



A message to all members from Peter Steere

As many of you will know I relocated to Hampshire in April but had continued in my role as Chairman of Marcham Society despite not being resident in Marcham anymore. It was always known that this situation could not continue indefinitely and there would come a time when I would need to resign. That time duly came and I gave my resignation to the committee in June.

Looking back there have been some changes during my time as Chairman; in terms of committee members, newly created posts, new communication mediums and resurrection of the Coral Rag publishing efforts, to name a few.

We have said goodbye to some long serving committee members; Margery, Joy, Judith and Malvin, but we have welcomed Shirley Eccles as Secretary, Sheila Tilley for Publications (plus Coral Rag project management), David Henderson as committee member and Rosemary Harwood as Health and Safety Officer (non-committee member). We also created the post of Membership Secretary that Simon Blackmore took up with enthusiasm and he has overseen a successful growth in our membership despite the difficulties that we have faced with the pandemic. Throughout my time we have had continuing support from Eric and Sheila Dunford in all sorts of ways and the continuing stewardship of our finances from John Guast as Treasurer. I am pleased to say that I leave with the Marcham Society in robust health, both financially and from the membership point of view.

That is not to say that it has been an entirely easy ride. I look back with little fondness for the audio visual equipment at All Saints church which, whilst we were grateful for the facility, left something to be desired in terms of the stability of the system from month to month. Attendees at our talks would have witnessed your Chairman rushing around trying to get the various disparate parts to work together as the deadline of 7:45pm for our speaker to start their talk was looming!

Along with many other societies we have had to deal with lockdowns and I was proud that the Marcham Society were one of the first to launch a Zoom video conferencing service for our talks which, despite some early teething troubles, continues to be well supported by our membership. We have also had to deal with other external problems such as not having access to Manor Farm to store our archive and I was pleased to see a successfully completed move of the archive to the new Marcham Centre village hall during the break between lockdowns in 2020.

Lastly I want to record my thanks to all involved in the Society (and for the book token which will be spent on some interesting history book no doubt). It has been a privilege to get to know so many good people through the Marcham Society. I will continue to be involved as an ordinary member and as a participant in any Zoom talks you may be able to provide to remote members in the future. I wish everyone involved continued success in all their endeavours.

“The History of the Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum ” by Mark Davies



For many years, Mark Davies lived on a narrow boat in central Oxford and he has recently moved into his own house in town. He is a local historian, author, public speaker, guide and publisher specialising in the history of Oxford.

Mark therefore has extensive local knowledge and this evening’s talk was about the History of the Botanic Garden in Oxford and those who have cared for it over the centuries. Founded by Henry Danvers, Earl of Derby, in 1621, the Botanic Garden is the oldest in Britain and Jacob Bobart, the ‘German Prince of Plants’, was the first keeper, famed both for his horticultural skill and his eccentricities. Thomas Baskerville described him as “the man that first gave life and beauty to this famous place”.

We were told about his family; his two sons, for example, another Jacob, ‘horticulture’s sapient King’, and Tilleman, who was overseer of the grounds of the new Blenheim Palace. Mark also alluded to a later descendant who was celebrated in fact and fiction as Oxford’s ‘Classical Coachman’ who had so many accidents with his four horse coach!

Mark’s talk also featured other important visitors and events associated with the Garden, including Ashmole, Ale, Apes, Aeronauts and even ‘Alice’! He spoke of James Sadler (1753–1828), “King of all Balloons”, the first Englishman ever to build and fly a hot-air balloon and this he did from the Botanic Gardens. So, as advertised, it was a talk about interesting people with passions rather than a horticultural catalogue of rare or peculiar plants!

Simon Blackmore

Slides from the Talk

'PRINCES OF PLANTS'



400 years of Oxford's Botanic Garden

Jacob Bobart

(c.1599-1679)

- First keeper 1641 - 1679



Jacob Bobart.
1659



Peter la Cave, 1789

James Sadler & son John

Oxford

7 July 1810

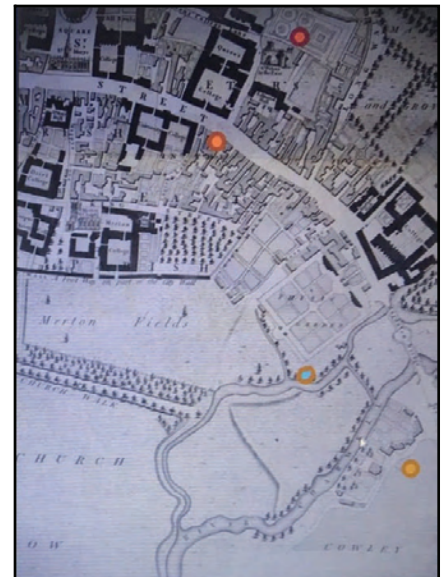


GARNAREIN has done Travels to the Moon, Sirs,
But SADLER scales th' Sun, with his Grand Balloon, Sirs.
Tu-ra-lu-ra, &c.
Now they soar aloft, all the Ladies smitten,
Down comes the Parachute and Miss BOBARTS Kitten,
Genius ne'er can want Englishmen's best Boon, Sirs,
Here's the English Aëronaut, the King of all Balloons, Sirs.
Tu-ra-lu-ra, &c.
Frenchmen let come all, in the air we'll meet 'em,
Phæton like they'll fall, dam'me there we'll beat 'em.



" There was a tent in the botanical garden and the gardens themselves open but notwithstanding that there was a great crush. In allusion to the gardens some of the people called the party 'Professor Daubeny's Squash' "
Virginia Draper, 30 June 1860

1900 ▼



Marcham Society Mid-Week Walks

Eric and Sheila Dunford organised another mid-week walk on 24th June.

The eleven walkers complied with the latest Covid regulations.

Lunch was taken in the Perch and Pike, a beautiful 17th century flint-built inn with a converted barn situated in the picturesque village of South Stoke in Oxfordshire.

The route that Eric chose was from South Stoke along the river Thames to North Stoke, past the church to the village street and then back along the path and road parallel to the river passing east of Littlestoke Manor.

Our thanks as always to Ordnance Survey for the image opposite.

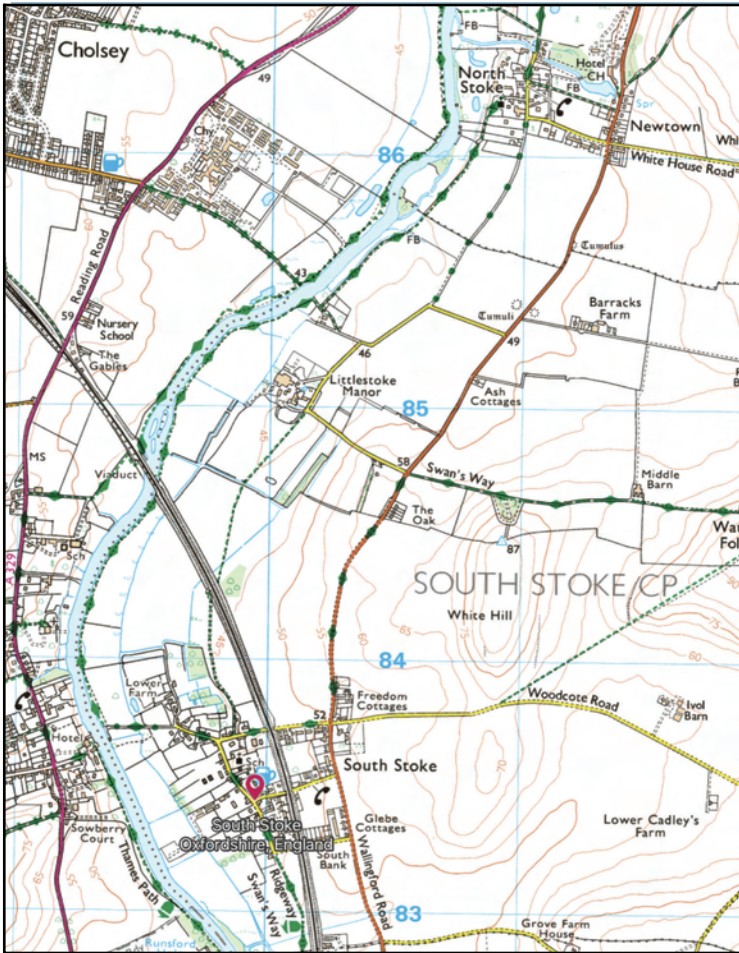
Sheila took photos that included the brick built viaduct marked on the map.

We will give notice of future walks that are planned in our regular emails to members.



The enthusiastic MarSoc walkers on the path beside the River Thames

MAP AND PHOTOS FROM THE MID-WEEK WALK



Sheila Dunford — the photographer for once has been photographed!



MARSOC BBQ

Marcham Society Barbecue: Saturday 10th July

Although the Covid regulations restricted our numbers to thirty, the annual MarSoc BBQ went ahead and Di Hutchings kindly invited us into her spacious garden.

There was an elegant marquee with colourful bunting and tables decorated with flowers. A perfect setting arranged and masterminded by Bryan and Shirley Eccles.

Eric and Sheila Dunford led a walk to see Di's wild flower avenue and then the more intrepid set off to explore the nature reserve in Cothill woods.

Malvin and Val Drakely then fulfilled their traditional role providing delicious barbecued burgers and sausages and there was a plentiful bar too.

The weather was kind, the company was entertaining and the only sadness was saying goodbye to Elaine and Peter Steere, our retiring chairman.



MARSOC BBQ



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

Unless otherwise notified, future meetings will be held in the Main Hall of the Marcham Centre

2021

Monday 27th September:

AGM to be followed by a talk on *'Butterflies, Marcham and Lockdown'* by Jim Asher

Monday 25th October :

'The History of St John's College' by Alastair Lack

Monday 22nd November :

Richard Venables describes his role as High Sheriff of Oxfordshire

Monday 6th December :

Christmas Party in the Small Hall at the Marcham Centre

2022

Monday 24th January

Annual Lecture :

James Gilbert describes his life and work as Consultant Transplant and Vascular Access Surgeon

Further details of the 2022 programme will be published as soon as possible

www.marchamsociety.org.uk