



Newsletter

The next Marcham Society Zoom Talk
is on Monday 26th April at 7.30

**“Pagans & Puritans
– the story of May Morning in
Oxfordshire” by Tim Healey**

A vibrant account of how May Day celebrations evolved over the centuries, including the riotous revels of Tudor and Stuart times, the Puritan backlash, the decorous innovations of the Victorians and the pageantry of celebrations today. The origins of maypoles, Morris dancing and May garlanding are all explored with a wealth of visual images.

Tim Healey is a freelance writer and broadcaster who has presented many programmes on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4.

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'Maypole' by Pieter Breughel the Younger

"OXFORDSHIRE ON CANVAS" by Marie-Louise Kerr

With Covid restrictions in place for the past year we have all been drawn to the beauty and delight of the countryside around us. On Monday 22nd March, 62 members of the Marcham Society had the opportunity to take a pleasurable visual tour of Oxford and the wider South Oxfordshire countryside portrayed by an illustrated collection of paintings, glass work and sculpture by artists from the 18th century to the Present, compiled by Marie Louise Kerr, a 'Curator without Museum' as she calls herself.

Through her passionate interest in art history Marie-Louise provided, in a most engaging manner, a well explained narrative for each of the illustrated two-dimensional canvases presented, depicting scenes from Oxford, Abingdon, Wallingford, Benson, Shillingford, Uffington and Wittenham Clumps to name but a few. She had interesting stories about each artist.

Many artists had either lived or spent many years in this area. Amongst their works, the examples she gave were *'The High Street Oxford,'* by **JMW Turner** (1755-1851) - acknowledged as one of the great landscape artists of all time - and two paintings by **George Dunlop Leslie** (1935-1921): *'September Sunshine'* showing the seasonal nature of the River Thames and *'Sun and Moon Flowers'* using the view from the window of his home in Wallingford looking over to the meadow the opposite bank of the River Thames.

She included **Paul Nash** (1889-1946) a greatly celebrated British surrealist painter and war artist who throughout his life held a special affinity for the well-known landmark, Wittenham Clumps which he had visited first as a young man. He was inspired by such landscapes with elements of ancient history and he painted *'The Wood on the Hill'* in 1912 and, by contrast, his bold watercolour *'Wittenham'* in 1935. There were others such as **Kate Tyron** (1885-1952), an American who had followed her passion for the nature writings of Richard Jefferies; she was inspired by the beautiful countryside around Swindon, painting *'The Village of Uffington'* in 1910.

Most of the landscape and paintings viewed are still easily recognisable and predominately unchanged since they were originally captured on canvas, despite the onset of modernisation - but not all. One of the most haunting paintings of the late 20th century **Roger Wagner's** (born 1957) *'Menorah' 1993*, currently hanging in St Giles Church in Oxford; it depicts with juxtaposed imagery the holocaust and the crucifixion set in front of the cooling towers of Didcot power station which has dominated the Oxfordshire landscape since 1970 until it was finally demolished in 2020.

Moving from canvas Marie-Louise touched on other forms of art within the area which we were encouraged to visit. Stained glass windows designed by **John Piper** (1903-1992) - the artist responsible for the design of the Baptistry window in Coventry cathedral. These could be seen in several churches, (namely St Mary the Virgin, Iffley, St Peter's, Wolvercote and St Bartholomew's, Nettlebed).

Marie-Louise concluded her virtual talk on a lighter note, asking who among us had ever looked up as they walked along Broad Street, Oxford and had spotted the statue by **Anthony Gormley**. He is well known for his Winged Angel of the North, and on the top of the Blackwell's Art and Poster Shop on Exeter College, stands his 7ft statue of a nude man, one of a series of sculptures called *'Another Time II'*. Passing by one would be excused from thinking 'What is that man doing up there?' and Marie-Louise quoted Gormley's own words, saying that he hoped there would never be a single satisfactory answer!

A captivating evening and Marie-Louise reminded us of the saying: 'Beauty is always in the Eye of the Beholder' - no doubt the audience took away memories of their own favourite scenes and of the artists that she had so sympathetically presented.

Ann Southwell

Photographs from Marie-Louise Kerr's Talk

HIGH STREET, OXFORD, 1810
JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER (1775–1851)



Abingdon (exhibited 1806)
Tate Britain



Abingdon from the Thames Navigation, 1804
The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust)

OXFORD FROM HINKSEY HILL, c. 1840
WILLIAM TURNER OF OXFORD (1789–1862)



SEPTEMBER SUNSHINE,
1869

GEORGE DUNLOP
LESLIE (1835–1921)



THE VILLAGE OF UFFINGTON, WILTSHIRE
(HOME OF TOM BROWN), c. 1910



Kate Allen Tryon (1865–1952)
Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

THE THAMES AT BENSON, OXFORDSHIRE, 1912
ALBERT CHEVALLIER TAYLER (1862–1925)
ALFRED EAST ART GALLERY

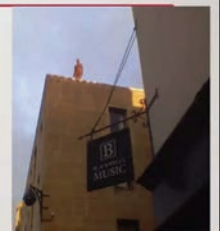
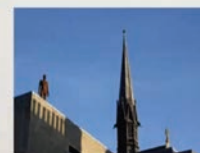


THE WOOD ON THE
HILL (WITTENHAM
CLUMPS), 1912

PAUL NASH (1889 - 1946)



ANOTHER TIME XI, 2009
ANTONY GORMLEY, EXETER COLLEGE



THE ALL SAINTS' CHURCHYARD

For some years, when the area of the churchyard has recently been mown, it has been managed in an attempt to improve its biodiversity. This biodiversity in the countryside has decreased because of more intensive farming and therefore churchyards have become more important. The present management plan was agreed with a team made up of representatives from Marcham Society, Marcham PCC and the Parish Council.

We had evidence, from a wildlife survey in 1993 by Roy Maycock from BBOWT who was 'impressed by the diversity of habitats' and said that *'the whole site is one of interest'*. We commissioned a new botanical survey in 2002 (and later a survey of lichens) by Frances Watkins (from Oxford Rare Plants Group and a trustee of Plantlife).

Together, these surveys identified over 130 plant species in the churchyard. The management plan agreed with the contractor was for the southern area to be cut twice a year, at times considered most effective for maintenance of wildflower meadows. Though we had sown yellow rattle to weaken the grass, it hadn't been very successful because the grass cuttings were left to rot down on the surface, thus feeding the coarse grass.



So four years ago we decided we needed to rake and remove the grass after the cut. This regime has been more effective but, because of the coarseness of the grass in places, it was hard work and also meant the contractors found it difficult to cut properly.

Jim Asher, Eric & I as the Marcham Society members are on this management group and we decided to mow it this spring in the hope that when it gets cut in July & October, the grass will all be new growth and easier to deal with.

We were grateful for the help of Rosemary Harwood and Bryan Eccles and this meant that we were able to finish the mowing in about an hour and a half.

We will also be grateful for any help with the raking in July and October.

THE ALL SAINTS' CHURCHYARD



ALL SAINTS CHURCH

Marcham Society members recently mowing between the gravestones in the churchyard.

Eric and Sheila Dunford will need help later in the season to maintain the churchyard as a suitable habitat for wild flowers and butterflies.

MarSoc Mid-Week Walks

Eric and Sheila Dunford hope that the regular monthly walks will begin again as soon as possible ... perhaps in April, if the Covid regulations allow. We will give notice of any walks that are planned in our regular emails to members.

Thomas Lambherde of Marcham

Here are details of an event that occurred in 1343, which was the 16th year of Edward III's reign. It tells how Thomas from Marcham was robbed at "Middeltone by Sutton", which is now Milton by Sutton [Courtenay].

Saturday, Jan. 18, 1343.

On Jan. 18, 16 Ed. III., Thomas Lambherde, of Mercham, came before the said coroners and bailiffs at Oxford and found pledges of prosecuting John de Hedescombe as a felon, on the charge that on Thursday after the day of St. Hillary, at Middeltone by Sutton in Berks at night he feloniously robbed him of 8 sheep, worth 8s., and took them to Oxford; and there the sheep were found with him and secured. Pledges, John Lokyng, John Harald.

He would have been in the process of driving his eight sheep somewhere to be sold. The Medieval roads suggest that he was most likely have been on his way either towards Wallingford or Reading (presumably to be then be sold on to London).

The victim's name, Thomas Lambherde, is clearly very literal as to his occupation!

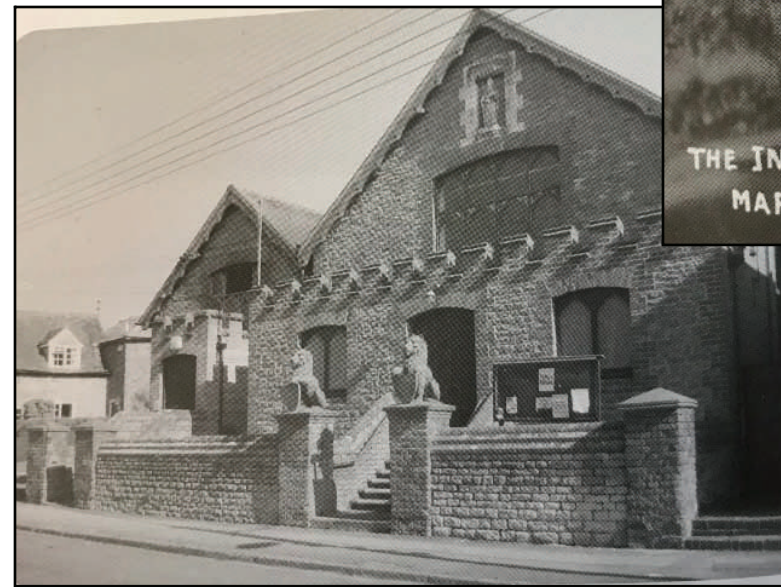
Researched by Robert Blackmore from the "Records of Medieval Oxford, Coroners' Inquests, the Walls of Oxford, Etc." (Oxford, 1912), p. 27. H. E. Salter (ed.)

THE INSTITUTE THROUGH THE YEARS



LEFT: Arthur Anson standing in front of the Institute— lanterns on either side of the two doors. Note the sundial.

BELOW: Lanterns, Sundial and Lions



ABOVE: Alterations and additions to the left hand entrance and no lanterns.

RIGHT: Renovations as a few days ago with the Lions protected during works.



FUTURE DATES

The Marcham Society was founded with three pillars of investigation in mind:-

**local history,
archaeology
and natural history.**

In designing our programme year by year we have strived to keep those three subjects in mind. The exception has been when giving the annual lecture, where a notable villager provides a talk from their own sphere of experience or expertise.

If you have suggestions for future talks and topics for visiting speakers, please contact the Secretary,
Shirley Eccles:
shirley.marsoc@gmail.com

Dates for the Diary

Monday 26 April

Tim Healey : *Pagans and Puritans* :
May Day celebrations in Oxford

Monday 24 May

Ed Peveler from Chilterns AoNB :
'Beacons of the Past, LiDAR, and woodland archaeology in South Oxfordshire'

Monday 28 June

Mark Davies : *The history of the Oxford Botanic Garden*, founded in 1621, celebrating 400 years.

We may be able to arrange a guided tour of the Botanic Garden following this talk if regulations allow.

Monday 26 July BBQ

(if Covid regulations allow)

Reminders and Zoom links will also be sent to members by email. All these events are at 7.30 pm unless otherwise notified.

Information about the programme and reviews of the talks are also available on the society's website and on Facebook.

www.marchamsociety.org.uk

www.facebook.com/marchamsociety