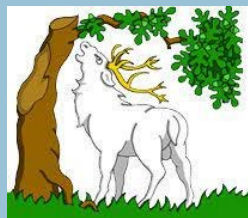


*The  
Marcham  
Society*

**MARCH 2023  
Volume 6, Issue 3**

# Newsletter



## **THE BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

**Berkshire local history groups will be holding their AGM in  
Marcham Centre as Marcham used to be part of Berkshire!**

**Saturday 25th March 2023**

**Marcham Centre Barrow Close, Marcham,  
Oxfordshire OX13 6TY**

The venue for this year's Annual General Meeting will be provided by the Marcham Society. Marcham was in Berkshire until the 1974 county boundary changes and still feels linked to our county through its history.

The programme will start at 11.00 with refreshments, followed at 11.30 by the AGM business which we will endeavour to keep as short as possible to increase the time for social and cultural activities.

After the AGM there will be an informative talk about the Marcham area, followed by a lunch break between 13.00 and 14.00.

After lunch, at 14.00, there will be a walk around the locality led by one of the Marcham Society's members. This is expected to take around an hour after which tea and cake will be served before departure.

***All Marcham Society Members are welcome to attend !***

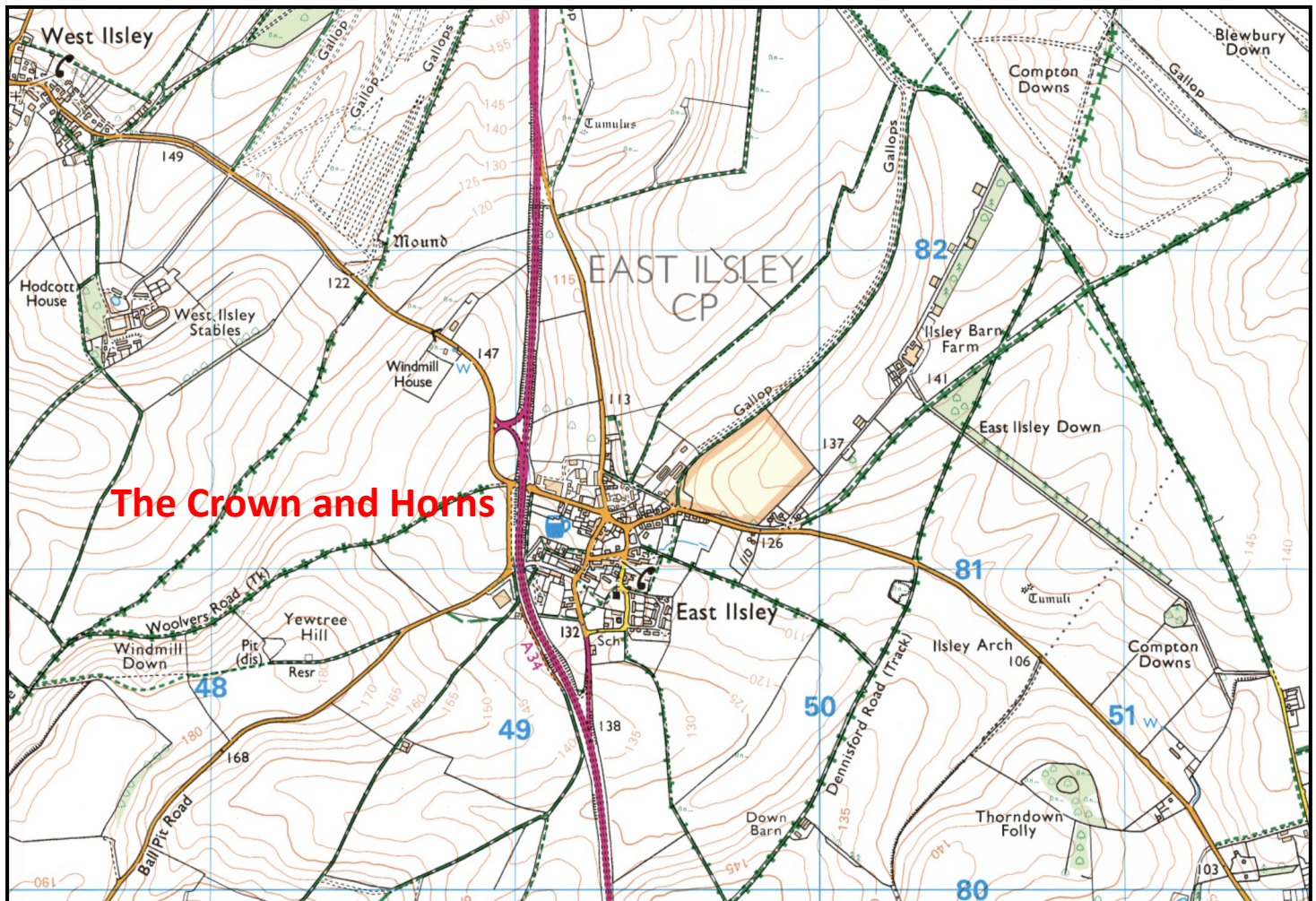
## The Mid-Week Walk from East Ilsley

Eric and Sheila Dunford organised another enjoyable midweek walk on **Thursday 9th February**.  
Our group met for lunch at the *Crown and Horns Pub, Compton Road, East Ilsley, RG20 7LH*

From the pub, we passed the village pump and the pond heading for the Church. We looked for War Graves in the churchyard without success. Walking South out of East Ilsley, we joined the Dennisford Road and turned Northwards towards the gallops on Compton Downs. Yet again the organisers had somehow arranged fine weather and there were splendid views over to the Clumps and Lowbury Hill. The downhill return brought us into the North of the village.

*(See the map below for the location, with thanks to the Ordnance Survey).*

The next Midweek Walk is planned for **Thursday 9th March 2023**  
Please email Eric in advance for further information: [e.dunford@btinternet.com](mailto:e.dunford@btinternet.com)





# SOME PHOTOS FROM THE MID-WEEK WALK



From the Crown and Horns...



...to visit Saint Mary's Churchyard.



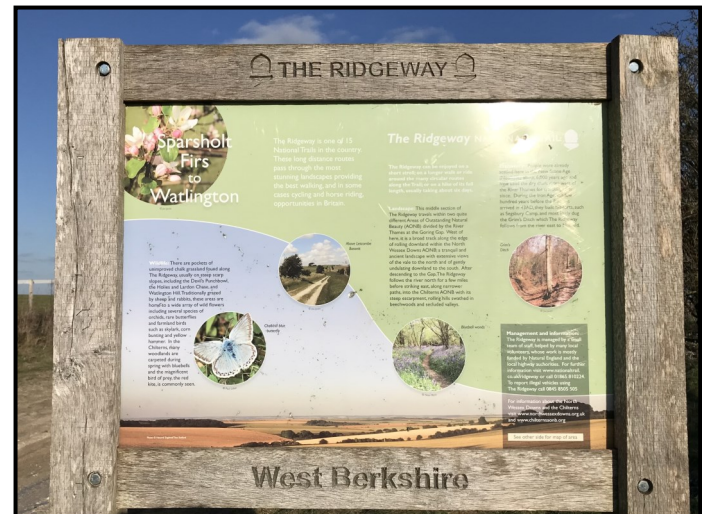
A short rest on the climb...



...then heading on uphill.



The sun shone for the group photo!



The Ridgeway and the Gallops.

*A link to more photographs from this midweek walk is available on request. Just email!*



## The Visit to Kingston Bagpuize House



### Kingston Bagpuize House - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023

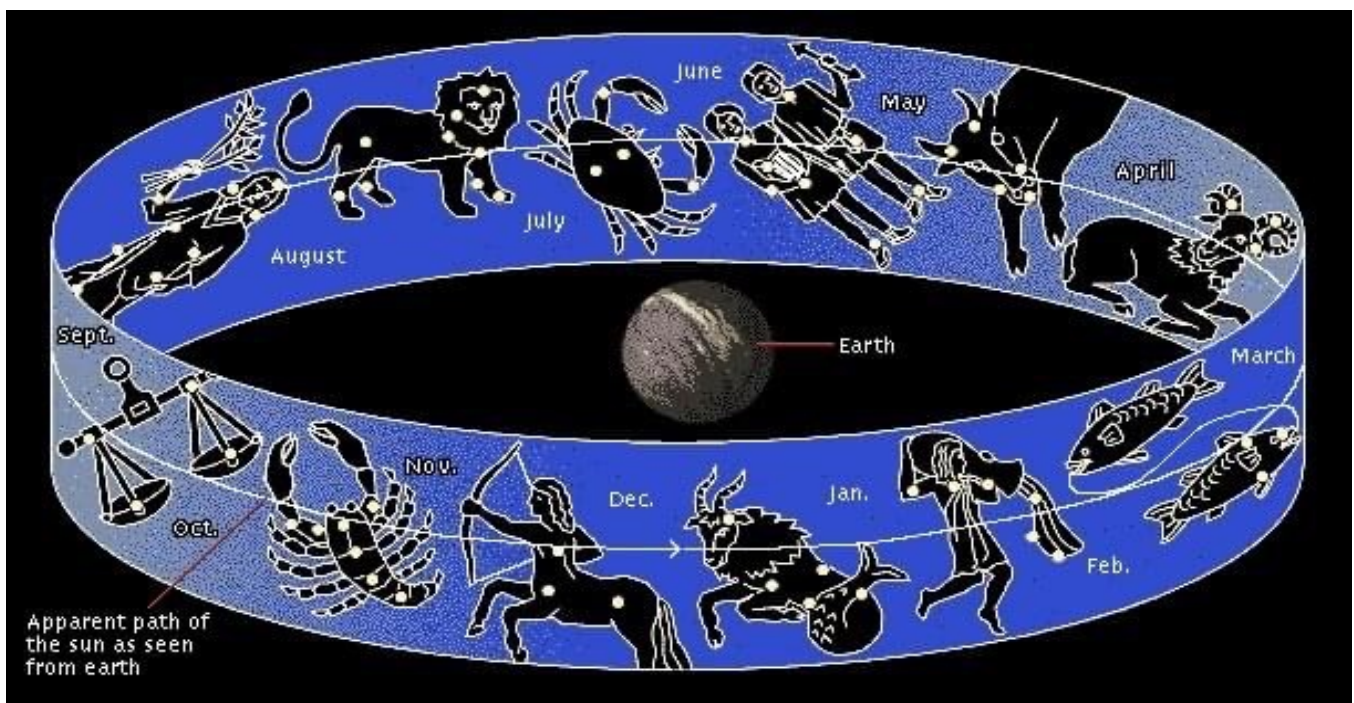
Following our tour of the grounds of Kingston Bagpuize House last year, this year with kind permission of Virginia Grant, we are offered a tour of the interior of this magnificent house itself. After a warm welcome and an introduction explaining the history of the house we were shown the ground floor rooms. Then we were taken upstairs to see the two bedrooms where items linked to the family were displayed. For example an exquisite feather fan dating back over 100 years and found hidden away in a box in a cupboard. Delicious tea and cakes were served in the Scullery after the tour. Our thanks to Virginia Grant for such a warm welcome and to Shirley Eccles for organising the visit.



## THE MARCHAM SOCIETY ASTRONOMY GROUP

We had a very encouraging turnout for the MAG meeting on **Thursday 23rd February** with a new record number of 30 people. The clouds parted briefly to let us see the Moon above Jupiter and Venus above the western horizon before we went indoors, and we had a later chance to see Mars and Orion after the indoor meeting. The regular Recent News/Sightings and Things to Look Out For in the coming weeks were followed by a fascinating talk by Simon Blackmore on *'Mythology and the Constellations'*.

Simon's talk was on the history and language of astronomy from the Bronze Age, the ancient civilisations of Babylon and Egypt, to the more 'modern' Greece and Rome. Astronomy has mixed nomenclature, Greek and Roman, from Asterisms and Galaxies (Greek) to Constellations (Roman); the word 'planet' is from Greek, although the planets are named after Roman gods.



The constellations, especially those in the zodiac, and their times of appearance in the sky were used as cues for planting seeds and for gathering crops. Simon also described the change from the geocentric model of Aristotle and the dramatic change to the heliocentric model of Copernicus.

Simon's third section covered stories from mythology linking constellations together, with tales of hunters, heroes, kings, queens, princesses and beasts. He finished with words of Ptolemy (2nd Century AD), which perhaps evokes our enthusiasm for astronomy even now: *"I know that I am mortal by nature and ephemeral, but when I trace at my pleasure the windings to and fro of the heavenly bodies, I no longer touch earth with my feet. I stand in the presence of Zeus himself and take my fill of ambrosia."*

Jim Asher

## THE TALK IN THE MARCHAM CENTRE

*'The Wildlife of the Rare Fens and Salt Spring of the Marcham Area'*  
given by Judith Webb  
on Monday 27th February 2023

How fortunate we are in Marcham to have Fens to the four points of the compass, even if they are relatively small. Judith Webb's most informative talk informed us of the abundance of rare flora and fauna, insects and invertebrates, six varieties of orchid, various bees and snails, some of which are found in only one other place in the county.



Much of this natural history can be discovered at Cothill, which will make walks all the more absorbing for those who were unaware this nature's bounty. Also, for the golfers among you, be more careful in watching where your ball lands on the fairway when playing at Frilford. Judith gave us an added bonus - the details of the salt springs to the south of Marcham on Manor Farm lying at the meeting of the limestone and clay substrata.



Judith finished her wonderfully illustrated talk by giving details of volunteer groups working in Cothill Fen, Parsonage Moor, Lashford Lane Fen and Dry Sandford Pit. She gave a link to *Abingdon Green Gym* ([abingdongreengym.org.uk](http://abingdongreengym.org.uk)) and also to her own article (available on line by clicking the link below):

**“The History of Cothill Fen National Nature Reserve”**

<https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JW-Cothill-Fen-Hist-FINAL-05-08-2020.pdf>



# COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY DIGGING...



Before any new houses can be built near Willow Farm, **Cotswold Archaeology** have been asked by the Vale of the White Horse District Council (VWHDC) to check that there are no important prehistoric or historic remains on the site. Their excavation report will be interesting reading. This is their declared objective:

*“The general objective of the evaluation is to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site. This information will enable VWHDC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation and the development proposal.”*

REGISTERED ORGANISATION C/A

Cotswold Archaeology

**Land South of A415  
Marcham  
Oxfordshire**

Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of archaeological Investigation

for:  
Bloor Homes South West

CA Project: CR1224  
Oxfordshire Museums Service Accession No.: TBC

October 2022

Andover Cirencester Milton Keynes Suffolk

data.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Site boundary	Residential street	Public open space	Local Endangerment Area of Play (Walled, Site offset)
Other land within the applicant's control	Shared surface street	Landscape buffers	Potential attenuation basin and tank
Proposed access - all modes	Private drive / path	Existing trees retained	Potential fuel pumping station
Proposed access - pedestrian / cycle	Residential development blocks	Existing hedgerows retained	Potential electricity substation
Off-site pedestrian footpaths	Indicative residential heritage	Proposed trees	

data.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Geophysical Survey Results  
(Archaeological Services, 2021)

Legend:

- Site boundary
- Proposed attenuation basin
- Residential street
- High
- Low
- Overlain

56m

South South of the A415, Marcham, Oxfordshire. Excavation  
Detailed Location Plan Showing Geophysical Survey Results.



## FUTURE DATES AND EVENTS

### Publicity below from MAD News.

Information is also published on Facebook, on the website and updates are also sent to members by email.

[www.marchamsociety.org.uk](http://www.marchamsociety.org.uk)

### Programme 2022-23

*Unless otherwise notified, meetings will be held at 7.45 pm in the Main Hall of the Marcham Centre*

#### Thursday 16th March 2023

Astronomy Group, at 7pm

#### Saturday 25th March 2023 (All day)

Berkshire Local History Association Conference in the Marcham Centre

*All Marcham Society members welcome*

#### Monday 27th March 2023

'The Blue Plaques in the Vale'

by Robert Evans (see on the left)

#### Monday 17th April 2023

Visit to Cothill House at 2.30pm

*(details will be emailed out)*

#### Thursday 20th April 2023

Astronomy Group, at 7pm

#### Monday 24th April 2023

MEMBERS' EVENING

*(Details to be announced)*

#### Wednesday 17th May 2023

Tour of Garford Village by Mike Greig, at 2pm

#### Monday 22nd May 2023

'Chimney Meadows—floodplain restoration' by Lisa Lane

#### Monday 26th June 2023

'The Two William Morrises of Oxfordshire' by Marie-Louise Kerr

#### Wednesday 5th July 2023

Visit to Aston Pottery Gardens, at 11am

#### Saturday 15th July 2023

SUMMER BARBECUE

*(Evening: details to be announced)*



The  
Marcham  
Society

Monday 27th March  
7.15 for 7.45pm  
Main Hall  
Marcham Centre



What do Asquith, Betjeman and  
Wytham Woods have in common?  
Blue Plaques in the Vale  
*Robert Evans FBA*

Robert Evans FBA, is Regius Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Oxford. Until his retirement he specialized in the post-medieval history of east-central Europe. His main areas of interest now are local and ecological history. He has been Chair of Abingdon Area Archaeology and History Society and he is at present chair of the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board.

#### Upcoming Events

- Thursday, 9th March 12.30pm: Marcham Society Midweek Walk – for more details contact [e.dunford@btinternet.com](mailto:e.dunford@btinternet.com)
- Thursday, 16th March 7pm: Marcham Society Astronomy Group, Small Hall @ Marcham Centre – for more details contact [jim.asher@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.asher@btinternet.com).

For more information contact [membership@marchamsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@marchamsociety.org.uk)

[www.marchamsociety.org.uk](http://www.marchamsociety.org.uk)

Facebook: [marchamsociety](https://www.facebook.com/marchamsociety)

The next Midweek Walk is planned for

**Thursday 9th March 2023**

Please email Eric in advance for further information: [e.dunford@btinternet.com](mailto:e.dunford@btinternet.com)