



MI8 on the trail of baddies in Yellow Peril

MEETING 16 Nov: PONDS FOR WILDLIFE

The speaker for our second meeting at the church was Rod Diala of the Pond Conservation Trust for Oxfordshire. The aim of the Trust is to encourage and assist individuals and organisations in the creation and management of ponds, to provide habitats for wildlife. The still water of a pond is warm and shallow, enabling wildlife to move around more freely and become more abundant.

Rod advised against using a hose to fill a pond. It is best to construct one in the late summer and let autumn rains fill it. A wide margin around the edge aids plants and wildlife that thrive in mud. High-growing grasses outside this margin help prevent debris being blown into the pond. Water from road run-off is a problem, as it contains heavy metals and other pollutants.

A wide variety of plants helps prevent a pond being choked by one or two rampant species, as well as encouraging a wide diversity of wildlife. However, Rod warned against the following (imported) plants that take over ponds and are very difficult to remove: water fern, parrot's feather, floating pennywort and Australian swamp stonecrop (take note the Antipodean section!).

Well-managed ponds teem with wildlife such as water fleas, great water diving beetles, medicinal leeches and newts. Butterflies enjoy the salt in the mud of drying-out edges and birds drink and feed. Of course, frogs and toads feature and Rod had an amusing story about toads. They like to travel to ponds at dusk when roads are busy, so many end up squashed. Tunnels were constructed under some roads, but needed regular clearing using high-pressure hoses. Rod and his colleagues were puzzled that the toads were avoiding the tunnels and risking road-crossing again. It was some time before they realised that puddles had been left when the tunnels were cleared. Toads don't like getting their feet wet!

JF

MIDWEEK WALK

Marcham Society Walk. Thursday January 6th.
This month we will be covering another stretch of the Wilts and Berks Canal, to the west of Wantage. We will meet at The Hatchet Inn in Childrey (Map Ref: SU363874) at 12.30pm for lunch or 1.30 for the 4 mile walk following the partially restored canal to East and West Challow. Members free, non-members £1.
Ring Eric Dunford on 391439 for lifts and further details. New walkers are always very welcome.

THE MARCHAM PLAYERS

A wonderful evening was had by all at the recent 15th Anniversary screening of **Yellow Peril**. Thirty-six members of the original cast and production team were joined by family and many friends at All Saints' Church which had been transformed into a cinema for the occasion. It was a truly memorable evening and Bartle and I would like to thank all those who helped to make it so. Many people had travelled considerable distances to be there, not least the star of the film Chief (Michael Barratt) and five other members of the MI8 gang of children. This was a real re-union of old friends and many happy tales were exchanged as we reminisced over the making of the film during the summer of 1987. Thank you to Joey Maclean for providing a sumptuous buffet and also to Matthew Hill for his technical expertise in projecting the film. Plans are afoot to release the film on DVD. Watch this space ...

Marcham Players celebrated Christmas with more wining and dining, this time at The Crown. We enjoyed a most festive Christmas meal accompanied by speeches and carol singing. A most satisfactory conclusion to a busy year for the Players.

We are always keen to welcome new members, whether it be as actors, producers, set builders, or supporters. We have a varied social programme as well as our productions, and although we are currently without a home through the temporary loss of The Institute, we have many plans for the future. Forthcoming dates include:

- Monday 3rd January: Theatre trip to "A Christmas Carol", Cowley Works, Oxford
 - Friday 14th January: Play Reading at Manor Farm
 - Date to be announced: our Annual General Meeting.
- Joey Maclean, our secretary, can provide further details on request (01865 391242)

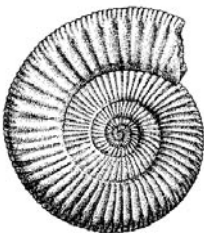
TIM OWEN

**TALKING SCIENCE
AT RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY
14 January 2005: 10:30am and 1:30pm: 15+; 7pm: 14+
'Excuse me Dr Chadwick, but I think you're mistaken!'**

Dr Chris Frost, ISIS

James Chadwick discovered the neutron in 1932. Shortly afterwards in an interview in the Times he told the world that whilst it was of great scientific interest, the neutron was not important to 'humanity in general'. This talk will show how Chadwick was wrong, by describing the science of the ISIS pulsed neutron source at the CCLRC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, this facility has put the neutron to work for humanity providing us with a unique view of the world of atoms, molecules and matter.
Admission to the lectures and open afternoon are by ticket only. Please contact the Talking Science booking line on 01235 445959 to book your tickets. Lecture Reservations must be made in advance from four weeks before the date of each lecture.

Let's get talking...



*The
Marcham
Society*

All Saints' Church
Tuesday January 18th 2005, 7.45pm

Witney,
a town built on blankets?
A talk given by Charles Gott

Non-members £1 www.marchamsociety.org.uk
Further details: Eric Dunford (391439) or Judith Fontaine (391275)