



# Marcham

## SOCIETY

October  
2025  
Volume 9  
Issue 8

### Our second talk of the 2025/26 season

#### ***The Port of Wantage by Sem Seaborne***

Monday 27th October at 7.15 for 7.45pm



Why would anyone want to bring boats into Wantage and continue doing it for 85 years? This is a story of why the Port was vital and the impact it had on life in Wantage, including some that were unintentional. Discover the effect that canal 'visitors' had in the days when the best faggots in Berkshire could be found at the Jolly Waterman on Wantage Wharf!

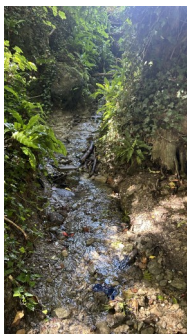
Dr. Sem Seaborne is a scientist and volunteer at the Vale & Downland Museum in Wantage. He has researched aspects of Wantage life in the early nineteenth century when the town was known as "Black Wantage", one of the most depraved and corrupt towns in the south of England!

**Members free of charge, Guests welcome at £5**

*Please see page 5 for details about **Marcham Uncovered**  
Encourage your friends and family to visit the Exhibition on 18th & 19th October*



## September's Midweek Walk around Wantage Page 2



Thank you to Martin Whild for organising this outing and leading us on such an interesting walk around Wantage.

The next midweek walk is planned for **Tuesday 21st October** from the Seven Stars, Marsh Baldon



## The Astronomy Meeting on Wednesday 17th September

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We had a good turnout for the first meeting of this new 2025-26 season – thank you to all who came, including our new Marcham Society members.

Following the round-up of news and members' images over the summer months, the first part of the evening focused on meridians. Simon Blackmore talked about the first meridian

(through the Canary Islands) dating from Ptolemy around 150AD, the setting in 1634 by Louis XIII of the Paris meridian, and the later adoption of the Greenwich meridian in 1883 as the prime meridian. In 2000, France celebrated the Paris meridian with a millennium project, 'La Méridienne Verte' - a line of trees planted from the north to the south of France and officially 'unveiled' on Bastille Day, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2000.

Jim Asher then showed the two meridian lines dating from the 1570s marked in the Santa Maria Novella basilica in Florence with holes (gnomons) projecting the

sun on to the floor; and the Greenwich meridian, with a simple experiment showing that the time when the sun is due south deviates a little from midday GMT during the year (by as much as 20 minutes each way), following what is known as the 'Equation of Time'.

The second part, presented by Bartle Frere, was a short film made by Epic Spaceman to explain in simple graphic terms current knowledge of exo-planets (planets around stars outside our solar system), the vast number of exoplanets indicated by recent observations, and how many of these may be within a habitable range of environmental conditions.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30pm, which will feature a talk by Pat Wallace (retired from Rutherford-Appleton Space) on "Close Encounters of the Telescopic Kind". We look forward to catching up with you then.

*On the right, Jim Asher speaks to the meeting about David Willis who died recently. David was an expert on Solar and Magnetospheric Physics and he was an enthusiastic member of the group. He will be greatly missed.*



For information on **Epic Spaceman**: <https://www.youtube.com/c/epicspaceman>

# The AGM and the Portable Antiquities Scheme on Monday 22nd September

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After the usual friendly chat, refreshments and general announcements, the evening started with a short AGM where the Chairman gave his annual report, the 2024/25 accounts were approved and the new 2025/26 committee were elected.

Judith Howarth and Rosemary Harwood left the committee and John Scoble on behalf of the Society thanked them for their past work and dedication.

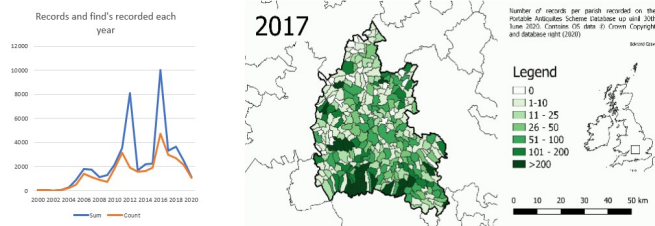
## The Marcham Society Election of Committee

The Committee members for 2024/5 and those standing for election in 2025/6 are:

Position	2024/5	2025/6
<b>Chair</b>	John Scoble	John Scoble
<b>Treasurer</b>	Shirley Eccles	Shirley Eccles
<b>Secretary</b>	Bartle Frere	Bartle Frere
<b>Membership Sec.</b>	Simon Blackmore	Simon Blackmore
	Eric Dunford	Eric Dunford
	Sheila Dunford	Sheila Dunford
	Judith Haworth	
	Di Hutchins	Di Hutchins
	Sheila Tilley	Sheila Tilley
(co-opted 2024/5)	Rosemary Harwood	
(co-opted 2024/5)	Jim Asher	Jim Asher
		Max Sinclair

## Oxfordshire and the PAS

- 36,112 records have been created for objects from Oxfordshire
- These record over 51,757 objects
- These were brought to the PAS by over 3628 finders
- And then recorded by over 290 individuals



There followed a talk by Dr Edward Caswell who works for the Oxfordshire Museums Service. In his talk he explained how artefacts found by the public and registered with the 'Portable Antiquities Scheme' can help archaeologists by adding to our understanding of local history and prehistory. He also showed how anyone can do their own research by using this extensive database.



For more information of the Portable Antiquity Scheme:-

<https://finds.org.uk>



## The new 2025-26 programme

Unless otherwise announced, talks will take place in the Main Hall at the Marcham Centre. Doors open at 7.15 for 7.45pm start.

### October

- Wednesday 8th:** Ashmolean Gallery visit and talk - 10.30 am (*now full*)
- Wednesday 15th:** Astronomy Meeting - 7.30 Small Hall, Marcham Centre  
"Close Encounters of the Telescope Kind" a talk by Pat Wallace
- Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th:** Marcham Uncovered - 30th Anniversary Exhibition with Craft and Gift Fair on the Sunday (*see below*)
- Tuesday 21st:** Midweek Walk 12.30 from the Seven Stars, Marsh Baldon, OX44 9LP
- Monday 27th:** "The Port of Wantage" a talk by Sem Seaborne



Look out for links, photos and reminders on the Marcham Society Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/marchamsociety>



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CORAL RAG 13

The Journal of The Marcham Society



EXHIBITION



**Marcham**  
UNCOVERED

Saturday 18th October 1330-1800  
Sunday 19th October 1000-1700

**The Marcham Society**  
celebrating 30 years

Come along to Marcham Centre and learn about...

**where Marcham came from**  
archaeology, geology and rivers

**local history**  
from the Domesday Book to present day

**people, places, events**  
where you live, village life and more

**natural history**  
wildlife, nature reserves and our own Astronomy group

**the future**  
planned growth and the proposed reservoir

Take part in...

**guided walks** around the village\*

**astronomy viewing** through telescopes\*

**worksheets/quizzes** for all the family

\*weather permitting

...with refreshments



Marcham Centre

On Sunday 19th October 1000-1700

**Craft and Gift Fair**

in the Small Hall at Marcham Centre

Come and browse for unique gifts  
at the same time as visiting

**Marcham Uncovered**