

**MARCHAM SOCIETY**

The speaker at the November meeting of the Marcham Society was Dr Robert Bewley who is Head of Survey at English Heritage. His title used to be "Head of Aerial Survey" and he has spent many years working in aerial photography for archaeological purposes. We watched an interesting series of slides, with an entertaining and informative commentary. The first slide was taken (not by him!) from a balloon over Paris in 1858. Soon after the success of aeroplane flight in 1903, aerial archaeology literally took off and we saw a slide of Stonehenge taken in 1906. Aerial reconnaissance was used in World War I and the Germans set up a unit to film ancient sites for archaeological research. In 1920 an archaeological division of the Ordnance Survey was set up so that all discoveries, such as crop circles, tracks etc., could be added to maps.

We saw a number of slides showing examples of prehistoric and Roman sites and also sites in the Middle East. In Jordan, which was the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire, strange marks have been seen, known as wheelhouses or jellyfish, and kite shapes, thought to be gazelle traps.

Taking aerial photos just asks the questions. The photos have to be interpreted and mapped, and catalogued in the National Archives at Swindon. There is a desperate need for more trained archaeologists to interpret the thousands of photos being taken each year. With only 25 fully trained aerial archaeologists in England and only one in each of Scotland and Wales, it is a massive task. English Heritage then has to decide what must be preserved, and what to leave uninvestigated. The criteria are the rarity of the site, the group value and the importance to regional identity.

One interesting point was that you need to know who to ask for permission to fly and film. In Jordan, a visit by the Red Arrows gave the opportunity to ask the late King Hussein. He was delighted to say yes. His brother, the chief of the Jordanian Air Force, and the new King Abdullah have continued the co-operation.

At the end we were able to look at some very recent aerial photos of Abingdon - so recent that they had not yet been catalogued. This produced some animated discussion as to which part of Abingdon was featured - perhaps emphasising how different things look from a vertical viewpoint, and how necessary it is to have trained operatives to "read the pictures".

*LT*

**MARCHAM SOCIETY WALK****Midweek Walk, Tuesday January 6th**

The next Marcham Society Midweek Walk will be on the **first Tuesday** of January. We will meet in the Boar's Head at Ardington (Map Ref: SU 4333883) at 12.30pm to eat or 1.30 for a short winter stroll through the estate villages of West and East Lockinge and back. New walkers are always very welcome.

Members free, non-members £1.

Ring Eric Dunford on 391439 for lifts and further details.

**SUNSHINE CLUB**

**Dec:** This month's social meeting we had a small sale table, with Christmas gifts. Chairlady did lots of pots with artificial flowers which looked very nice. We thank everyone who gave and those who brought. We also had a tombola which did very well and Alice had her lovely hand-made cards on sale with a nice selection. Tea and cakes were served afternoon ended with a grand raffle.

On 12th of this month we had our Christmas party at the Lantern restaurant, Steventon for the third year running. It was really lovely, as always. We all come away feeling one wouldn't want any more food for a day or two! Everyone enjoyed, finished with a Christmas raffle - our thanks to all who yet again come with things to contribute towards this, our special events wouldn't be so without members' help and support. Funds from these all go towards the outings etc.

Monday 15th December will be our last meeting for this year with mince pies, wine and our last really grand raffle for this year. Also each member will be receiving a Tesco gift voucher for £5.00 as appreciation of their support. We also have a gift given by Mrs Smith, a lovely pair of slippers, to be a special raffle - many thanks to her for this.

We are very sad to hear of the death of one member, Lillian Butterson, who live in Duffield Place. Everyone is in shock as it was unexpected, our thoughts go out to her family. She was a very nice person, always cheerful and enjoyed coming to the club - she will certainly be missed by us all. A card of condolence has been sent from the club.

We shall restart Monday club on 5th January 2004, also committee meeting. We would like to wish members a happy and healthy new year 04, also the team and everyone.

*J CROOK*

**MARCHAM SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB**

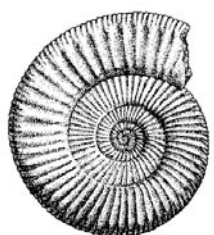
November 27th our last meeting, we had Mr Lawrence to entertain us with some slides, places of interest he himself had visited. He asked if any of us recognised the locations, a few members did, we all found it very interesting. We had an extra raffle this month, thanks to Ena Dewsnap and Edna Wright who each gave a doll. The first lucky ticket belonged to Jill Hoskins, the second drawn went to Vi Gawler. A word of thanks to Joyce and Hubert Smith for their generous donation, also Alice Campion, we are extremely grateful. One of our members, Mary McIlwrath had a special birthday this month, a plant and some choes were given. We all hoped Mary enjoyed her day. Later we all enjoyed tea and biscuits and ended the meeting with our usual raffle.

The committee would like to thank all members for their support during the year and to wish one and all a very happy and healthy new year 2004.

Our next meeting, which is the AGM, will be on January 29th, 2.30pm. See you all then.

*Some sad news has just reached us - one of our members, Lillian Butterson passed away in hospital.*

*EC & BR*



*The  
Marcham  
Society*

**Juliet Phipps will be talking about  
conservation work done by the  
National Trust from their workshops  
at Coleshill near Faringdon**

*The Institute, North Street*

*Tuesday January 20<sup>th</sup> 2004 7.45pm*

Non-members £1

Further details: Eric Dunford (391439) or Judith Fontaine (391275)