
TOWER_{AND}TOWN



Natural Marlborough

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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

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Natural Marlborough

I know I am not alone in my love for the natural world. From childhood, family walks and the nature table at primary school fostered my interest. Television takes us beyond the local, enabling us to see creatures in natural habitats which we can never hope to visit, the superb photography presenting us with breathtaking scenes. All too often, however, we are also confronted with distressing messages about pollution, habitat loss and endangerment or, worse still, extinction of animals. I am left wondering what I can do about it.

The answer is complicated but part of it, I am sure, is to treasure what we have around us. The contributors to this edition do just that. Trevor Dobie writes eloquently of the wildlife in his garden. Anna Forbes describes her inspirational work for ARK, Gareth Harris his patient championing of the dormouse and Louise



Sleeping Dormouse © Gareth Harris

Cookson her care of her bees. Ellie Tull, Morgan Taylor and Henry Maulik show how the natural environment in Marlborough and its surroundings has inspired them in different ways. John Price's article about the connexions of the Victorian nature writer, Richard Jefferies, with Marlborough shows that this is nothing new. By way of contrast, Lily Smith shares with us her transformative experience of volunteering in Gunjur. I hope you enjoy this stroll through the Marlborough countryside and beyond .

Sarah Bumphrey: Editor

Front Cover: ARK River School with Marlborough St Mary's at Stonebridge May 2019

Compiler: Hugh de Saram

Proof readers: Mike Jackson and Julia Peel

In A Marlborough Garden

Trevor Dobie

Spring - a positive time of year. Leaves unfurl and the first flowers reveal their bright, happy colours. Daylight hours increase and a frenzy of wildlife activity returns to the garden. The small pond is full of frog spawn and newts are returning, unexpectedly, after the erasure of the Van Diemen's wildlife haven. A visiting heron has its patience rewarded by a meal of an unwary frog. Blue and Great tits squabble for the best nest boxes, while blackbirds, thrushes, robins and chaffinches start their dawn chorus. As the clocks change, nest building is well under way and birds gather moss from the unruly lawn. Insects increase in numbers – vital for the food chain.

April rolls into May, hatching tadpoles crowd around the pond's edge whilst the first swallows and swifts announce their return. A green woodpecker hops around the lawn, probing ant nests for food. Finches squabble over the sunflower hearts while starlings boldly and greedily empty the window feeders. A blackcap patrols the wildlife hedge, his wonderful warble betraying his perch. Occasionally, a sparrowhawk swoops in for a meal!

As summer arrives, juvenile birds beg food from harassed parents. The trail camera reveals visits of muntjac, foxes and hedgehogs. Bats hunt above the pond on balmy evenings. (Sadly, slow worms are yet to return following the recent school development.)

Nights lengthen, autumn approaches, summer visitors depart and froglets leave the pond. Dragonflies lay eggs around the pond's margins, their wispy wings crackling on rushes and stones. With the first frosts, the natural hedge begins to drop its leaves revealing previously hidden bird nests. Foraging is restricted during the cold months as natural food becomes scarce. Small birds depend more on feeders. Sunflower hearts are favoured, along with mealworms and suet pellets. Loose flocks of finches and tits visit periodically, brightening up the winter scene.

Hidden in the bleakness of winter, amphibians take up residence in the untidy corners of the garden; log piles give shelter to hibernating hedgehogs while ivy provides a roost for many birds and insects.

Spring is not far away...



Fox by Pond (night vision camera)

The River Kennet is a rare chalk stream flowing through the centre of the town. We have otter, water vole, kingfisher, brown trout and a host of other native wildlife in Marlborough. They thrive because they have a healthy river, i.e. the habitats that these creatures need is present and is joined up.

As a Project Officer and Volunteer Co-ordinator for the charity Action for the River Kennet (ARK), my days are varied, from running our education projects (such as Eels in School over three months with five schools) to finding funding to make projects happen. I really enjoy working with schools and groups to connect them with their river. Both involve getting in the river, having fun and expanding people's knowledge about their river and its wildlife. I hope that most children in the town now know what a *cased caddis* is!

Currently I am running a river restoration project in Manton and planning ones for Ramsbury and Little Bedwyn. Stonebridge Wild River Reserve is such an asset to the town and, through our volunteer tasks and community days there, so many people are playing an active part in conservation at the reserve, both in the river and on land. Having a great team of over 170 volunteers means we can deliver high quality work in an economical way.

We can all contribute to preserving the Kennet; here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Reduce water use (the less we use the more is left to keep our river flowing).
- ◆ Buy phosphate-free cleaning products.
- ◆ Start gardening with native plants that cope with long dry periods and sudden downpours.
- ◆ Consider creating a rain garden (less need for watering and creating places for rain to slowly permeate into the ground)
- ◆ Riparian owners could have a buffer strip of native marginal vegetation along the riverbank - great habitat for any species, preventing erosion and filtering runoff.
- ◆ Join ARK (every project we deliver needs funding, membership is £20 a year for an individual or just £30 for a family).
- ◆ Become an ARK volunteer - contact anna@riverkennet.org or visit our website for the latest Volunteer Programme.

For more information visit our website www.riverkennet.org or follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/riverkennet.

What made you want to keep bees?

I grew up on a farm and would often go to small local shows. There was always a bee tent. I loved the smell of the wax and the honey and seeing all you could do with bees. They are fascinating.

How long have you kept bees?

For 14 years. I have 4 hives in my garden. I can walk down at any time of the day and see what my bees are doing, watch them and see what they need.

What are the pleasures of beekeeping?

There's the produce of the hives – honey and wax. Once you understand how the hive works, which takes some years, it's very relaxing. You have to be calm and gentle with the bees. It's also very sociable. I belong to Newbury Beekeepers Association. We have monthly bee meetings where we have bee teas and eat cake. I have learnt a lot from them.

Are there any problems?

Most hives have the varroa mite. We have to manage it by using a series of chemical treatments in the autumn after we've removed the honey. The mites drop off the bees through the mesh floor. I get stung every now and again. I have built up a resistance and it feels like the sting of a stinging nettle. I don't like being stung in my face and I have learnt to wear a bee suit.

What is the honey like?

As I live near the forest, water-meadows, farms and gardens my bees have access to a range of plants. Rape greatly influences the honey; it can set solid in a week so you have to make sure you get it out of the frame in time. Some people think it smells cabbage-y but I like it. Tree honey (lime, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut) is darker. Summer honey tastes more floral.

Do they have favourite flowers?

Bees prefer single flowers. They love snowdrops, aconites and hellebores early in the season. Ivy is a good last source of nectar in the autumn but the honey isn't good!



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www.ospreymc.co.uk



For further enquiries, please contact Lorraine Wash on (020) 8569 8364 or email lorraine.wash@ospreymc.co.uk



To sit alone in a country church is companionable solitude: a volume of silence. I'm at St Michael's, Tidcombe, prior to taking a service for its rededication next weekend: writing my sermon in the church seemed appropriate and ought, I thought, allow the place to permeate my words a little. Major repairs to these lively stones were being undertaken, following a heroic fundraising effort - then, as happens in so many similar cases, thieves arrived by night and used the scaffolding to remove lead from the roof, rolling it up in heavy carpets, carting it away through the graveyard.

Such ruinous seasons of metal theft - sometimes being inflicted multiple times on the same church - are almost beyond endurance for those already shouldering the massive cost of our built heritage. The Church of England looks after a startling forty-five percent of all Grade I listed buildings in the country, and each one has to be sustained by voluntary effort - often by tiny communities, as in Tidcombe. So it's an amazing, praiseworthy feat that the majority of England's 15,700 parish churches are in such good shape and a defiant sign of life that St Michael's has a gleaming new roof (this time, in terne-coated stainless steel).

Church buildings run by subtle semiotics: they are always signifying something just out of sight. '*Underneath*', reads a tombstone - the word embellished for emphasis - 'are deposited the mortal remains of Edward Tanner, many years an inhabitant of this parish'. Rustily caged, an enclosure for creatures long departed, the monument points to what is beyond and invites you to imagine it, grisly or glorious. Because they express investment in what cannot be seen (barely even articulated), these emblems are potent beyond belief. We are unable to grasp the thing signified, so the physical sign becomes a vital proxy. This instinct can, of course, be baneful (as any parish priest knows) but to suppress or ignore it is folly, for it can also point us to paradise.

The font in Tidcombe church is a fine example. Perhaps because it doesn't belong to anyone in particular - but thousands of lives, fondly or briskly christened - its personal significance is both diffused and amplified. In buttery limestone, faintly striated, it is a deep and beautiful thing - thought to be Saxon and to date from around 850AD. Being so soaked in association - with bawling, aspirant life, and the Christ of this place - the St Michael's font fairly pulses.

We can no more evacuate divine meaning from the material world as live in the clouds. This is why we shall continue to replace the church roof and thermometer our appeals to heaven. My sermon complete, I sketch the font in 6B, enjoy a silent sandwich, then leave.

The wooded landscapes surrounding Marlborough, characterised by the Savernake Forest and West Wood, support the dormouse, a superstar of woodlands by night.

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is a small rodent, with the large eyes of a nocturnal species, and the characteristic furry tail. The dormouse is sensitive to weather and climate (impacting their food and hibernation) and as the effects of climate change are felt, concern for dormouse populations increases. The dormouse is a protected species and a national and local priority for conservation.

Dormice use a wide variety of habitats, from broad-leaved woodland, to conifer plantations, to hedgerows, scrub and coastal gorse. They should be considered a species of wooded landscapes, rather than just woodlands, using the hedgerow and scrub networks to move through the landscape.

It's likely that dormice have been a feature of the area's woodlands for centuries, well known by local woodsmen who often found them when coppicing hazel and sweet chestnut. Dormice have been formally recorded in the Savernake Forest since at least 1975 and studied in detail since the 2000s. Today, members of Wiltshire Mammal Group, with the support of Forestry Commission and local Estates, undertake detailed monitoring of dormice at three locations near Marlborough. This work is undertaken by volunteers and contributes to the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme; a national scheme administered by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. The long-term monitoring of the NDMP indicates that dormice are declining in large parts of the UK. And unfortunately, this is our experience of monitoring in the woodlands surrounding Marlborough.

The reasons for these declines, whether nationally or locally, are complex and interactive. Climate change is certainly contributing to this by impacting upon food availability and hibernation, whilst loss of habitats to built development and changes in land management combine to reduce habitat suitability and to isolate small populations. On the other hand, landowners, such as the Forestry Commission, work hard to sustain the dormouse population within the Savernake Forest and wider area.

With thanks to the Forestry Commission for supporting dormouse monitoring in the Savernake Forest.

Further information

Wiltshire Bat Group & Wiltshire Mammal Group: <https://wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com/>

National Dormouse Monitoring Programme: <https://ptes.org/campaigns/dormice/>

Nature and Landscape Photography Ellie Tull

With these photos, I have drawn on my love of nature and landscape photography, which I have done projects on in my A-Level Photography classes at school. I have drawn inspiration from abstract nature photographers such as Byron Jorjorian, showcasing the natural form of the cactus and the grass, taken on my visit to RHS Garden Wisley in Surrey. The mist photo was taken in my village – I really like how the mist comes through the trees, coming menacingly towards the viewer. I have chosen to convert my images into black and white, because, as war photographer Don McCullin has said, black and white ‘brings life into things’.



Photo: © Gareth Harris. Autumn 2018, near Marlborough – dormice greatly increase their weight prior to hibernation as they pile on their fat reserves. This is a particularly fat dormouse!”



Richard Jefferies (1848-1887) And Marlborough – Part 1

John Price

Richard Jefferies, the Victorian writer, was born at Coate Farmhouse (now a Museum to his memory) situated just before the Coate Water roundabout as one approaches Swindon.

Best known for his nature writings, such as *Wild Life in a Southern County*, *The Gamekeeper at Home*, and *Round About a Great Estate*, he also wrote a boys' adventure book, *Bevis*, and a remarkable apocalyptic novel, *After London*, which imagines the flooding of the Thames Valley following an unspecified disaster that has destroyed London and dammed the Thames. A “spiritual autobiography”, *The Story of My Heart*, divides opinion as much as Marmite is reputed to do; and he also wrote a series of novels of varying quality.

Jefferies spent much of his childhood roaming the downs between Marlborough and Swindon, and thought nothing of walking 20 to 30 miles a day. It was from these walks, and the observations he recorded in his notebooks, that he drew the material for his many nature essays.

Richard undoubtedly knew Marlborough well, but only rarely refers to it by name. In his novels it becomes “Overborough” - an appropriate name as it was a borough over the downs. Even the Marlborough Road from Coate to the new Commonhead roundabout was referred to in many of his works as the “Overborough Road”. The first reference Jefferies makes to Marlborough in his writings was when he was looking for work as newspaper reporter having been off work ill - with the TB that later killed him so young. In a letter to his aunt of 1871 he says; “There remains a paper at Marlborough to which I applied. They were quite ready to employ me, but said they could give but a small price, quoting a sum which absolutely would not buy me a dinner once a week. This was no good.” The paper was *The Marlborough Times*.

Two other specific references are to Savernake Forest, which he knew well, and about which he wrote an essay titled: *Marlborough Forest*, in which he eulogises the beech trees. This is reprinted in Edward Thomas's *The Hills and the Vale*; and *A Summer Day in Savernake Forest* is republished in *Landscape and Labour*, collected by John Pearson.

Nature: An Asset, Not An Issue

Morgan Taylor

Despite what I now know to be a constructed landscape, the creation of which has contributed to sweeping declines in biodiversity, the rolling patchwork farmland of the Marlborough downs shaped my understanding and appreciation of nature. It was evident that everything had a place. The badger in its sett, buzzard in its tree, bumblebee in its meadow. Each animal played its part and made the landscape what it was; what I would now describe as delivering ecosystem function. This bucolic vision is obviously shrouded by childish misinterpretation, and by now a fair share of retrospective embellishment of memory, which adds to the poetry of it all, but doesn't detract from the fact that some of my most abiding memories relate to events where people intentionally damaged nature. I remember the hunts, the spraying of pesticide, corvid traps, poisoned badgers.

Conserving nature is not just a question of morality, but a fundamental requirement; it's not hyperbolic to state that we are entirely dependent upon nature to survive, yet we consistently degrade it. As an ecologist I suppose it is therefore my role to counteract this as far as possible, either through enforcing the rules or educating those most likely to cause an impact.

My work has several focuses. We are most often engaged to support new development schemes, identifying ecological constraints in relation to legal and planning policy compliance, and finding solutions which enable works to proceed whilst protecting and improving biodiversity.

This whole approach may be subject to change in coming years. The emergence of a concept known as Biodiversity Net Gain represents a potential tipping point. The idea, put forward in a consultation in late 2018, is that measurable gains in biodiversity (assessed using a metric which calculates the value of an area of habitat based on its type, condition and quality) are delivered on all new development schemes and enshrined in legislation. Time will tell as to how BNG is applied (I'm helping to write guidance on it and am still none the wiser myself), and importantly how effective BNG is in improving the state of nature in the UK, but it's a good first step; albeit 60 years, thousands of hectares of irreplaceable habitat, and millions of birds, bats and invertebrates too late.

The end goal should be for nature to be seen as an asset, something to be valued, improved and protected, not an issue, something to be 'dealt with' in planning and kept away from where we live and work. I'd encourage everyone to do their part in helping to deliver this. Garden for wildlife, put up a bird box, lobby your local MP, or become an ecologist.

St. John's Students: Where are they now?

No 3:

Henry Maulik

How school and the Kennet shaped my life

When I think of Marlborough, countless fond memories spring to mind. Being lucky enough to have lived there for eighteen years before university, Marlborough has played an important role in shaping my life. It was at St John's School where I first developed an interest in Environmental Science that I later went on to study at university.

Tower and Town is also something that's been part of my life whilst growing up in Marlborough. I in fact used to deliver a number of magazines on my bicycle for my grandparents for the sizeable sum of one pound (unfortunately, not per copy either)! I'd like to think that if I were still delivering the magazines today there would be some recognition of inflation, I won't hold my breath on this one however.

My time at St John's will always be centric to growing up in Marlborough; almost all of my close friends now were fellow students and many of our most memorable moments are still from our time in Marlborough. From snow days in Treacle Bolly to catching bullheads in the River Kennet, on reflection I always feel very fortunate to have grown up in these surroundings.

The River Kennet itself shaped a key part in my interest of Environmental Science. Whilst studying for my A-Levels the Kennet and its associated flora and fauna formed part of my Environmental Case Study. I spent many hours in a somewhat suspect inflatable boat paddling, and at times sinking, up and down the length of the river recording the wildlife. Kingfisher sightings near the old railway line, hundreds of brown trout and stream water crowfoot by Chiltern Foliat are but a few of the species that can be found within the river's ecosystem.

Throughout my case study I had the privilege to meet some of the members and volunteers for Action for the River Kennet (ARK) whose magnificent work and dedication to the River ensures the continued preservation

of its ecosystem.

*ARK Volunteers River Restoration
at Stonebridge Wild River Reserve
May 2019*



Screeching Swifts

At this time of year, one of the most visible and audible birds is the swift, parties of which screech loudly as they perform aerial acrobatics overhead. Almost pure black, with long, swept-back wings, their appearance was described beautifully by Edward Thomas in his poem “Haymaking” - “As if the bow had flown off with the arrow”.

Swifts arrive from Africa in mid-May and they’ll be gone by mid-August. Their scientific name, *Apus*, suggests, incorrectly, that they are footless. In heraldry, swifts were used as a symbol for the fourth son of a household – a hapless creature unable to plant his feet on the land.

A common misconception is that swifts and swallows are closely related; in fact, the nearest relatives of the swifts are the tropical hummingbirds.

Feeding on insects caught on the wing, swifts demonstrate several behavioural adaptations that enable them to cope with bad weather, especially rain. The parents have a remarkable ability to fly around depressions; English birds have been recorded feeding over Germany, covering 600-1200 miles on such rain-dodging excursions. Meanwhile, the food-deprived chicks can enter a period of torpor with body temperature and metabolism reduced sufficiently for them to survive up to 48 hours.

Most amazing of all is the fact that, once the young birds leave the nest high in the eaves of a tall building, they may not land again until they are mature enough to make their own nest, up to four years later. At night they roost on the wing, circling for hours high in the sky until dawn breaks. The swift’s capacity for long distance flight is awe-inspiring; estimates of 500 miles per day mean that a bird known to be 20 years old had covered 3.65 million miles in its lifetime – all that with a zero- carbon footprint!



What's On in August:

Regular events:

Every Monday

6pm Recreation Ground, Salisbury Road. Bowls Club.
7.30pm Christchurch. Marlborough Choral Society.
7.45-9pm Bell-ringing practice at St George's,
Preshute.

Every Tuesday

2.45pm The Parlour, Christchurch. Women's
Fellowship.
7.30-9pm Bell-ringing practice at St Mary's,
Marlborough.

Every Wednesday

10am Jubilee Centre. Drop-in, Tea/Coffee. 12.30
Lunch.
12.30pm St George's, Preshute. Teddy Prayers &
Picnic. A special service for U5s & carers followed by
a picnic lunch. (*First Wednesday*)
1.30-3.30pm Town Hall. Sunshine Club for the over
55s.
7.30-9pm Bell-ringing practice at St John's.
Mildenhall.
7.30-9.30pm St Mary's Church Hall. Marlborough
Community Choir. (*Every Wednesday during term-time*).

Every Thursday

10-30-12noon Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge.
Singing for the Brain. Alzheimer's Support. 01225
776481. (*Every Thursday during term-time*).
7-8.30pm Wesley Hall, Oxford St. Hangout &
Devotion. Youth Club.

Every Friday

10-12 noon Christchurch Crush Hall. Food bank.

Every Friday and Saturday (1st April-22 December)

10am-4pm 132 High Street SN8 1HN. Marlborough

Museum. £3 (u 16s free).

Every 2nd Saturday

10-12 noon Library. Marlborough
Dyslexia Association. D
07729 452143

August calendar

To 10 August: Marlborough
27 July – 1st September Av
events: 'A Summer of Play
(£1). nationaltrust.org.uk/

1st (Thursday)

1pm Mildenhall Village Ha
Lunch. Visitors £6. 861279
1.05pm Marlborough Coll
Dr Peter King. Free.
5.15pm MC Ellis Theatre.
'The Little World of the G
door.
8pm MC Ellis Theatre. Th
door.

2nd (Friday)

7.30pm Town Hall. Blues
£25 from White Horse Bo
8pm MC Memorial Hall. C
Ford: Sing Sing Sing! £20

5th (Monday)

2.00pm Kennet Valley Hal
Embroiderers' Guild. Talk
'Traditional and Regional I
welcome.
5.15pm MC Ellis Theatre.
Joys & Quirks of English t
on door.
8pm Ellis Theatre. Harry t

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Marlborough Floral Club: Summer
Organ Recital: Marlborough
College Chapel. Organ Recital:

Lecture by Roger Vlitos:
'Great Eccentrics'. £5 on

Marlborough Aldbourne Band. £5 on

Night featuring Jimmy Hall.
Workshop.

Gala Performance. 'Matt
*.

Marlborough, Lockeridge. Marlborough
by Victoria Riley:
'Indonesian Batik? Everyone

Talk by Tim Moorey: The
Crossword Setter. £5

Marlborough Piano. £5 on door.

6th (Tuesday)

5.15pm MC Ellis Theatre. Talk by Max Stafford:
PMQS: 'Democratic Exercise or Spectacle for Sore
Eyes'. £5 on door.

8pm MC Memorial Hall. Gala Performance. The Revd
Richard Coles: 'From Pop Star to Parson'. £15.
Tickets ONLINE at summerschool.co.uk; BY
PHONE 01672 892388; IN PERSON at Summer
School Office or Sound Knowledge or ON THE
DOOR subject to availability.

7th (Wednesday)

5.15pm MC Ellis Theatre. Lecture by Sibella Laing:
'Power behind the Veil'. £5 on door.

7.30pm Wesley Hall, Oxford Street. WI. Speaker:
Janet Howell: 'Flora & Fauna of Madagascar?'. New
members and guests welcome.

8th (Thursday)

1.05pm MC Chapel. Organ Recital. William Fox. Free.

5.15pm MC Ellis Theatre. Lecture by Mark Cottle:
'Photographic Odyssey: Shackleton's Endurance
Expedition Captured on Camera. £5.

9th (Friday)

6pm MC Ellis Theatre. Concert: Singing for Pleasure
Course Celebration. Free.

8pm MC Memorial Hall. Gala Performance. 'The
Magic of Motown' £20 Tickets at summerschool.co.uk;
01672 892388; at Summer School Office or Sound Knowledge or
ON THE DOOR subject to availability.

9th (Friday) – 11th (Sunday)

Marlborough Rising: Filling the Town with Music.

10th (Saturday) 9am-4pm – 11th (Sunday) 11am-4pm

Aldbourne Memorial Hall. Aldbourne Artists'
Exhibition & Sale. £2 towards Memorial Hall.

11th (Sunday)

8am The Common. Car Boot Sale. Cars £8, Vans £10.

In aid of Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

14th (Wednesday)

7.45pm Wesley Hall, Oxford Street. Gardening Association. Talk by Brigit Strawbridge: 'Bumblebees'.

30th (Friday) – 9th September (Monday)

Various Times. The Common. Gifford's Circus: Tickets on sale now: 01242 572573.

JULY EDITION: APOLOGY

We apologise to **ActionAid** for neglecting to say that their work with women and girls in Rwanda has been funded by the players of the **People's Postcode Lottery**.



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Family News compiled by Jessy Pomfret

Dennis Silk CBE (8 October 1931 – 19 June 2019) was educated at Christ's Hospital and Cambridge, where he read history and captained the cricket XI. He went on to play first-class amateur cricket over many years, captaining MCC touring sides on several foreign tours. He served as Chairman of the Test and County Cricket Board and as MCC President, later Honorary Life Vice-President.



by Alan Thornhill

He taught history at Marlborough and was housemaster of A1 (Silk and Beer, in A1 and A2 respectively, were a memorable pair) and then of C1 (with much-loved wife Diana) before moving on to become Warden of Radley College. Marlborough remembers him particularly for his coaching (together with Martin Harrison) of the 1963 1st XV rugby side which uniquely not only had an unbeaten season but also had no try scored against them. It was during his time at Marlborough that he got to know Siegfried Sassoon, at the time living in Heytesbury, becoming an expert on his work and much in demand for his talks on and readings of the great WWI poet. He later became President for Life of the Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship. His time at Radley led a fellow-headmaster to deem that he had made it into one of the best public schools in England. (Radley was selected by the BBC for its documentary series *Public School*.)

He was made a CBE in the 1995 New Year's Honours List for services to cricket and education. We send our sympathy and gratitude for his life to wife Diana and children Kate, Alexandra, Tom and William.

Many people will remember **Fred Palmer** who was a pupil at Marlborough Grammar School from 1948 to 1957. When he left he went to Reading University to do a degree and PhD in agriculture. His father was a farmer at Puthall Farm, off the A4, east of Marlborough so he had an understandable interest in agriculture.

He worked around the world from Mexico to Pakistan to East Africa. He was involved with the Ford Foundation and their development of high yielding strains of wheat and maize known as the "green revolution".

In retirement he and his wife, Peggy, (also MGS) lived in France where Fred died recently at the age of 81. We send our condolences to his family.

Much gratitude to everyone who has sent in items for this page. Please keep them coming! Without you there would be no Family News.

'The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land' Except, of course, it isn't - hands up if you've heard that voice lately? Thought not....the turtle dove has been on the endangered list in the UK for more than twenty years, along with numerous other species, victims of intensive farming and habitat destruction.

But in one corner of Sussex, turtle doves and other birds, beasts and insects are staging a comeback. In her award-winning book **Wilding** Isabella Tree describes what happened on the Knepp Estate, when the author and her husband Charlie Burrell accepted that farming the heavy clay soil on their land was becoming ever less sustainable. They took the decision to allow the land to revert to its natural state. Simple enough? The policy presented quite as many challenges as conventional farming - tree guards, yes or no? Should they intervene when free-ranging stock was endangering, or being endangered by, walkers on the estate? What would be the effect of simply giving up trying to drain the land and allowing the river to revert to its floodplain? They sought guidance from a range of experts, and endured headache-inducing discussions with assorted Government and non-Governmental agencies over grants and subsidies. The book charts the gradual alteration from farmland to a habitat teeming with a variety of wildlife - bats, butterflies, dung beetles, skylarks, deer, semi-wild pigs and cattle, fungi, owls, and dragonflies - balancing just enough scientific data with describing the practicalities of the project.

Wilding is this year's winner of the *Richard Jefferies Society/White Horse Bookshop Prize for Nature Writing*. Chapters are prefaced with literary quotes reminding us of the social and cultural aspects of natural history and the importance of experiencing the natural world to promote well-being. The people of the Yukon in Canada and Alaska understand that importance, and live it. One of the runners up for the RJ/WHB prize was Adam Weymouth, with **Kings of the Yukon**, an elegiac account of a 2,000 mile journey by canoe, observing a natural wilderness, and the symbiotic relationship between the indigenous people of the region and the salmon – the 'kings' of the title. It's a relationship under threat, climate change and industrialisation having fundamentally affected the habitat and ecosystems. Adam Weymouth is appearing at the Literature Festival in September to talk about this joyous and despairing book.

This month's review covers both the *Summer Exhibition 2019* at the Royal Academy and *Augustus John: Drawn from Life* at the Salisbury Museum.

This was my first visit to the RA's *Summer Exhibition 2019*. Bedazzled by the magnificence of Burlington House itself, the grand courtyard and plush staircase leading to the first floor, I eventually reached the entrance to Wohl Central Hall, the first 'room' of the exhibition. Put simply, 'this year's co-ordinator, the painter Jock McFadyen RA, plays on the British love of animals and the traditional popularity of pictures of pets, mixing the real with the imagined, the domestic with the wild and the cute with the fierce'. In describing the types of work entered into this year's show, specifically a piece by Banksy, the information board went on to say, 'Banksy's *Keep Out* sets the tone for the exhibition: art that reflects the world today.'

And that is precisely the central motif of this year's exhibition. Recurring images of abandonment, waste, pollution, destruction and decay are the threads running through this tapestry of intrigue and wonderment. This year, the RA received over 16,000 submissions.

Gallery III is the largest and most spectacular hanging space at the Academy. Stepping in, you are blown away by the enormity of some of the paintings, and the fluidity of arrangement between painting and photography. The outstanding piece for me in this room was David Hephner's housing block which, in the centre, has a small image of John Constable's *The Hay Wain* with 'Wayne' graffitied over it.

There's so much I could say about this exhibition, so many pieces I loved and indeed wish I could have bought! Being surrounded by 'art that reflects the world today' was thrilling. It is a wakeup call to the world we are living in, and what it is becoming.

On your next visit to Salisbury, make a point of visiting the *Augustus John: Drawn from Life* exhibition at the Salisbury Museum. This is a small, intimate show of selected drawings, paintings, etchings and sculptures by, arguably, the most talented British draughtsman of the twentieth century. His drawings are rightly compared to those of the Great Masters of the Renaissance. They are beyond exquisite. Studies of his first wife, Ida Nettleship, and of his great friend and poet, WB Yeats are particular standouts. This is a modest yet stunning exhibition, which I encourage you to see.

P.S. Filed at home in and amongst many other things is a photograph of my great grandfather (an artist) with two of his great friends, Augustus John, and renowned Irish artist, Willy Conor (by coincidence a family relative also) painting together in Ireland before the First World War.

Summer Exhibition 2019 - at the RA 10th June – 12th August 2019.

Augustus John: Drawn from Life - Salisbury Museum 18th May – 29th September 2019

Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Service times

Christchurch, New Road (Methodist)

- 9.00am Service with Communion (1st Sunday)
- 10.30am Morning Service with Junior Church and crèche

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

- 10.30am Meeting for Worship

St George's, Preshute (C of E)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)
- 10.00am All Age Service (1st Sunday)
Parish Communion (other Sundays)

St John the Baptist, Minal (C of E)

- 8.00am Holy Communion BCP (2nd Sunday)
- 9.30am Parish Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)

St Mary's, behind the Town Hall (C of E)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP on 4th Sunday)
- 10.00am All Age Worship (1st Sunday): Parish Communion and Junior Church and crèche on all other Sundays
- 5.30pm Informal service except on 1st Sunday.

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

- 11.00am Sung Mass (See also below)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the College Chapel

Weekday Services

St Mary's Holy Communion: 10.30am Wednesday

St Thomas More Mass: 10.00am Mon, Tues, Wed and Sat Holy Days

St George's 4.30pm Weds: Tea Time followed by Evening Prayer
12.30 pm (1st Wednesday): Teddy Prayers & Picnic,
a special service for U5s & carers followed by a picnic lunch

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FROM THE REGISTERS

Departed - we pray for the family of:

23 June - Barbara Elaine Barrington Purton (94) of Savernake Court,
Marlborough
Kingsdown Crematorium

FLAT TO LET (Sheltered Housing)

Marlborough & District Housing Association (MDHA) has a one-bedroom ground floor flat available for rent at **10 The Green**, Marlborough from 1st August 2019.

Applications are invited from residents of Marlborough and surrounding areas who are over the age of 55 years and able to live independently. No care provision is available on site and a Medical Report is required from the applicants' doctor prior to the grant of a tenancy. No pets are permitted. Only very limited visitors' parking is available on site and there are no spaces or garages allocated to tenants.

The monthly rent is £333.21 and a deposit of £300.21 will be required prior to completion of the Tenancy Agreement. Residents are responsible for their own council tax, telephone and utility charges. Visit www.mdha.org.uk for more information.

Please contact Mrs. Deuchar on 07887 924539 for an application form.

For 2 weeks in April 2019 my good friend Lucy and I travelled to Gunjur in The Gambia to volunteer for the Gunjur Project. I really wanted to get involved when I became aware of Gunjur through Lucy's mother who founded a charity called Thriving Through Venture which links teenagers from Wiltshire with partners in Gunjur, where they complete personal projects.

During our stay we:

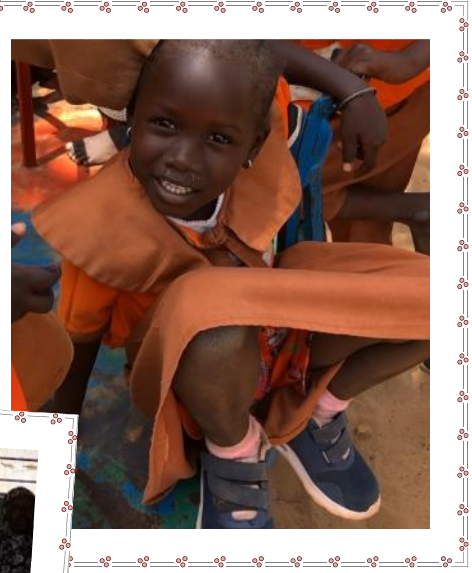
- ◆ planted and watered over 500 papaya seedlings in a Women's Development Garden;
- ◆ helped out at the local nursery teaching young children English and communication skills by playing games, drawing and singing;
- ◆ took part in two surveys observing bird migration and the importance of maintaining protected wildlife areas;
- ◆ worked with the country coordinator of Waste Aid UK in 3 schools and local restaurants on the importance of recycling and reducing waste;
- ◆ supported the staff at Gunjur Project with how to use technology effectively in business situations.

When I put it like that it really does sound like a lot. But the time flew by and before I knew it we were back on the M25 stuck in traffic.

Now being home it feels like I visited a different world. In Gunjur nobody judged anyone, families worked together and shared resources, the children took care of each other but most importantly to me, EVERYONE was welcoming.

It's hard to put into words what I experienced but I think I got a glimpse at the now lost, real meaning of life and how to be truly content. It's far from having the new iPhone X or the most expensive watch. It's about being happy and accepting what you have and what it really would be like to make the most of very little. What I personally gained in Gunjur will never leave me.

The photos are some I took in The Gambia for my A Level photography Course. They really capture what I experienced in everyday life in Gunjur. If anybody is interested in getting involved with what I took part in, please visit the Gunjur Project Association website - <https://www.gpagambia.org>



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News from the Churches

Team Rector for Marlborough Anglican Team

Revd Christopher Smith will be licensed as Team Rector for Marlborough Anglican Team at St Mary's on Tuesday 24th September at 7.00pm followed by refreshments in the Town Hall - open to all.



New Minister at Christchurch

We, the congregation at Christchurch, are delighted to announce that the Revd Stephen Skinner will be the new Methodist minister in Marlborough, taking up his appointment on September 1st. Stephen is coming from Broadstairs in Kent where he has worked for 12 years, and on 3rd September at 7.30pm he will be welcomed at his first Service at Christchurch Methodist Church. All welcome.



We continue to pray for Heather as she moves to her new appointment in the Wirral, and for Stephen as he prepares for this change in his ministry. Please include Revd Stephen Skinner and Revd Chris Smith and their families in your prayers during this time of transition. *(contributed by Alison Harris)*

Morning Prayer

All welcome to join Informal Morning Prayer sessions which are held weekly at St George's, Preshute on Mondays at 7.45am and on Wednesdays at 8.00am at St Mary's, Marlborough. Usually we meet for half an hour of prayer for our parish, our town and the wider world. Praying makes a difference; come along and find out.

Women's Fellowship Programme

There is no meeting in August.

MAPAG

There will be no meeting in August. The next will be 7.30 on 16th September in the Quaker Meeting House. We hope to have a talk on Homelessness by Rachael Dobson.



Marlborough Churches Together

The Fraternal Meeting will be on 5th August at 12.45 in the Quaker Meeting House; all are welcome.



St Peter and St Paul Patronal Festival

On Sunday 30th June St Peter's Church was packed for the annual patronal festival. The choir of St John's Devizes led the singing, and the preacher, the Bishop of Ramsbury, reminded us of the role of the key, the symbol of St Peter, and of the authority bestowed on the key-holder to unlock as well as to lock, leaving us with much to ponder at the end of a memorable service.

Devotion Youth Project

devotion

Thanks to a small number of loyal volunteers, the Devotion ecumenical youth project has continued to provide Thursday evening Hangout sessions (7.30-9pm), where young people can find a safe space to relax. Devotion will start again on 5th September. If you would like to know more, or volunteer, please contact Janneke for more information (892291/jblokland@gmail.com).

Open the Book

Volunteers from Christchurch, St Mary's and St George's churches make up teams who go into Marlborough St Mary's and Preshute's school assemblies and present Bible Stories under the Open the Book initiative.

Rehearsing and acting out the stories is good fun for the volunteers and enjoyed by the pupils and staff. Both teams are happy for more people to be involved - either through volunteering their acting skills or by praying for this initiative. More information from Alison Selby (alison@crossmead.net) or Charles Graham (ctg100@hotmail.com).

Ride + Stride 2019

The annual Historic Churches Ride + Stride will take place on Saturday 14th September 10am-6pm. Walk, cycle or ride around Wiltshire visiting as many churches as you can to help raise funds for the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust. 50% of the money raised goes to the participant's chosen church and the other half to the County Historic Churches Trust. Sponsorship forms for those walking or cycling will be available in our churches during August.

Get There!

Aimed at children aged 7-11, the holiday club will take place at the Marlburian Centre and the College Playing Fields from Wednesday 28th August to Friday 30th August 9.30am - 12.30pm. The cost for children is £7.50 per day, £20 for three days and financial support is available. Get There! is supported by Marlborough Churches Together. If you know anyone who would like to come or if you would like to be involved in any way, please contact Janneke (jblokland@gmail.com / 892291). A sign-up form for volunteers is available in St Mary's and St George's.

St Non's Retreat

is at the Retreat centre near St David's, Pembrokeshire from September 17th to 20th. It will be led by Edwina Fogg on the theme of the great mystic Hildegard of Bingen. To book please email Barney at barney.rsdl@gmail.com.

Mustard Seed Book Group

Phoebe, by Paula Gooder, gives a very human insight into Paul, his letter to the Romans, and the world of early Christianity. Come and join the Book Group discussion on Monday 19th August 7.30pm in Mustard Seed.



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Contributions and comments from readers are welcome. Please send articles and letters to the Monthly Editor or the Editorial Coordinator, other notices or announcements to the compiler. All items for the September issue by Tuesday 13th August please.

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