

*The
Marcham
Society*

**MARCH 2025
Volume 8, Issue 3**

Newsletter

Our next talk in the Marcham Centre



Christ's Hospital of Abingdon

Almshouses - Education - Relief in Need - Albert Park



“A History of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon”
a talk by Jackie Smith

*Monday 24th March 2025 at 7.15 for 7.45pm in the Main Hall,
Marcham Centre , Barrow Close, OX13 6TY*

This talk is designed to show the influential role played by Christ's Hospital throughout Abingdon's history. Christ's Hospital was incorporated before the town became a Borough.

Jackie Smith has been a member of Abingdon Area Archaeology and History Society since 1969 and has been co-author of two books and a research paper on aspects of Abingdon's history, for example its pubs and Christ's Hospital.



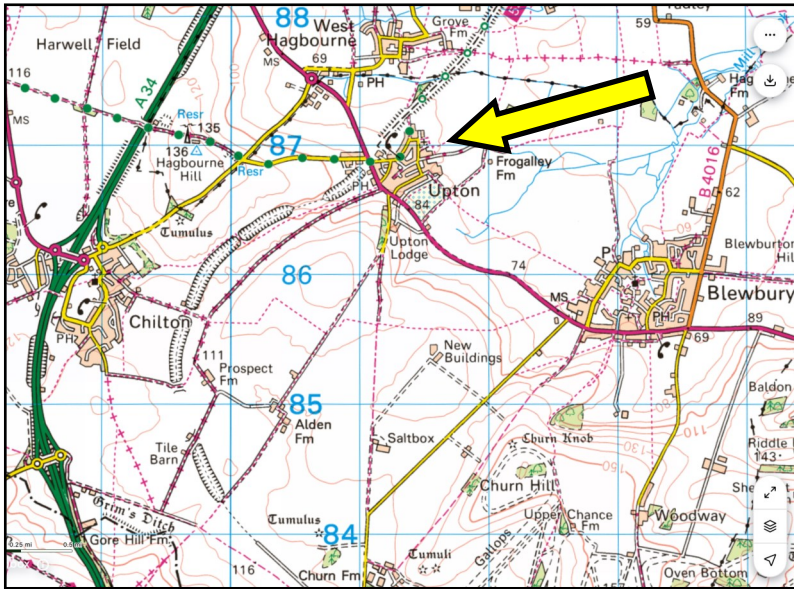
The Bridge, Abingdon in 1791 by Eliza Sykes

She was also a regular contributor to the *"Heralding the Past"* column in the local paper. She is Honorary Archivist to Abingdon Town Council and Archivist to Christ's Hospital. She is not a trained archivist but she worked in the local history collections in Oxford before she retired and receives help and advice from both the senior Archivist and Conservationist at the Royal Berkshire Archives in Reading.

Photos from our last midweek walk Page 2



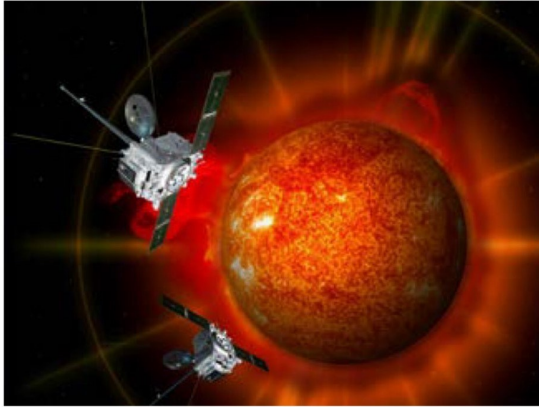
The George at Upton



Views of Chilton Church and the bridge over the disused railway line



Thursday 13th February:
After the usual monthly round-up of news and sightings, we had a talk from Richard Harrison on *“Solar Missions and the role of RAL”*



Artist's depiction of NASA's twin Solar TERrestrial RELations Observatory (STEREO) spacecraft. NASA / Jay Friedlander



Feb 20-28

The Planetary Parade

The seven planets in our solar system have been visible in the night sky. Known as a planetary parade this phenomenon is rare and it won't happen again until 2040!

Below are photos of three of the planets: Mars, Jupiter and Venus all taken from Marcham by Jim Asher.



For more information, please email: astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk

"Coleshill: Nerve Centre of British Resistance"

A talk given by Gillian Cane

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Coleshill is now owned and managed by the National Trust. Today it is a very beautiful and peaceful spot in the Oxfordshire countryside. But it is here that you can still see the Guardroom where, during WW2, recruits were greeted for their training to become saboteurs who would help to slow down an invasion of the country by the Germans.

Coleshill House was the headquarters of this top-secret operation which trained and coordinated as many as ten thousand men dispersed around the country who would secretly go into action at a moment's notice. It was in effect a suicide mission. Those connected with this secret movement, mostly went to their graves never having told a soul of their courage and willingness to do something quite extraordinary.



The British Resistance Archive website (*see the link below*) is maintained by the Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team (CART) to share research about the Auxiliary Units of the Second World War, sometimes known as Churchill's Secret Army, a sabotage organisation set up in 1940 in case of a Nazi invasion.

The website covers Operational Patrols and all known personnel, their Headquarters at Coleshill House, the Special Duties Branch which was the secret civilian spy communications network, the Intelligence Officers of the Scout Sections, as well as links to the Special Air Services (SAS) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) who carried out missions to Occupied Europe with men recruited directly from the Auxiliary Units.

The Link to the C.A.R.T. website : <https://www.staybehinds.com/>



A Visit to St Mary's Church Iffley on Monday 7th April 2025 at 10am

St Mary the Virgin church in Iffley is recognised as one of the most spectacular Romanesque parish churches in England. It was built around 1160-70 in a late Norman style with, not only intricate carvings on the west door, but also a riot of 12th century carvings inside too. At the other end of the timescale, in modern times, there is a magnificent stained glass window to see, designed by John Piper and built after his death in 1995.

We are delighted to have Elizabeth Wells, a member of the Iffley History Society to guide us on our visit to St Mary's Church and she will also take us on a tour around the village and to the lock.

If you would like to come please email : Shirley.marsoc@gmail.com

Marcham Archaeology - the OUDCE Project

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PITS IN MARCHAM

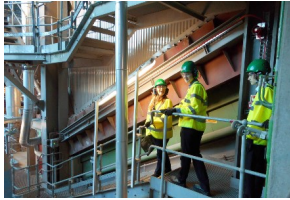
Oxford University Department of Continuing Education (OUDCE)

Following the recent Marcham Society talk by Jane Harrison on the *Excavations in the village of Besselsleigh*, we have been asked if a similar exploration would be possible in Marcham as it would complement Jane's research already done in Besselsleigh and Appleton.

This will involve a one metre square test pits dug in selected gardens carried out by mature archaeology students as part of the OUDCE Certificate in Archaeology. The excavations will be supervised by professional archaeologists. Clearly they will prefer gardens that are situated in the older parts of the village rather than new developments where archaeological survey has already been carried out.

The first weekend of test pits is planned for **12th/13th April** but there may be subsequent weekends.

If you would be interested in receiving more information, visiting or even 'hosting' one of these test pits in your garden, please let us know by email: marchamsociety@gmail.com



Our visit to Viridor, the Energy Recovery Facility at Ardley 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover...'

This visit focussed on the reduction of waste, recycling and seeing what happens to general waste in Oxfordshire at Ardley Energy Recovery Facility. All the byproducts of processing general waste, to protect public health and the environment, are useful. The site processes over 330,000 tonnes of waste a year and continuously exports enough energy to power the equivalent to over 60,000 homes.

Thank you to Jessica, the Manager of the Learning and Visitor Centre who looked after us and took the two photos below. Thank you also to Shirley Eccles who organised and arranged the visit.



Click below to take a virtual tour of the facility
which has descriptions and videos for every stage of the process:

<https://www.viridor.co.uk/erf-virtual-tour/>

The next Midweek Walk will meet at 12.30 at the



Brightwell Street, OX10 0RT

Thursday 6th March 2025

For more details on this or future walks please contact Eric Dunford:
walks@marchamsociety.org.uk
01865 391439



KELMSCOTT
MANOR

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON

Kelmescott Manor has a growing community of volunteers and joining us as a volunteer is a great way to meet new people and learn new skills. No prior experience is required just enthusiasm. For more information on volunteering at Kelmescott, do look at our website, which includes some testimonials from current volunteers.

<https://kelmscottmanor.org.uk/support-us/volunteering/>

MAD News

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Your Independent Local News Source



(See on the right)

2025 Programme

Unless otherwise announced, evening meetings will be held in the Main Hall of the Marcham Centre.
Doors open at 7.15 pm for 7.45 pm start.

Thursday 6th March: Midweek Walk (see on the left)

Thursday 13th March: Astronomy Group 7pm
"A History of the Calendar - What happened to the Missing Ten Days" - a talk by Kevin Langley

Monday 24th March: "A History of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon"
a talk by Jackie Smith

Thursday 3rd April: Midweek Walk (details to follow)

Monday 7th April: Guided Tour of Iffley Church, village and lock.
10am (see page 5)

Thursday 10th April: Astronomy Group 7pm
"Total Solar Eclipse : Turkey 2006" - a short film to be introduced by Max Sinclair.

Monday 28th April:
"George Owen, Royal Physician" - a talk by Paul Whitton

Thursday 8th May: Midweek Walk (details to follow)

Thursday 8th May: Astronomy Group 7pm: "Learning about Jupiter - our Great Planet" - a set of short talks.

Monday 12th May: The Space Vault at Henley Museum 10.30am

Monday 26th May: Members' Evening (details to follow)

Thursday 12th June: Abingdon Abbey Buildings guided tour 2pm

Monday 23rd June: "Birds of Otmoor" - a talk by Peter Barker

Saturday 12th July: Members' Summer Barbecue 6pm

Look out for links, photos and reminders on the Marcham Society Facebook page



MAD News for March and also past issues are available on line:

<https://www.madnews.co.uk/index.php>

If you would like to help with the production of MAD News please contact the editor : editor@madnews.co.uk