

MARCHAM SOCIETY MEETING 14 March 2006
PAST LANDSCAPES, RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

Early Landscapes in the Dorchester-on-Thames area

Karen Selway-Richards began her talk by pointing out that the English landscape has been continuously remodelled since Neolithic times. Aerial photographs taken in the 1930s showed patterns of earthworks and crop marks around Dorchester and sites of Neolithic long barrows have been identified at Warborough. More complete monuments have survived in Wiltshire and Dorset, where it has been more common over time to graze animals on the land, rather than cultivate crops.

'Curcus' (bank/ditch constructions) have been found parallel to the river at Benson and Dorchester, but their function is uncertain. 'Henges' (monuments surrounded by ditches) only occur in the British Isles and it is possible that animal and human sacrifices took place within them. A large ringed henge was found during gravel extraction at Dorchester in the 1950s.

In the Bronze Age, barrows became circular. Well-drained land was cleared to build settlements of thatched round houses. Dyke Hills at Dorchester was a settlement enclosed by dykes and the River Thames. This became Britain's first scheduled monument in the 1800s.

During Roman times, Dorchester was at the junction of roads from east to west and north to south. It became one of the first walled settlements in Britain. A burial site was established on the eastern side of the River Thame which was in use until Mediaeval times.

JUDITH FONTAINE

MARCHAM SOCIETY WALK

Midweek Walk on Thursday, April 6th.

This month's walk will start in the pretty hamlet of Church Hanborough and explore the low hills between it and Freeland. We will meet at The Hand and Shears Public House in Church Hanborough (Map Ref: SP426128) at 12.30pm for lunch or 1.30 for the walk of about 4½ miles. As always, new walkers are very welcome. Members free, non-members £1. Ring Eric Dunford on 391439 for lifts and further details.

ON THE BUSES

Thames Travel X15 is ideal for exploring the Thames Path, just a pity that the road at Newbridge was closed last month. Hopefully all is well there and we shall get some warmer weather. Walking from Newbridge (X15 at 0917, and hourly, from Frilford Road) took us to Swinford Bridge and Stagecoach 100 to Oxford and the bus home from St Aldates. (see March MADNews).



If you enjoy a longer walk then continue from Swinford Bridge past Godstow and Binsey, parts of the canal system and out on to Botley Road in Oxford, with a walk to St Aldates for the bus. To do that section on its own (it's worth it) catch Stagecoach 32 from Marcham to Oxford (0956 and every hour) and then Stagecoach 100, every 15 minutes from George Street to Farmoor. Stagecoach 33 back from St Aldates to Marcham is at 20 past each hour.

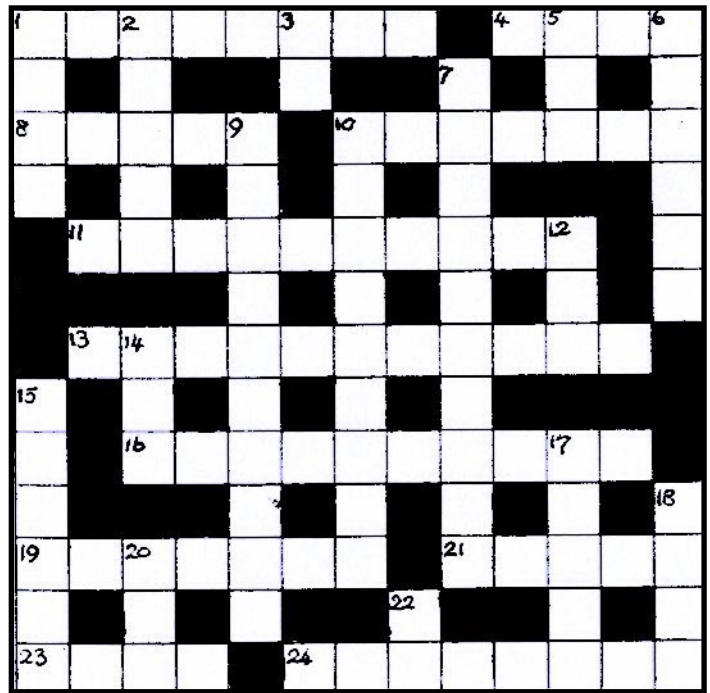
Thames Travel are painting their all-white buses a splendid green and blue with a white line curving across the side to show the River so don't miss one by mistake!

Make sure you get a timetable for Stagecoach 31, 32, 33 from the Post Office showing the mostly hourly service to Wantage, Abingdon, Oxford. There are two very bad gaps in the service in the morning Monday to Fridays: nothing to Abingdon and Oxford between 0826 and 0956, and to Wantage between 0801 and 0951.

Gone are the Stagecoach X31 express journeys to Oxford but there is a new Stagecoach X30 express, mostly half-hourly, from Wantage to Oxford along the A338 and A420. At the time of going to press we are waiting to discover if it will stop at Frilford - it did not seem as if it was intended to do so when the timetable was published.

BUS SPOTTER

APRIL'S CROSSWORD BY ALISA



ACROSS

- 1 & 21 Curved road (8,5)
- 4 Cease (4)
- 8 Slit (5)
- 10 Ape (7)
- 11 Exercises (10)
- 13 Bob Anderson's hobby (4,7)
- 16 Excessive indulgence (10)
- 19 Sort of buying (7)
- 21 See 1
- 23 Gem (4)
- 24 Windy (8)

DOWN

- 1 Bird (4)
- 2 Sort of godmother (5)
- 3 Former spouse (2)
- 5 Meal (3)
- 6 Like better (6)
- 7 Old northern craft (6,4)
- 9 Telephone answering service (10)
- 10 Lion-guarded building (9)
- 12 Giver of light (3)
- 14 Finish (3)
- 15 Sort of citizen (6)
- 17 Fish (5)
- 18 Sort of light (4)
- 20 Crown or Dog (3)
- 22 God of 12 (2)

The Marcham Society

All Saints' Church
 Tuesday 11th April 2006, 7.45pm

Wildlife from pre-history
 Diane Wilson will be talking to us about our local dragonflies.

Non-members £1
 Further details: Janey Cumber (391327) or Judith Fontaine (391275)

www.marchamsociety.org.uk