

# Maidstone Distillery

10 December 2021

Sixteen members of the HTW group braved a cold and windy December afternoon to visit Maidstone Distillery. We were warmly welcomed by our hosts Amanda and Naomi who clearly understood us well as we kicked off with a double Gordon Bishops gin and tonic. While we were enjoying this Amanda gave us a short history of the market building, corn exchange and theatre.



Moving towards the back of the distillery and having been supplied with another drink - a gin cocktail- Naomi continued with the history of gin and why it became so popular in the time of William and Mary. At the peak of production England distilled over 10 million gallons of gin annually.

George Bishop started distilling in 1785 and within a very short time became so famous that it appeared in the James Gillray cartoon of 1803 *The Hand Writing Upon The Wall* ( the bottle in the bottom left hand corner).



After closing in 1818 it resurrected out by Thomas Grant -1850- continuing until the last bottle of Morello Cherry Brandy in 1982. The distillery was reopened in 2020 by Samantha and Darren.

Naomi showed us the magnificent still telling us how the gin is made. We learnt that everything here is done by hand even the bottling and labelling - each bottle is unique with its own batch and bottle number.



Finally it was back to the bar to have a guided tasting of the George Bishop London Dry Gin and the Ranscombe Wild Small Batch Gin which is made with botanicals gathered from Ranscombe Farm.



Thank you Suzi Taylor for organising such an enjoyable visit.