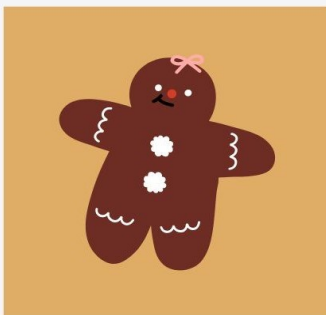


*The  
Marcham  
Society*

**DECEMBER 2024**  
**Volume 7, Issue 11**

# Newsletter

**Our Christmas Party is on Monday  
2nd December at 6.30pm**



To join our party, please email: [Shirley.MarSoc@gmail.com](mailto:Shirley.MarSoc@gmail.com)

## THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

A round-up of astronomy sightings during November, followed by a fun multiple choice Christmas Quiz with refreshments!



**Thursday 12th December 2024** at 7 pm in the Small Hall,  
Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

### *Visible over Marcham in December*

- **Thursday 5th** – Crescent Moon left of Venus early evening twilight
- **Saturday 7th** – Jupiter at opposition (nearest to earth /in-line with the Sun)
- **Saturday 14th** – Near-full moon above Jupiter (Eastern sky – evening)

*The visible planets: Me, V, Ma, J, S, U, N*

*New moon: Sunday 1st December*

*Full moon: Sunday 15th December*

*Remember to send in your own photos!*

The Moon taken by Jim Asher on 12<sup>th</sup> November at 16:25



For more details or to join the emailing list: [astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk](mailto:astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk)



# ASTON MARTIN HERITAGE TRUST *Page 3*

*Photos from our visit on Thursday 21st November 2024*



Thank you to Shirley Eccles and Max Sinclair for their photos and also a thank you to Shirley for organising this enjoyable visit.





# "Fungi of Oxfordshire's Golden Triangle"

A review of the talk given by Judy Webb given on Monday 28th October

Judy Webb began her fascinating talk on "Fungi of Oxfordshire's Golden Triangle" by explaining that the term had been coined because of the number of rare plants, not just fungi, found in the sandy heaths around Frilford and Cothill. She stressed the importance of fungi in recycling nutrients - without them, leaves would just lie on the surface smothering new growth and the chemicals in them would be locked there and unavailable to other plants.

Judy explained that the bit of the fungus seen above ground is the fruiting body, usually produced in the autumn. The bulk of the fungus lives underground and consists of fine threads known as mycelia. One of the largest plants in the world is 9km of mycelia in a National Park in Oregon. Plants with small seeds such as orchids also need fungi to feed them until they can develop leaves and photosynthesise, food then travels in the opposite direction as the plants feed the fungus. Gardeners can buy mycelium to add to the soil when planting shrubs to help their root systems establish.

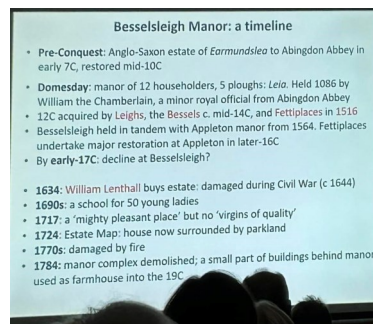
Before going hunting for fungi Judy stressed the need to be able to identify which species are poisonous, though she pointed out that touching the fungi wasn't dangerous but eating even half a death cup toadstool was enough to kill an adult. Identification is aided by smell, discolouration on being cut and also by creating a spore print, leaving a toadstool cap lying on paper overnight as different species produce different colour spores. She also told us about the importance of fungi to forensic science, citing a case of badger baiting where the earth from a suspect's boots contained spores of truffles, a woodland species and a great favourite with badgers, not likely to be found in fields apart from near badger setts, not conclusive proof but one more piece of evidence.

Judy illustrated her talks with lots of super photos and also brought along a wide range of specimens for us to see, touch and smell. I always think an interesting talk generates lots of questions and this one certainly did that.

*Sheila Dunford*

# "Excavations at Besselsleigh Manor"

A talk given by Jane Harrison on Monday 25th November 2024

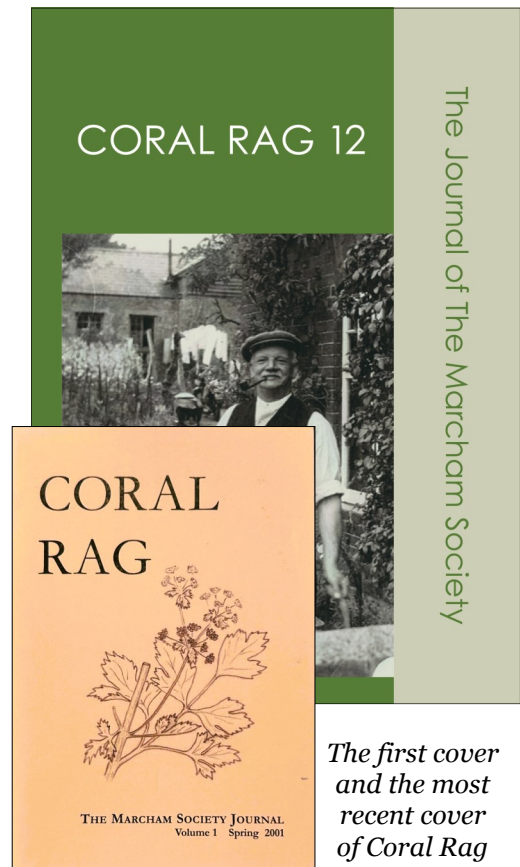


*Coral Rag* is the Journal of the Marcham Society and its name is taken from the local coral rag-stone (Corallian limestone) on which Marcham stands. To quote Eric Dunford who wrote the foreword of the first volume in 2001:

*“This title was chosen to show that we want to contain some lighter material as well as the more serious reports, but it also draws attention to the fact that our whole environment is based on the Corallian rocks beneath our feet and that most of our old buildings are made of this ‘rag’ stone.”*

Since then there have been another eleven volumes published with a variety of articles covering Archaeology, Natural History, History and many other topics that relate to the parish of Marcham and the surrounding countryside.

Most of these past volumes are still available in the Village Shop or from Sheila Tilley at our regular meetings.



## ***CORAL RAG 13***

To celebrate the 30th year of the Marcham Society, we would like to publish a further volume, Coral Rag 13. We have a few articles already submitted but we would like to invite the members to write a contribution that involves the natural history, the past or more recent history of the village or its parish.

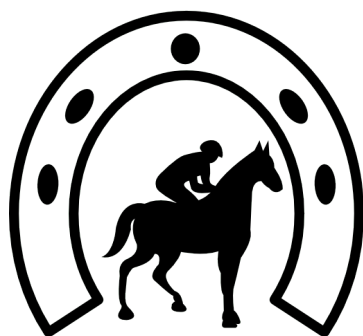
We would hope to review and collate articles by the end of January with the plan to be in print by Summer 2025. If you have a suggestion or an interest in writing a short piece, please contact:

Sheila Tilley: [sheilajtilley@gmail.com](mailto:sheilajtilley@gmail.com)

## The Midweek Walk

The December Midweek Walk  
will start at 12.30 on  
**Thursday 5th December**

We will be meeting at the  
**Horse and Jockey Pub**  
25 Faringdon Road  
Stanford-in-the-Vale  
SN7 8NN



For more details on this or future  
walks please contact Eric Dunford:  
[e.dunford@btinternet.com](mailto:e.dunford@btinternet.com)  
01865 391439



**Wednesday 5th February 2025:**  
A visit to the Energy Recovery Facility  
at Ardley 10am - details will follow.



[www.viridor.co.uk/energy/energy-recovery-facilities/ardley-erf](http://www.viridor.co.uk/energy/energy-recovery-facilities/ardley-erf)

## Programme for 2024/25

*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.*

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**Monday 2nd December:** The Christmas Party 6.30pm

**Thursday 5th December:** Midweek Walk (*see on the left*)

**Thursday 12th December:** Astronomy Group 7pm (*see page 2*)

## 2025

**Thursday 16th January:** Astronomy Group 7pm  
*"What JWST is teaching us about galaxies"* a talk by Prof Andy Bunker

**Monday 27th January:** Annual Lecture: *"World Youth Service and Enterprise Charity"* a talk by Andrew McDowell

**Wednesday 5th February:** Trip to the Energy Recovery Facility at Ardley 10am (*see on the left*)

**Thursday 13th February:** Astronomy Group 7pm  
*"Solar missions and the role of RAL"* a talk by Richard Harrison

**Monday 24th February:** *"Coleshill: Nerve Centre of British Resistance"* a talk by Gillian Cane

**Thursday 13th March:** Astronomy Group 7pm  
*"A History of the Calendar - What happened to the Missing Ten Days"* a talk by Kevin Langley

**Monday 24th March:** *"A History of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon"* a talk by Jackie Smith

**Thursday 10th April:** Astronomy Group 7pm

**Monday 28th April:**  
*"George Owen, Royal Physician"* a talk by Paul Whitton

## Marcham and District News

MAD News for December 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)