



# Marcham

## SOCIETY

April  
2026  
Volume 9  
Issue 4

### The April Talk



#### ***“The Wildlife of Radley Lakes” - a talk by David Guyoncourt***

Monday 27th April 2026 at 7.30 for 7.45pm

Main Hall, Marcham Centre

Radley Lakes is a floodplain area beside the Thames which over time has evolved into a wide variety of habitats. For many centuries it consisted mainly of pasture with few trees. Then gravel was quarried and the pits became lakes. Subsequently at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many of the pits were filled with ash from Didcot Power Station and these soon became a new unique habitat.

The site was allowed to rewild and a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats evolved. David Guyoncourt has surveyed the flora and fauna of the Radley Lakes area since 1974 for county and national organisations.

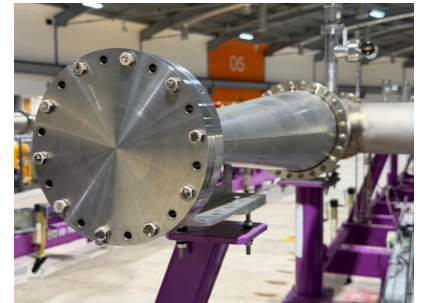
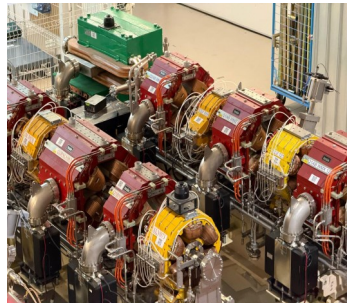
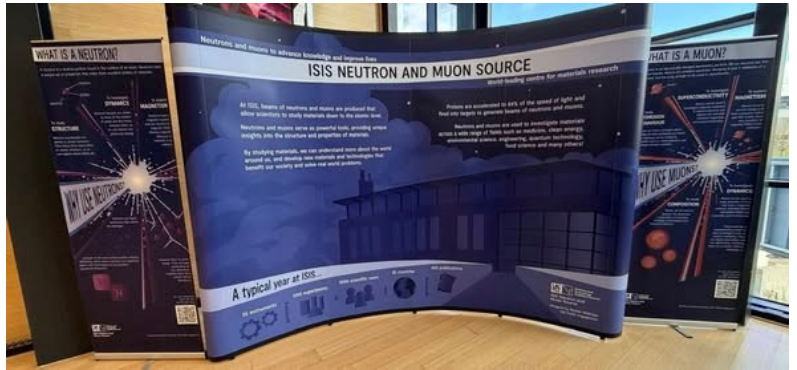
With the threat to Radley Lakes in the 1990's David became a founder member of Save Radley Lakes and is now a Trustee of the Radley Lakes Trust. David's talk will describe some of the flora and fauna which inhabit this splendid wildlife area.





Thank you to Eric and Sheila Dunford for organising this Midweek Walk to Ardington.  
For more information about the next walk contact:  
[walks@marchamsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@marchamsociety.org.uk)





Thank you to Dr Katsuaki Inoue for the tour of the facility and also to Shirley Eccles for organising this visit.

For more information about the Diamond Light Source:  
[www.diamond.ac.uk/Home/About.htm](http://www.diamond.ac.uk/Home/About.htm)





## The Astronomy Meeting held on Wednesday 18th March



Thank you to all who came to our March meeting at which we had the delight of a clear sky for once! Many of us managed to see Jupiter and three of its moons overhead through the MAG telescope on the patio, and naked-eye sightings of a very bright Venus setting low in the western sky and Orion to the south.

After the regular round-up of News and Members Matter, the main feature of the evening was the talk by Mark Buckley on “Space Board Games”.



Mark started by explaining his interest in board games and, in particular, board games modelled on space exploration. These are games in which players compete to explore space within and outside of the solar system, involving the acquisition and use of ‘real’ resources to



achieve a range of mission goals, such as rockets and satellites, along with energy, materials and related enablers with feasible extensions to current known technology. He showed four examples of games with different levels of complexity and playing times, some of which extended to many

hours. The complexity of the games reflects the complexity of real space exploration and research missions and the sometimes first-hand space industry experience of the games’ authors.



Many thanks to Mark for entertaining and amazing us, to Meriel for helping Mark assemble the presentation and to both for coming all the way from South Wales to join us.

**Jim Asher**

*Copies of all the slides presented in the meeting are available by following the links on the Astronomy page of the Marcham Society website.*

The next Astronomy meeting is on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April** at 7:30pm featuring “Steeple Aston Observatory” by Tim Haymes

## “The History of RAF Abingdon”

*A talk by Alan Bovington-Cox*

**RAF Abingdon** was established as an airfield in 1932, serving as headquarters and the base for two bomber squadrons until the onset of World War II in 1939. Following the war, the airfield transitioned to Transport Command, operating aircraft such as the Dakota, York, Hastings, Beverley and Andover. Growing up near RAF Greenham Common sparked Alan’s interest in aviation. In 1968, he moved to Abingdon and witnessed RAF Abingdon's final days as a Transport Command hub. From then until the airfield's closure in July 1992, he was captivated by its history and stories.

His fascination continues today and he has helped as a volunteer at the *Abingdon Air and Country Show*, which in the past has been held on what remains of the airfield (now cancelled for 2026).



Alan speaking to us in the Marcham Centre



Blackburn Beverley



A record attendance of over 80 in the audience



Avro Vulcan B2 XH537



USAF - ANG



Jaguar T2 XX146/S maintenance in F shed



31<sup>st</sup> July 1992 handing over the RAF Ensign



Lowering the Ensign for the last time

**April 2026**

**Thursday 2nd:** The Midweek Walk - from the Plough Inn at Finstock - 12.30 pm  
 (See below and for more information contact: [walks@marchamsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@marchamsociety.org.uk))

**Wednesday 15th:** Astronomy Meeting at 7.30 in the Small Hall, Marcham Centre  
 After a round-up of news and Members' Matter, "Steeple Aston Observatory" by Tim Haymes

**Thursday 23rd:** Guided Tour of Combe Mill - 1pm

**Monday 27th:** "The Wildlife of Radley Lakes" - a talk by David Guyoncourt  
 at 7.45 in the Main Hall, Marcham Centre  
 (see the front page)



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



The April Midweek Walk starts from the



— Finstock —

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12.30 Thursday 2nd April 2026

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 Sunday 26 April  
 10am–4pm  
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