

MARCHAM SOCIETY: APRIL 2005 MEETING

The Marcham Society met on 12th April at All Saints' Church for a talk by Dr John Wilson, of Cogges Farm Museum on farming in the 19th century.

We were met by a display of farm implements arranged on a long table on the steps of the altar; they were mostly made of wood or horn, and were a sombre sight; they were flanked by two smocks, one a work-a-day and one a Sunday-go-to-meeting smock, both again buff-coloured and displayed incongruously on female stuffed mannequins; the brightest exhibit was a red-and-yellow model of an Oxfordshire waisted wagon.

These somewhat drab exhibits did not prepare us for the wit and wisdom of Dr Wilson's talk; ripples of laughter spread through the church, as he recounted stories of his encounters with the previous owners of the exhibits, whether dealers or farmers; of the use to which the tools had been put; of the advantages of the developing methods and benefits of nineteenth century agricultural practice. As he spoke, the ways of a previous generation became personified in their tools – a much-mended horn horse-comb secured in brass; the tools which farmers used to treat sick animals; bells whose sound indicated where the sheep were but which also gave lonely shepherds some semblance of company. We were shown several instruments to prevent the horns of cattle from puncturing valuable hides, either their own or others'; and a framed and treasured 'certificate of stability' for 6 years and 9 months' service. A poignant piece was a wooden clapper for children to use to scare birds away from growing corn and which, in those unpolluted silences, allowed the farmer to hear whether they were working.

Dr Wilson pointed out that, while fifty years ago most people had access to the countryside and knew how a working farm was run, nowadays even children living in the country do not often see farming in progress. He emphasised the importance to historians of keeping old tools and records, and also showed how buying can be a form of research.

At the end of the talk we were able to examine the display; seen close to, the smocks were particularly fascinating, one of them beautifully embroidered all over its wide collar and both smocked for thickness and warmth. The balance and weight of the tools and implements gave us insight into the life of farm workers a century and more ago, and their ingenuity in creating tools for the job in hand from materials which were easily available.

The Museum at Cogges Farm will offer 'twilight tours' on evenings during summer, either for groups or for individuals. There are also tours of the working farm, with old breeds of horses, cattle and sheep on show; and shearing and steam threshing can be seen taking place.

More details of this from the Museum on 01993 772702.

MJ

MARCHAM AND WW2 EXHIBITION 7TH – 8TH MAY

All Saints' Church

Sat. 2pm – 6 pm, Sun. 2 – 4 pm
A look at life in Marcham and district in the middle of the last century and the effect on it of the 2nd World War



MARCHAM SOCIETY WALK: THUR 12 MAY

Our May walk will return to the River Leach, familiar to those with long memories of earlier Bank Holiday walks. This will take in the villages of Eastleach Turville, Eastleach Martin and Southrop with long stretches of the beautiful river valley. We will meet at The Victoria Inn in Eastleach Turville (Map Ref: SP198053), north of Lechlade, at 12.30pm for lunch or 1.30 for the 4½ mile walk. As always, new walkers are very welcome. Members free, non-members £1. Ring Eric Dunford on 391439 for lifts and further details.

**TUBNEY GARDEN FETE
NEW VENUE – TUBNEY HOUSE**

The Tubney Garden Fete is on Saturday 4th June, at 2.30 pm, in the grounds of Tubney House, in aid of Tubney Church Funds.

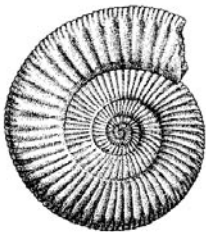
- many stalls
- games
- raffles
- refreshments.
- free car parking

If you have anything to give, please contact the Vicar 01865 390803.
Do come and enjoy the afternoon with your family and friends!



14 May – 5 June 2005

You can pick up a guide at Abingdon Library, Tourist Information Centres, libraries, art galleries, museums, art shops and hotels around Oxfordshire to find out about lots of exciting events and exhibitions all over the county. Contact the Artweeks office on 01865 861574 or go to www.artweeks.org

 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">The Marcham Society</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">Monthly meeting</p> <p>Members will be talking about their research including more details about some of the topics included in the exhibition. <i>Visitors welcome</i></p>
<p>All Saints' Church Tuesday May 10th 2005, 7.45pm</p>	<p>Non-members £1 Further details: Janey Cumber (391327) or Judith Fontaine (391275)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.marchamsociety.org.uk</p>

If you are viewing this in PDF on our website, most "www" references are links!