

THE TWITCH

Newsletter of The Malling Society

Autumn 2023

Dear Members,

Welcome to the Autumnal Newsletter, we have 2 wonderful stories for you -

1. Leybourne Parish Council Secures Leybourne Woods for Generations to Come!

We are thrilled to announce that Leybourne Parish Council has successfully exchanged contracts for the acquisition of Leybourne Woods; a significant achievement that will



benefit our community for generations to come.

We are proud to share that the project received crucial funding from the UK Government through a generous grant from the Community Ownership Fund, administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities. This grant, totalling £120,000, was pivotal in achieving the £150,000 purchase price.

The success of this project underscores the power of collective action.

It demonstrates what can be achieved when the community comes together with borough councillors, parish council, residents, and government financial support.

In securing these woods we are reminded of the immense value of our natural heritage and the significance of preserving it for the well-being of current and future generations.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this dream a reality. We are excited to embark on this new journey and safeguard Leybourne Woods for the enjoyment of all.

We will update the community as we work towards enhancing and protecting this beautiful natural space.

2. **Leybourne Castle Lake** is now in the ownership of Leybourne Parish Council and is undergoing a series of improvements, thanks to the dedicated efforts of local parishes.

One of the recent additions to the area is a new path and fence along the northern edge of the lake. This not only enhances safety but also provides a convenient and pleasant route for those looking to explore the area's natural beauty.



We are in the final stages of securing a fishing lease with SWS Fisheries. This lease is expected to improve the management of the lake and underscores the commitment to preserving the ecological balance of the lake and maintaining it as a hub for recreational activities.

In addition to these developments, the community has rallied together to further enhance the lake's surroundings. A dedicated volunteer litter picker has already been active in keeping the area clean, and plans are underway to establish a volunteer's group. If you're interested in contributing to the conservation and maintenance efforts at Leybourne Castle Lake, please contact clerk@leybournepc.org.uk.

Looking ahead to the coming year, there are exciting plans to create a walkway near the lake along Oxley Shaw Lane. This will provide an even more convenient route for nature enthusiasts and those who simply wish to unwind by the water.

After decades of neglect, Castle Lake is set to become an even more inviting and accessible location for all to enjoy.

3. Seat



The Malling Society refurbished the seat in the wall of Douces Manor, St Leonards Street in time for the Coronation of King Charles III, the seat was for years popular with walkers, and for people to just sit and view the park and lake. I'm pleased to report that it is once again being used and hopefully will be for generations to come.

4. The last talk for this year will be...

The Malling Society Presents.....

On Tuesday, November 14th 19.00 (7 pm)



'History of the RAF West Malling' a talk by historian Peter Hall

A fully illustrated talk on this famous Royal Air Force Station in the Kent countryside.

To be held in the Main Hall of the West Malling C.E. Primary School, Old Cricket Ground, off Norman Road, West Malling ME19 6RL

**TALKS ARE AVAILABLE TO BOTH MEMBERS at £3.00
AND NON-MEMBERS AT £3.50 PER PERSON
PAYABLE ON ENTRY**

We had booked Peter back in 2019 but due to the Pandemic and life getting in the way, he wasn't able to make it. We look forward to his long awaited visit!

The talks we have had this year were:

	<p>March - Royal British Legion Industries a talk by Steve Hammond Lisa Cooksley-White</p> <p>Royal British Legion Industries is based in Aylesford, supporting the Armed Forces, people with disabilities, and the unemployed.</p>	<p>Our village provides all levels of care, ranging from emergency accommodation to dementia care.</p> <p>Royal British Legion Industries is Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Co. and is a national market leader in the production of road and rail signs.</p>
	<p>April - Women of the Air Transport Auxiliary by Geoff Collins.</p> <p>Geoff has a lifelong interest in aviation and has studied many aspects of aviation history. Particularly interested in the women who became members of the Air Transport Auxiliary, they were the heroes of their time.</p>	 <p>May - Update on the Medway Queen – Heroine of Dunkirk Talk by Mark Bathurst</p> <p>The Medway Queen, this humble paddle steamer went on to rescue over 7,000 British troops from Normandy in 1940. Several of her crew being decorated for bravery and the ship also became known as the 'Heroine of Dunkirk'</p>
<p>June outing - A Group visit and guided tour of the Medway Queen from Gillingham Pier. Report above.</p>	 <p>July - Folklore and Flowers by Sophie Leathart</p> <p>A light-hearted look at some of the myths and legends surrounding our flowers and trees Sophie has gained RHS qualifications for horticulture at Hadlow.</p>	
	<p>September – English Country Cheeses with tastings with Derek March</p> <p>The list of cheeses from the United Kingdom, and there are over 700 named British cheeses produced in the UK, which has become an important export - states The British Cheese Board (now part of Dairy UK)</p> <p>We tried some they were delicious!!</p>	 <p>October – ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY LIVES with Lesley Polley</p> <p>An informative talk on writing your Memory book</p> <p>Preserving memories to be forever treasured, and getting your memories into print. If you are considering recording your own life story – whether it's for children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, the cat, our own peace of mind or for the entertainment of the greater world at large – We can help.</p>

November see poster above

If you have any ideas for speakers for next year please let us know at the usual address themallingsociety@gmail.com

5. The Medway Queen outing



On June 13, a group of Malling Society members visited the paddle steamer, The Medway Queen, the Heroine of Dunkirk, for a guided tour at Gillingham Pier, where she is berthed.

We started with an introductory talk in the visitor centre, where the ship's story was displayed with photographs and artefacts and was told about her history. We then moved into the workshop where much of the preservation repairs are done, which was fascinating.

Then we went on board the ship itself, where we were able to see how much restoration has been done and learnt about her extraordinary history, including her role in World War 2 as a minesweeper and the amazing rescue of over 7000 troops from Normandy, although she was not designed for either role.

She subsequently had a very varied life as a pleasure craft, appeared in several movies and became a clubhouse, restaurant and nightclub at the Island Marina on the Isle of Wight. After many hard times, she came to her berth at Gillingham Pier, where she is being lovingly restored by the Medway Queen Preservation Society. The visit was most interesting and was rounded off with a cream tea.

6. The Twitch Heritage Centre, Douces Manor



The Twitch Inn will be open as usual on Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023 from 12:00 – 16:00 with a **New Photographic Exhibition – “History of West Malling from its earliest buildings”** along with other static displays, at **Douce’s Manor, St. Leonard’s Street, West Malling ME19 6UB**. Please note that Douce’s Manor is a private residence; the house and grounds are **NOT** open to the public. Parking is on St. Leonard’s Street or in the town.

7. Subs due from 25th October 2023

If you have setup a standing order for payment of your subscriptions (£7.00 p.a.) this will continue as normal. Those of you that normally pay by cheque at the AGM, can send your cheques made payable to **The Malling Society**, to Mrs E. Vago, 116 St Leonards St, West Malling, ME19 6PD.

Alternatively, why not set up a standing order with your bank, details can be found on our website, this is a very safe and simple system. www.themallingsociety.org.uk/

The Malling Society, **Account No 64676218** at National Westminster Bank, Larkfield Branch (**sort code 55-81-07**) Ref: **Membership Subs.**

8. Orders for our CDs or Publications

Will continue to be available via the website.

<https://www.themallingsociety.org.uk/malling-society-publications/>

<https://www.themallingsociety.org.uk/malling-society-cds/>

We will keep you informed of the various events via the website at

<http://www.themallingsociety.org.uk/events/>

And our Facebook Group Page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/574446186223021>

Any correspondence can still be sent to themallingsociety@gmail.com where Kris will pick it up and pass it to the respective person to deal.

Hope to see you soon!! Stay Safe!! And have a wonderful Christmas

Kind Regards

David Thornewell
Chair



The Malling Society