

*The  
Marcham  
Society*

**APRIL 2025**  
**Volume 8, Issue 4**

# Newsletter

## Our next talk in the Marcham Centre

### **“George Owen, Royal Physician”**

a talk by Paul Whitton

*Monday 28th April 2025 at 7.15 for 7.45pm in the Main Hall,  
Marcham Centre , Barrow Close, OX13 6TY*



This illustrated talk by Paul Whitton explores the fascinating life of Dr George Owen; Royal Physician to three monarchs; Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I.

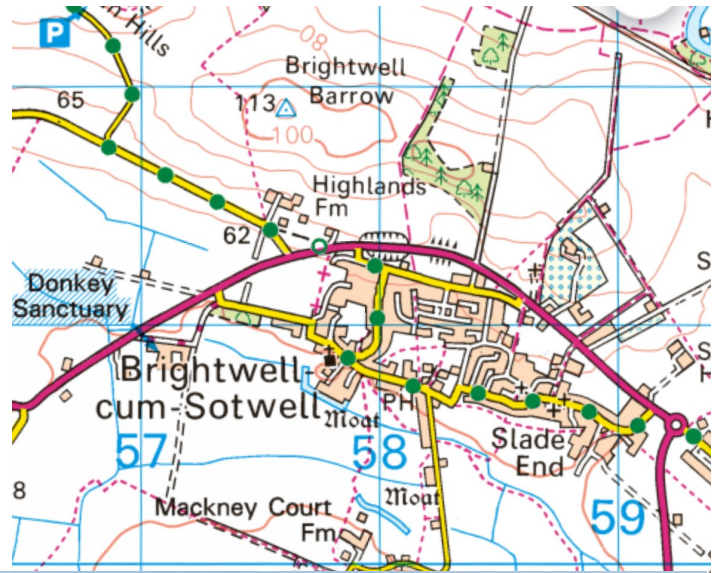
Dr George Owen (1499 – 1558) was granted the lease of Hinton Waldrist Manor and we start by discovering how this local medieval castle and house became a royal manor.

We then go to Oxford to see how George Owen entered the world of Tudor medicine. The talk also looks at the perils facing a physician to a powerful and unpredictable king like Henry.

We hear about some of the curiosities of Tudor remedies, with the help of an apothecary. He even worked on translations with Katherine Parr. As part of his reward for service to monarchs, Owen was granted many properties in the Oxford area. We look especially at Godstow Abbey, Wolvercote, and Cumnor Place, finding there two beautiful ladies who came to tragic ends.

Finally, we reflect on his legacy, how he raised standards in medicine through the Royal College of Physicians and became an MP. Maybe his greatest achievement was simply to survive those years of service to Henry VIII.

Photos from our last midweek walk  
from the Red Lion at Brightwell cum Sotwell...



Thanks to Eric and Sheila for organising another successful walk and thanks to Phil Jennings for these photographs!





Kevin Langley giving his talk: "A History of the Calendar - What happened to the Missing Ten Days?"



## The meeting on Thursday 13th March

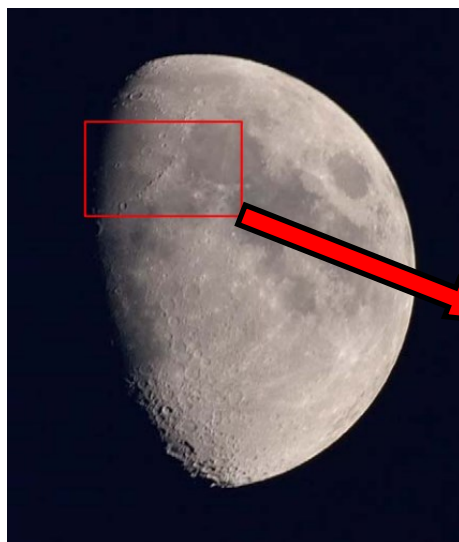
There was another good turnout at the evening meeting – thank-you to all who came. A few of us had a passing glimpse of Venus in the cloudy evening sky on the way in to the meeting and a great view of the full moon (‘worm moon’, believe it or not) in a clear patch of sky on the way out at the end.



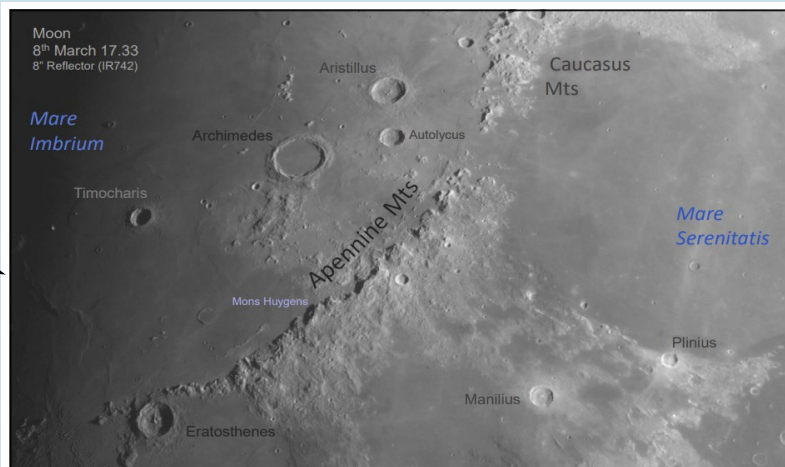
Following the round-up of recent news and Members Matter images, featuring several of Venus, Mercury, Mars and Jupiter, we had a fascinating and wide-ranging talk from Kevin Langley on the complex and long history of the calendar, the loss of ten days when it ‘went Gregorian’ and even why the tax year ends of 5th April!

A big thank-you to Kevin for putting the talk together from scratch following a challenge we set him a few months ago.

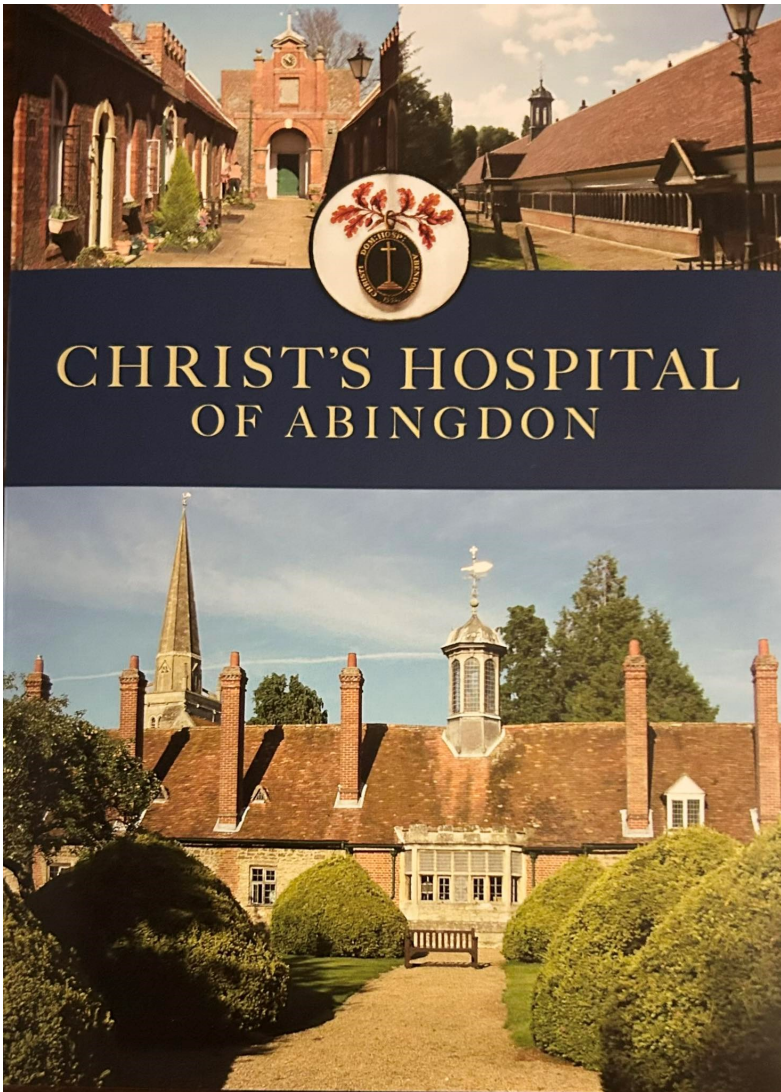
*Jim Asher*



## Moon: Apennine Mountains Ridge on 8th March



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



This talk was 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.

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 Royal Berkshire Archives.

**The Link to Christ’s Hospital : <http://www.ch-of-abingdon.org/>**



### **A Visit to St Mary's Church Iffley on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

**This trip is now fully booked!**

## **Our March Outing to the Space Vault at the River & Rowing Museum in Henley**



### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

The Space Vault Exhibition showcased one of the UK's largest private collections of space artefacts, incorporating rare and historic objects brought back from NASA's Apollo missions, Russian space shuttle programs, International Space Station and SpaceX.

In addition to the "Space Vault" exhibition, the Museum had five permanent galleries delving into the origins of the town and stories and history of the Thames, plus the John Piper Gallery and the Wind in the Willows gallery.

## THE HARROW



The Midweek Walk meets on 10th April at 12.30  
**at the Harrow, Main Street,  
West Ilsley, RG20 7AR**

For more details and to book your lunch,  
please contact Eric Dunford:  
[walks@marchamsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@marchamsociety.org.uk)



**Monday 12th May at 1.30pm**

A guided tour of the Museum,  
including its highlights such as  
the Anglo-Saxons and Alfred the Great  
followed by afternoon tea in the café.

£7.50 per person

Contact Shirley : [shirley.marsoc@gmail.com](mailto:shirley.marsoc@gmail.com)

## 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.*

**Monday 7th April:** Guided Tour of Iffley Church, village and lock.  
10am *(Trip now full)*

**Thursday 10th April:** Midweek Walk *(details to the left)*

**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

**Saturday 3rd - Monday 5th May:** Flower Festival  
*(details to the left)*

**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.

**Friday 9th - Saturday 10th May:** Big Marcham Weekend

**Monday 12th May:** Vale and Downland Museum 1.30 pm  
*(details to the left)*

**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 April 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](mailto:editor@madnews.co.uk)