thames Estuary, both formations are from Kesselrings Luftflotte 2. It is estimated that the whole attack is represented by no less than twenty separate small formations. 41 Sqn (Hornchurch), which had spent a considerable amount of time at Catterick, had now been moved down to Hornchurch and they were immediately sent to the satellite station at Manston and were despatched to intercept the enemy over the Thames Estuary. 111 Sqn (Croydon) had an early "scramble" and were directed to intercept at Dover. 253 Squadron Kenley (Hurricanes) were also despatched as was 501 Sqn (Gravesend) and 603 Sqn (Hornchurch).

<http://www.battleofbritain1940.net/0035.html>

Franz von Werra



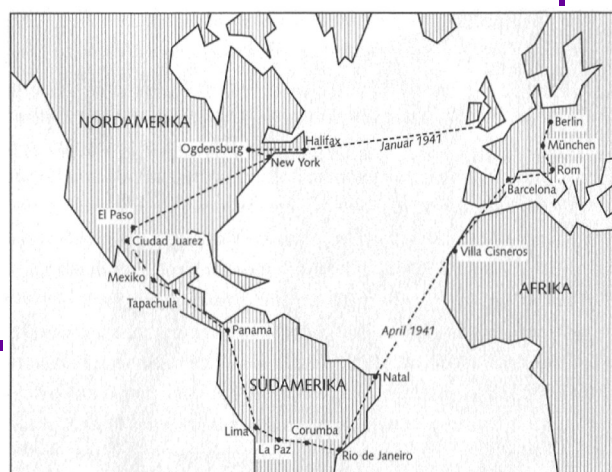
escape plan which he submitted to the camp's Senior German Officer, Major Willibald Fanelsa, formerly of KG1, and Hptm. Helmut Pohle, formerly of KG30 and head of the camp's escape committee. Von Werra's plan was approved and he received a promise that he would receive the necessary assistance. The stage of the plan required Major Fanelsa to request the daily exercise walk, usually carried out at 10.30 hrs, to be delayed until 14.00 hrs, ostensibly because it interfered with the camp's educational courses. The real reason for the request, however,

was that it shortened the time a prisoner escaping during the walk would have to wait until nightfall. The camp commander agreed the request and on 7 October, a group of 24 prisoners under the command of Hptm. Pohle, escorted by a British officer, three warrant officers and seven soldiers, left the camp at the later time. During a rest break along the route von Werra managed to slip over a wall into an adjacent field to begin his escape. Despite many searches of the area during the following days, von Werra remained at large, but at 23.00 hrs on 10 October, two members of the Home Guard were searching a barn in which von Werra was hiding and he was recaptured. By the time von Werra was escorted to the nearest road, however, he had already untied the knot of the cord used to bind his hands and disappeared into the night. Recaptured again during a large, joint search by police and army on 12 October, he was sentenced to 21 days close confinement. Released on day 19, he was transferred to a PoW camp at Swanwick, approximately 10 miles north of Derby. Far from being disappointed by his failure, von Werra encouraged his new fellow-prisoners to escape with him and on 17 November work began on a tunnel. After one month, the three meter deep tunnel was 15 meters long. Then, at 20.25 hrs on 20 December, von Werra and four comrades took advantage of an air raid warning and disappeared into the tunnel. Although his companions were soon recaptured, von Werra had benefited from his earlier escape attempts and had made careful preparations which, he hoped, would enable him to fly back across the Channel. Wearing an imitation British flying jacket and appropriate badges, all made within the camp, his story was that he was Captain Van Lott, a Dutch pilot - hence his imperfect English - who had crashed after a special mission. Persuading everyone

he encountered that it was imperative he return to his base immediately, he succeeded in gaining entry to Hucknall aerodrome. He was already seated in a Hurricane when Squadron Leader Boniface, an RAF officer more suspicious than his colleagues, forced him from the cockpit at gunpoint. Recaptured once again but undaunted, he assured Squadron Leader Boniface that his next attempt would be the one that would see him home.

After spending another 14 days in solitary confinement, von Werra was sent to Canada and, as one of 1,100 German PoWs (250 officers and 850 other ranks), von Werra was placed aboard the *Dutchess of York* which set sail for Halifax on 2 January 1941. Eleven days later, the prisoners were put aboard a west-bound train and on the 24th, in accordance with von Werra's instructions, his companions diverted the attention of the guards while he escaped by jumping from one of the train's windows. He was then close to Smith Falls, Ontario, about 30 miles from the border with the still neutral United States, and his intention was to cross into the USA where he would be free. Eventually, von Werra reached the US-Canadian border at Prescott. Here, the St. Lawrence River which separates the two countries was iced over and with frozen ears and feet, von Werra walked out onto the ice. After struggling to the middle of the river, he found the ice too thin to bear his weight and, reasoning that there must be a channel of water ahead which was not yet frozen, he returned to the shore. At a deserted holiday camp, von Werra found an old boat and, gathering all his strength, he succeeded in pulling it across the ice to the channel. Using a plate as an oar, he manoeuvred the boat to the American bank and freedom.

In New York, because von Werra had entered the US illegally, the German embassy agreed to pay a bond of \$1000. Although he was in fact the third German prisoner to escape from Canada and take refuge in the United States, the American press seized upon the event as if it was unique and was eager to interview "The Red Baron". In Germany,



Franz von Werra

too, the news of his adventures was greeted with great enthusiasm and on 14 December, von Werra was awarded the Ritterkreuzin recognition of his achievement.

For the next six weeks, von Werra enjoyed, as he wrote to his sister, "a princely life". He even sent a postcard to Squadron Leader Boniface, with whom he had bet a magnum of champagne against ten cigarettes that his third escape attempt would succeed. To the American authorities, however, von Werra was an unwanted and unwelcome visitor and they planned to extradite him back to Canada. The German embassy was aware of the danger and made arrangements for von Werra to escape to Mexico City, Peru and finally Brazil. From Brazil, von Werra sailed from Rio de Janeiro for Spain, arriving in Barcelona on 16 April. The following day, after a short stop in Rome, he arrived in Berlin where he was personally received by Hitler and Goring as the first - and last - German soldier to escape from British captivity after July 1940.

Promoted by Goring to Hauptmann and awarded the Knight's Cross, von Werra then spent a few days at the Luftwaffe HQ where he was extensively debriefed in order to extract the maximum benefit from his experiences, particularly concerning the interrogation techniques employed by the British. Although offered a position working in Berlin, von Werra was anxious to return to flying duties and was soon pressing for a transfer so that he could rejoin a front-line fighter unit. In June 1941 he was re-deployed as commander of 1st Group/Jagd-Geschwader 53 in Russia, flying in combat daily and raising his aerial victories to 21.

In mid-August came a return to Germany to upgrade to the new Me 109F-4. He took the chance to marry his fiancée, Elfi, and the event was celebrated with much Nazi pomp. On 20 September, I./JG53 was transferred to the Netherlands to protect the Reich from increasing RAF Bomber Command activity.

During a training flight above the North Sea off Katwijk near Visslingen on October 25, 1941 his Bf-109 had technical problems as he approached the Dutch coast at very low altitude. His aircraft suddenly went into a dive towards the sea and disappeared within a few seconds. His comrades circled the crash site, a rescue boat arrived, but apart from some floating wreckage, there was nothing to discover. His body was never recovered.

Sources:

<http://www.schumacher-luzern.ch/images/>

[Franz von Werra, Ein deutscher Jagdflieger mit Schweizer Herkunft.pdf](http://www.asisbiz.com/i12/Bf-109E/Bf-109E-JG3.2-(-Werra.html)

[http://www.asisbiz.com/i12/Bf-109E/Bf-109E-JG3.2-\(-Werra.html](http://www.asisbiz.com/i12/Bf-109E/Bf-109E-JG3.2-(-Werra.html)

<http://www.ldbethanians.co.uk/interesting.htm>

Researched and edited by Rob Spain

From the Old Bethanians' Society magazine 1989-90 edition: (Bethany School alumni magazine)

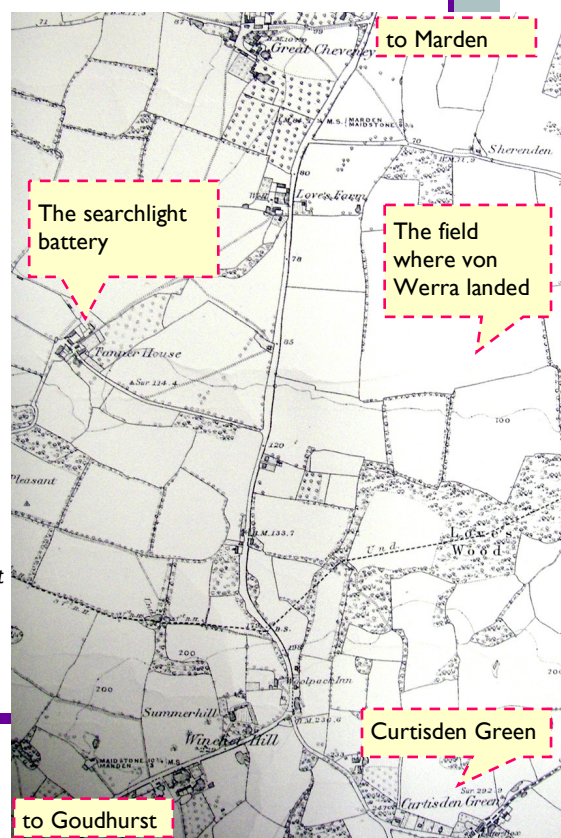
Shortly after ten o'clock, Donald Fairman was standing near the back door of his cottage in Curtisden Green, in the heart of the orchard and hop country, smoking a cigarette and contemplating his chrysanthemums. He was far from satisfied with their progress and was giving the matter serious thought. The real trouble was that one could no longer get the proper plant foods, nor spend much time in the garden, owing to the war. "Blast the Germans!"

This thought recalled to him the noise of distant air battles, a noise to which he had grown accustomed in the past few weeks. He looked up. Behind the trees to the north, heavy anti-aircraft batteries along the Thames were putting up a terrific barrage. With all the noise in the sky it was frustrating not to be able to make out what was happening. Then his eye caught the silver flash of sunlight on weaving fighters. As he watched, his eyes focused unexpectedly on the outline of a bomber, the haze and the blue background made it appear transparent. Then he saw another bomber close to the first, and then another. Three ... six nine ... twelve....

Suddenly, above the pulsating drone of the engines came the rising howl of diving fighters, followed by bursts of cannon and machine-gun fire. Confused dogfights developed all over Donald Fairman's personal patch of sky. As the formation passed overhead he saw two fast machines spiralling down, the leading one clearly in trouble. Its engine spluttered and banged, now and again leaving a puff of black smoke behind. When the following aircraft fired a short burst, the other waggled its wings violently. They came lower and lower and then passed out of view behind the trees. A plane suddenly skimmed over the trees round the garden, the engine making a series of bangs. In the split second it was overhead, Donald Fairman clearly saw a black and white cross on the fuselage and a swastika on the fin.

As it disappeared he heard a long burst of machine gun fire, which he identified as coming from a searchlight battery just down the road on Mannington's Farm. A moment later there was a loud bump, followed by a tearing sound, and Donald Fairman knew then that the plane had crashed only a few hundred yards away,

probably on one of the big fields on the east side of Winchet Hill. He hurried into the house and changed into his Home Guard uniform. His car was parked outside the cottage, but petrol was rationed and scarce. He had a nice sense of values. He slung his rifle over his shoulder and set off on a bicycle. However, by the time he arrived at the scene of the crash, the pilot, Oberleutnant Franz von Werra, who was uninjured, had already been taken prisoner by members of the searchlight battery.





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.

Some articles from The Parish Pump, newsletter of the Marden Society

From the Marden Society Parish Pump March 1994.

The Kentish Express reported in April 1929 that 'a terrible calamity had befallen a family in Marden', in a house more or less where the village pump now stands.

The gunshots signalling this tragedy were not heard, but the police were alerted by a young Charles Hooker (Irvin's dad) who was puzzled about the family's non-appearance. The police entered the shop in Albion Road, known as The Stores, and discovered Rosina (49), Nellie (18) and Samuel (17) all dead on a bed, having it appeared been killed while sleeping.

In another bedroom the body of Samuel (53) was found, with a breech-loading pistol clenched between his knees, who had first killed his family then himself.

Samuel had been postmaster of Heathfield Towers for 18 years until he had a nervous breakdown - he went to Crowborough to work for a while then bought a little business in Albion Road, Marden. However during the eighteen months of his time in Marden the business declined and Nellie became ill. The sceptre of consumption began to consume him and he finally ended all his families ills in one tragic gesture.

THEFT OF WINDFALLS

Picking up windfalls in the orchards seems a harmless country practice, but in September 1908 a Harry Crow was sentenced to one month's hard labour for just such an offence in Marden. He went to Mr R H Stokes' orchards and was later seen with 2.5 bushels of windfalls in the village trying to sell them on. His punishment does seem severe to our views today.

MONEY BACK

In 1908 Henry Crowhurst bought a cow in calf, but he did not buy the calf, just paid £16 for the cow. However she proved to give very poor milk and he demanded his money back. The cow was finally sold on for £7 in Staplehurst and court action resulted in him being granted the £9 outstanding from the original sale.

A TWENTY STONE CALF

The year is 1840 - Mr R Southon of Tilden Farm allowed his bull to be used for reproduction. After 45 weeks gestation (some 5 weeks longer than usual) a cow belonging to Mr William Marsh produced a calf weighing 20 stone.

Mr Cleaver, the cow leacher, said he had never witnessed anything quite like it before.

Nothing more is known about this large animal, or whether he grew even larger, but I bet he made his mother's eyes water when she gave birth.

Odd Spot

TREACLE MINING IN KENT

Article in the Parish Pump from September 1994

The Marden Society had a talk in July 1994 on the subject of Kentish mining, but the author of the article was unhappy about the omission of the unique Kentish treacle mines.

The author preferred to remain anonymous but does write that the two best known mines were at Frittenden and Tovil. The treacle was used as fodder for the pigs, kept in the 'dens' or 'denes' since Jutish and Anglo-Saxon times as well as a sweetener for mead or drinking water. The treacle was a thick, black oozy substance like nearly set tar.

There was a mill in Goudhurst Road for making the props to maintain safety in the mines. Frank Wood apparently said that the posts made in these saw mills never needed to be treated as the treacle

in the mines was a natural protection in itself. Kentish treacle was sent all over the world for 300 years until imported sugar products led to a decline, and although the treacle is still under our feet, the mines have been sealed.

This article led to a vigorous correspondence for several editions, with contributors arguing about the site of the mines or about their history.

16 years later perhaps the Society should revive the debate on these once prosperous mines.

More detail online about treacle mining :

<http://www.treaclemineer.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treacle_mining

[http://www.facebook.com/group.php?](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&gid=18732279075)

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Exhibitions at the Heritage Centre

Our current exhibition is a topical one on The Battle of Britain, showing from September to November. It was opened by Sir Nicholas Fenn (former RAF) and also attended by Norman Pert, an eye-witness. The diary of a young girl features the capture of Von Werra (the one that got away), who came down at Winchet Hill.

A Life – the autobiography of some of his life – by Edward Day, will also be launched.

A mobile exhibition on Pattenden Lane by Jason Croucher is almost complete.

To follow – Historic Buildings, then Clubs and Societies.

Meet the MHG: A snapshot of the Advisor —CATHERINE ALDERSON.



CATHERINE ALDERSON moved to Marden in 1998.

She undertook teacher training as a mature student, with history as her specialist subject. After teaching in Buckinghamshire, she moved to near Manchester with her husband, where she became an educational guide at Quarry Bank Mill, a textile museum. As it was a developing museum her roles increased as she took responsibility for manufacturing, retail and public relations. In 1989 she moved to York and was in charge of retail and visitor services' staff at The National Railway Museum.

Currently she is a volunteer at Sissinghurst Castle Garden and also contributes her working life skills to the Marden Heritage Centre.

MARDEN HISTORY GROUP

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This issue's reduced price offer for members:

THE FALLEN OF MARDEN 1939—1945

This booklet provides some background to the lives of the men and women from Marden who were killed during the Second World War – the eleven servicemen who were victims of a V1 flying bomb at the Pattenden Lane army camp in 1944, the 25 servicemen from Marden itself who lost their lives, and the six people (civilians and serviceman) who were killed in the bombing of Maidstone Road in 1941 and Maidstone West Station in 1944. A total of 42 deceased are commemorated. The companion volume "The Fallen of Marden 1914-1919" is available at £13.00



"The Fallen of Marden 1939-1945" by Chris and Mari Gosling - Sixth Edition. 60 pages A4 with colour and B/W illustrations. Normal price £10.50, **offer price £8.50**. Pick yours up from the Heritage Centre (bring any membership email printout) or order from the Selby Oast address (please add £1.00 P and P). Sterling cheques made payable to "Marden History Group" please.

Event: Marden History Group Hog Roast : Sunday 12th September 2010

What a brilliant day the Hog Roast 2010 turned out to be. After dodgy weather the sun shone warmly, the roasting hog smelt delicious and the music and singing was fantastic. Jasmine dressed in WRAF costume and sang appropriate songs. Recessions kept the feet tapping. Even Sir Nicholas rendered a few RAF songs – not to the words that some former airmen may remember! At 2.00 we all decamped to the paddock of Selby Oast and, after much previous nail biting, our air raid siren was linked to the generator, which had arrived at the last minute, and made its well remembered



sound. Then another sound familiar to the older generation entered our consciousness. AND, low over the trees, a Spitfire came into view. It made several circuits to much cheering and waving from below. We could even see the pilot. Finally, with a waggle of its wings, it flew home. Then the all clear sounded and we came down to earth. Was this "our finest hour?" Certainly for a relieved chairman David McFarland it was. Thanks go to so many people who helped in so many different ways.

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.

