
TOWER AND TOWN



St John's Edition

NOVEMBER 2021 50P

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TOWER^{AND}TOWN

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Editorial

On a couple of recent occasions, when I have introduced myself as a secondary school English teacher, the response has been a shaking of the head and a comment about ‘young people nowadays’ being unable to string a sentence together because of ‘texting’ or, more vaguely, ‘technology’. I am not sure why people think this – misinformation in the media perhaps?

I haven’t been an English teacher all that long, having retrained after a career in journalism and as a writer of novels, but I swiftly discovered that young people can indeed string sentences together – and so much more. Writing enjoys a high profile in lessons, and pupils at St John’s are encouraged to hone their skills writing both fiction and non-fiction. Consequently, we have a wealth of talent, and written work that is imaginative, ambitious and accomplished.

The selection of work we present in this issue of Tower & Town has been written in the first few weeks of the first term of the new school year. We are still recovering from the Covid crisis and our young people have faced many challenges and uncertainties in recent months. They have, however, also proved remarkably resilient, and settled into a new school year with optimism and focus.

This selection of work gives a flavour of the range of writing across the school. We have gothic writing from year 7s, speeches about revolution in the classroom (inspired by ‘Animal Farm’) from Year 9, and reviews of classic books and films by members of the sixth form – along with a selection of artwork from our recent A level students. I hope readers of Tower & Town find something to appreciate and enjoy!

Sarah Singleton, Editor

Front cover: Jasmine Jackson

Grey clouds blanketed a small abysmal park, lined with rigid wooden fences and rough bushes that hosted no berries. The sun was invisible to Susan, her aged golden retriever, and her grandson Ben, who stood in the disappointing park on that miserable day. Susan's hazel hair was tucked into a ponytail and her poker face showed no emotion. She wore a dismal zebra-print sweater which felt like a fluffy Pomeranian, and three triangular-shaped buttons, decorated with two black stripes on each corner. The buttons were quite worn out; the sweater itself originated in the mid-1960s and had once been her mother's, before it landed itself in Susan's capable hands.

Slowly, the first few raindrops landed squarely on her nose, narrowly avoiding her silver rectangle spectacles. The raindrops fell like pennies from a jar and landed in the sticky mud, making it ooze like butter in a pan. The wind whistled in Susan's ears like a roar of thunder and the air tasted fresh like newly cut grass. Silently, a singular button fell from her warm sweater, arriving in the oozing mud. As it was quite a far drop for a button, a single shallow crack appeared, snaking through the middle, replicating a leaf vein. The edges were caked in mud and the rain continued pouring down onto the unfortunate park.

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Pride and Prejudice: Imogen Cannon, Year 12

I would be lying if I said I haven't watched the 2005 film version of this book an embarrassing number of times. Nonetheless, when reading the book, it still felt like the very first time I was hearing the story, allowing me to experience all the emotions all over again.

The story follows Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters as they navigated marriage, love and social class. It is my opinion that Elizabeth Bennet is the greatest literary protagonist of all time; her quick wit, keen mind and romanticism make her an irresistible heroine. The modern nature of her thinking means she is often still found relatable by women today, which is a quality many fictional women from the time period lack. I believe that her most admirable trait is her strong sense of morality and refusal to be pushed around.

Another enjoyable aspect of the novel is Austen's cutting social commentary. Through the use of satire, Austen critiques the wealthy, the laws regarding women and property, marriage, social divisions, and the value of women in society. I found that her social commentary provided a fascinating insight into the historical period in which Austen lived. She provides one of very few ways to view the opinions of women at the time on the issues that affected them.

History is, more often than not, written from the male perspective, so it is invaluable to hear Austen's thoughts and feelings about early 19th century society. Perhaps my favourite part of *Pride and Prejudice* is Austen's characterisation. Her ability to create characters that we, the reader, might root for, despise, mock and so much more is unmatched, and the characters in her novels are always memorable and full of complexity. For me, this is what changes her books from excellent to extraordinary.

Tower and Town, 2022

Our printing costs are rising; however
subscriptions will remain at £5 for one more year;
single copies will be £1 each from January 1st.

The Impact of the Covid Crisis: Results Day 2021:

Frankie, Year 12

I believe that this pandemic has left its mark on me, but not in a wholeheartedly bad way: remote learning allowed me to learn independence when it came to absorbing information, the lack of outside activities allowed me to get back into reading (a thing I would do feverishly when I was younger) and not seeing my friends and family allowed me to appreciate them that much more when we were finally able to see each other again. Despite all of this, I did find it hard, and wearing and lonesome, much like most of the people in the country (and the world).

The road to GCSEs was always going to be tricky, but I always thought it would be do-able, like riding a bike or breaking in new shoes (difficult and sometimes painful, but easily enough overcome with a little perseverance) however, I never imagined in my wildest dreams that they would be disrupted to such a great degree as they were. The mere thought of a global pandemic had barely infiltrated my 14-year-old brain let alone been thought of as a possible reality. Hence the Coronavirus was something that really scared me when it first came around, being something that I had not spared a single thought about in the past. Nonetheless I could still cling to the idea that it would stay in Asia, a far away story to keep us alert but not alarmed. Unfortunately, that is not the way it happened, and school went online...

I'll admit I was nervous when results day came along, I guess I didn't know what to expect. After two years full of disruption and disaster, I think my mind struggled to accept that maybe, just maybe, something good had come out of it. Thankfully, all of my hard work came together in the end, and resulted in me being very happy with my results, so maybe every cloud does have a silver lining after all?

Garden Party - *by Les Halliwell, 2021*

A leaf falls to the ground . . . dead.
Not a word is said, not a tear is shed.
A man falls to the ground . . . dead.
Many a word is said, many tears are shed.

Citizens ! In God's Great Game
a leaf and man rank the same.
So just know your place
and with good grace
enter God's warm embrace.

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The Multi-Storey Car Park:

Marianne Bracken, Year 8

It was seven o'clock on Friday evening and I was going to meet up with my friends to celebrate my birthday. I bought a parking ticket and drove around the cracked multi-storey car park, managing to find a spot on the third floor. I half ran to the lift, to discover it was locked, and the stairwell was too. I peered out the glassless window to find that there were not any other exits. Quickly, I climbed back into my car to find a different place to park. But the engine would not start. Brilliant.

I poked around the concrete building trying to work out what to do, when I decided to accept this would be my home for the night. I looked around. There were vines hanging out of cracks, and puddles of leaked oil and rain. It smelt of rotting bodies and petrol. Walking around, it gave me the sensation of walking through a graveyard.

Out of nowhere, I heard the lift clicking up the floors and a man shouting for help, banging on the door...

I rushed over to help him, violently pushing the open button until the doors creaked open.

There was nobody in there. Just a pile of dust.

I was petrified.

Backing away from the swirling dust, I bumped into my car, setting off the alarm. Screaming, I ran up to the next storey. I stepped into the fourth storey, panting. Crack! It started so slowly I didn't notice at first, but when I did, I just ran to try and make it to the fifth storey.

But I didn't make it. The floor fell through.

Gothic Writing:

Charlotte Prothero, Year 8

Shadows leapt out at every corner. All I could hear in my head was a high-pitched whistling sound, despite the fact that my surroundings were deathly silent. Desperately pinching myself again and again, I firmly told myself I was not dreaming. I wish I hadn't stepped out of my cottage with its glow of safety and warmth.

Ivy crept up the decaying walls of the abandoned mansion that towered threateningly over me. Moss flourished under the dampness and evident neglect of the scene.

continued overleaf

A distant church bell chimed twelve bongs. Midnight.

Ordinarily, I should have loved to be outside. I like to go out at night when all the planet's burdens are asleep – just me and the world. There is an air of serenity, as though the Earth is resting after a hectic day.

Yet here was a place that felt so alive with the supernatural, so throbbing with spirits, swirling round and round me in a whirlpool of evil, despair and regret, that I could not fully accept it.

Sharp spikes like spears on the top of the fence enclosing me glinted wickedly in the full moon, as if daring me to escape. The roof was laden with crumbling chimneys and cracked red tiles.

The leafless trees swayed even though the air was still and the black dot in my eyes steadily grew larger and larger, and larger still – until I passed out.

Lolita:

Jodie Harris, Year 12

I chose Vladimir Nabokov's classic 'Lolita' as I was enticed by the controversy surrounding the novel, particularly in relation to the theme of love, and I was far from disappointed by my reading experience.

The public outrage surrounding 'Lolita' focuses primarily on the perceived 'romanticisation' of the paedophilic relationship between the thirty-something protagonist (Humbert Humbert) and his twelve-year-old step-daughter, Dolores (or Lolita). This outrage would be totally justified in my opinion if it were not a total interpretation of Nabokov's purpose. By far the most interesting and challenging element of 'Lolita' is the perspective from which it is written and what the reader therefore gets to see. While the plot of the novel is taboo at best, it must be taken into account that Nabokov's intention was to tell this perverse story from the point of the abuser; the prose is romantic because the reader is supposed to read between the lines and see that it is not a love story at all. It is a horror story.

Humbert is manipulating the reader and Nabokov's intention was that they should 'see through the cracks' as it were. This was a unique and interesting device, that enriched the read hugely.

The prose itself was also a delight to read, speaking to Nabokov's talents, considering that English was his fifth language. I had read Nabokov's work before and I can earnestly say that I have never come across an author who is able to set tone and atmosphere so effectively. The immersive nature of 'Lolita', even within Nabokov's work, is in a league of its own.

“All that glisters is not gold: is there still a place for Shakespeare in a 21st-century curriculum?”: the St John’s Sixth Form LitFest Debate.

Ten St John’s Sixth Form students volunteered to launch the Marlborough Literature Festival with a debate. The event was held on the September 30 at the Town Hall, asking ‘Should we still be teaching Shakespeare in this day and age?’

The students explored the idea with a well-rounded knowledge about whether students should be taught the “out-dated”, “confusing” and even “violent” work of Shakespeare - a white male playwright from centuries ago.

In this debate I witnessed all students getting involved and interacting with each other’s points and listening to all areas of concern. The atmosphere - although a disagreement was playing out - was upbeat and enticing. The audience was appreciative of any mic malfunctions students faced, or humour relating to exactly how Shakespeare is taught and whether it is the work of the teacher, not the writer, when pupils find the language difficult. Many discrete chuckles and even all-out laughter enveloped the atmosphere of the hall to make all the students feel clearly comfortable to elaborate points and have their concerns validated.

The first issue of discussion to be brought to attention was, “All that glisters is not gold. Is Shakespeare’s reputation earned?” Students were quick to defend and oppose. Does the fact that Shakespeare’s plays created significant change in English culture overcome any argument that his plots were stolen? Nevertheless, there are issues in his plays that he is not held accountable for; so if we can disregard some aspects of Shakespeare’s plays, why not as a whole?

The issue of whether Shakespeare’s work is challenging or just problematic was discussed throughout the debate. Most students leaned towards the opinion that his work needs to be known for its importance in our history but would rather have a more diverse selection of novels to discuss in English Literature, which as it stands, is becoming a less popular subject to be taken forward from GCSE.

Another matter brought up was the age at which students should start learning Shakespeare, or at least come to terms with his work. Most agreed that none or hardly any of his plays are light in subject matter, so think it fitting that we don’t “dive right in” at the beginning of year 7 with such force. Some students thought that Shakespeare should only be taken from the start of the GCSE course.

Overall, the debate was supposed to be a light-hearted and charismatic event to start the LitFest and I can report the students fulfilled their purpose. With good humour, they brought up serious, educated points on which we should all be focusing for future generations.

continued overleaf

The main take-away I received from the debate was that Shakespeare should indeed be taught in school, especially in history and drama as Shakespeare holds a strong place in both topics, but also in English, whether that be in A-level or GCSE or lower years depending on the person, but not to the perhaps overloaded extent that it is being taught currently.

The Narrative of Inception (2010): Toby, Year 12

The film *Inception* operates squarely within the Hollywood narrative model, delivering a protagonist (Dom Cobb) with a goal-oriented storyline (one last job), a romantic storyline (reconciliation with his wife Mal), and a happy (if ambiguous) ending, as well as deploying the familiar patterns and elements of the heist movie subgenre. It uses a conventional framing device (the flashback), ratchets up the tension with complications and obstacles, and speeds up the logical resolution with various deadlines.

The film *Inception* makes viewers think, because so many questions appear to be unanswered, or answered unsatisfactorily, at the end of the narrative. The narrative of *Inception* focuses on plot and audience awareness rather than the development of individual character goals, although they are not entirely lacking. For example, Ariadne is a novice character whose main purpose is as a plot device that will help explain the rules of dreaming to the audience.

Inception has more than one line of narrative flowing throughout the film. In fact, it has four timelines that crosscut each other throughout the film. The evidence in the movie points to the conclusion that the entire narrative is Cobb's multi-layered (or not) dream, perhaps engineered and orchestrated by himself, or by the characters who play his colleagues.

This conclusion makes explicit the notion of all films as a shared dream, which is a sophomoric move at best. At worst, it nullifies all the stakes in the story, effectively eliminating whatever sympathy and involvement the audience might have invested in the characters and their predicaments. It also neatly takes care of all questions about the internal logic of the film's story world, for better or for worse.

Finally, because Cobb represents the emotional heart of the story and the audience's eyes into the problems at hand, it only follows that his blissful blindness at the end becomes a shared experience with those sitting in the theatre. We become oblivious to the truth as Cobb himself has willingly become.

We want a change. For years, you have ignored us, forcing us to do exactly what you want when you want and giving us detentions if we do not follow your orders. What happened to our freedom? You teach us about democratic socialism, telling us how important it is and promoting it, yet you silence us and stop us from having any sort of belief which goes against yours. You explain how awful totalitarianism is, but you decide to run the school in the same way as many totalitarian leaders. What happened to school being a safe place? What happened to our happiness?

We want a change. Though it makes sense you make us learn all the subjects to begin, don't you find it unjust how you obligate us to take Maths, English and Science for GCSE? At this age, most students know vaguely in which direction they want to take their life – whether that's becoming a scientist or an artist – but you still force us to take the subjects *you* think are important, even if the pupil in question does not. I'm not sure about you, but I know quite a few people who excel in the creative subjects such as Drama, D.T and Art, and struggle immensely in the more academic lessons like English, Science and Maths but are still forced to take these subjects for GCSE. They then waste precious time in which they could be learning more about their preferred subjects practising the subjects they could not care less about. Does this sound fair to you? Teachers, though *you* may find these lessons important, not all of us do. Give us power. We want a change.

We want a change. Everyone says school is vital to learn social skills and meet others our age, yet now we have barely any time to socialise with others. Not only are we severely punished for speaking in class, but lunch has recently been shortened to 50 minutes instead of 1 hour. This means that at school, we only get one hour and ten minutes of time to speak. Don't you find this wrong? As well as this, you have split us into purple and white band – we only *really* see half of our year group! And if you thought it couldn't get any worse, listen to this. You give us homework everyday which prevents us from having any sort of social life outside school! Can you believe it? Do you not realise how detrimental this could be for our futures? After all, if we have no experience in speaking to others and meeting new people, how are we going to get anywhere in life? We want a change.

So teachers, if you're still listening, please take what I said into consideration. School should be a place where we feel untroubled and free. Right now, it's a cage which is home to all our worries.

We want a change.

Give us a change.

Dear Teachers: Meenashi Thethron Seenaj, Year 9

From the moment that children are old enough to hold a pen, we are pressurised to perform well in school and become well rounded adults. And yet, when we join the education system, in which time character shaping is vital, we are not taught and pushed to become good honest people; no, we are taught subjects such as trigonometry and algebra. Students are trapped in prisons of useless information; we focus on past discoveries rather than future possibilities. We become mindless information machines for facts that, once it is time to apply them, may become outdated and old. Do you really want your children and their children to grow, not into functioning members of society, but more husks of knowledge from long gone centuries and people?

Young adults are ridiculed by older generations for not knowing how to mend their clothes, change a tyre or apply for jobs, and yet, these same generations do not make the effort to teach them. Having spent their time in school making graphs and doing tests, students who become young adults must rely on search engines to learn, resulting in shame, mockery, and disappointment from both themselves and others. Do you really want this for the generation who will soon take your place?

Of course, I am not suggesting overthrowing education itself, but school should be the time to create selfless and helpful individuals and let them grow, not a time that will be looked back on as a time of disdain and discomfort. Put down your pens and lift up your hands! Teaching students to communicate and lift others up is far more than knowing $x + y^7 = n$.

Many adults, who grow to become callous and spiteful, are the same children who, so busy being under stress and pressure, never learnt how to do basic necessities, such as getting along with others. Even promoting group work is a step in the right direction; no adult is born cold and rude; their attitudes are the products of their experiences in life. If we make sure these experiences were positive, then we are that much closer to a better world! Surely, you want a better world?

In school, many students disregard the few times topics such as mindfulness are spoken about, because the same people who preach kindness are sometimes the cruellest of all. So, try giving your students a say, the only way a curriculum with ideas for students, by students can go is forward! Stop giving out sanctions and give out your hand! Students having voices is not a privilege, but a right!



Freddie Mowbray



Alex Hagerty

Wendy's Café, Gt Bedwyn

Wendy's café must be one of Gt Bedwyn's best-kept secrets. It's a little gem, located in what used to be the pavilion of the old bowls lawn, tucked in behind the children's playground off Farm Lane. Here's a selection of the delightful décor to start you off.



I'm steeped in crime and espionage this month, lurking in the shadows and learning how to perform GBH using everyday household objects. Don't cross me. I started with the latest Mick Herron novel, **Slough House**, which was everything I hoped it would be. If you're a fan of this series, you won't need convincing to read it, and if you haven't read them, go away, start with *Slow Horses*, and get back to me when you've caught up. Did you see Mick Herron speak at the Literature Festival last month? What a charming, interesting, quietly funny man, and how very unlike his characters!

I picked up **Winter Counts** by David Heska Wanbli Weiden because I'm a sucker (in a romantic and unrealistic way) for Native American history and culture, and I lapped up this crime novel. Set on a reservation in South Dakota the narrator, Virgil Wounded Horse, is an 'enforcer' – aka vigilante, or as he's dismissively described, 'hired thug', paid to deliver justice that's been denied by the federal or tribal law agencies. When the drug and alcohol problems on the reservation begin to affect him personally our damaged-but-essentially-good hearted-and-honourable hero embarks on a twisty mission to find the dealers and the source. And of course, on the way he re-connects with an ex-girlfriend, finds his own peace with his cultural heritage, and comes to an appreciation of the struggles of his people to maintain their integrity and way of life. It's not, to be honest, an especially startling whodunnit, even I spotted the baddie fairly early on, but it's very readable and feels convincing. If you think it sounds like your kind of thing, I do recommend it.

Several people have recommended **Box 88** by Charles Cumming, and it is a thoroughly absorbing spy novel. Our hero finds the past catching up with him as the storyline alternates between the very end of the 1980s, the final days of the Cold War and the Lockerbie bombing, and the present day. An agent of an even-top-secreter organisation than MI5, Lachlan Kite is captured by Iranian intelligence and faced with the stark choice between revealing the secrets of thirty years ago, or risking the lives of his family. No, I don't know how it ends, I'm half-way through and have to keep stopping to, you know, *go to work* and *write my column for Tower and Town*. It's really engrossing, and the second of the series *Judas 62* has just been published, hurrah.

On a bright, crisp day in November a chalky track besides Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserve at Morgan's Hill rises up to inspiring views of Cherhill Down and the plains of north Wiltshire. A Roman road runs along its northern edge and the fifth century Wansdyke, built to defend the northern territory of Wessex, defines its southern border. You may look across to a string of cattle or a flock of Herdwick sheep, while above in a patch of blue sky a kite and a "cronking" raven are having a spat. The grazing animals are helping to control the grassland levels, but the Trust, in conjunction with the local farmer, have to manage this carefully, to avoid overgrazing. From time to time scrub clearance is required, and areas of invasive tor-grass need controlling, scraping back to the bare chalk so that different plants and invertebrates can colonise.



The reserve is a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its orchids, butterflies and for the general quality of its chalk grassland and wildflowers. Unusually all three of the UK's native conifer trees grow here – Scots pine, juniper and yew – possibly planted as drovers' waymarkers. There are cowslips, primroses and violets in spring, and wild thyme, horseshoe vetch, rock rose, round-headed rampion, marsh helleborine and autumn gentian as the season progresses. Eleven species of orchid occur, including early purple, spotted, fragrant, twayblade, bee and pyramidal. Where there are flowers, butterflies follow. Along the Wansdyke you can find the adonis, chalkhill and common blues and further down the slopes you may spot the marsh fritillary – one of the UK's endangered species, the larvae of which feed on devil's-bit scabious. Rarer still is the similar-looking metalmark the Duke of Burgundy, a favourite with butterfly lovers. Birds found at the reserve include red kite, kestrel, buzzard, yellowhammer and skylark. There are migrants too: I disturbed a ring ouzel from a hawthorn bush in early spring, and wheatears like the short turf on the adjacent golf course.

It is believed the hill was named after a local man, John Morgan, who in 1720 was hanged at this site for murdering his uncle. On a more pleasant note, as you leave the reserve, you may notice a stone with a memorial on it to Beatrice Gillam (1920-2016), revered local naturalist and one of the founders of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (www.wiltshirewildlife.org).

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms – we welcome

17 October Xander Constantine William Timpson at St George's

24 October Reggie Everard Glenn White-Jowdie at St Mary's

Weddings - we congratulate

18 September Bev Alderson & Paul Hughes wedding blessed at
St John the Baptist, Minal

9 October Derek Barnes & Jan Winstone at St George's, Preshute

Funerals - we pray for the families of:

11 September Eric Brown (91) of Brunel Care Home, Box
(formerly of Marlborough)

St George's Preshute and Marlborough Cemetery

24 September Geoffrey 'Geoff' Stuart Jones (75) of Priest Acre Cottages,
Fyfield

West Berkshire Crematorium, Thatcham

Prospect Hospice rated 'Outstanding' by Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Following a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Prospect Hospice, Swindon, has received an overall rating of Outstanding.

In the report summary, the CQC recognised that staff provided outstanding care to patients, ensuring they were active partners in their care and those patients felt that they were truly cared for and supported by hospice staff. It was also highlighted that the hospice achieved Outstanding for being Well-Led and that leaders in the organisation had an inspiring shared purpose to deliver outstanding care and that staff were proud to work within the hospice team.

Prospect Hospice is a charity providing end-of-life care to people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It serves a community of more than 300,000 people in Swindon and north east Wiltshire, including Royal Wootton Bassett, Cricklade, Marlborough and Pewsey.

What's On

November calendar

1st (Monday)

4.30pm to 6pm Wesley Hall, Oxford Street. Bright Lights Party for children in Reception, Yr1 and Yr2 to celebrate the start of the Autumn term, with lots of food, games and storytelling from the Bible. Come as you are or in your favourite costume! Free entry, please book at tinyurl.com/brightlightsparty

1st (Monday)

St John's Academy: Term 2 starts (to Friday 17th December)

4th (Thursday)

2pm Mildenhall Village Hall, Marlborough Floral Club, demonstrator Nicky Heal: 'Christmas at Home'. First Thursday of each month, arrangements are raffled at the end of the demonstration. Tea and biscuits are served afterwards. For more information, please call Micky Graham 01672 514301. (2nd December, Christmas tea and AGM plus Alanna Marie will demonstrate ideas for Christmas. There will be a good selection of floral sundries available to use at home).

6th (Saturday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Peace Concert. International pianist, Catherine Nardiello, comes all the way from Italy to perform a programme of wonderful music on the theme of peace, including opera arrangements, contemporary music and sacred pieces. Tickets £10 (£5 for students) on the door on the night. CDs available for purchase. Interval refreshments available.

18th (Thursday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Marlborough History Society. Lecture by Robin Buchanan Dunlop: 'Ham in the Middle Ages: How the land dominated life in the village'. Non-members £5. See related advert for further details.

19th (Friday)

Marlborough College: Exeat starts (to Monday 22nd November)

28th (Sunday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Brilliant International Musicians Concert, The Jumis Ensemble promises high quality international chamber music that will give you an experience to remember forever. They play in prestigious music venues, eg St John's Smith Square and the Drapers' Hall. Their programme will include Rhiannon: Piano Quartet, Debussy: Cello Sonata and Faure: Piano Quartet No 2, Op 45. Tickets £13 (£9 for St Peter's members) on the door or from the White Horse Bookshop.

1st December (Wednesday)

7pm St Peter's Church brought to you by the Merchant's House. The Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey, will share songs and readings from his new book 'English Grounds: A Pastoral Journal'. Rooted in the Wiltshire landscape, 'English Grounds' explores themes of place, spirituality and belonging in a series of short essays and photographs. Former Literary Editor of The Times, Erica Wagner, describes this as "a marvellous book, lit by faith, love and imagination". Tickets £20 (£17 for Friends of the Merchant's House) available from www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events

A vibrant poster for a 'Bright Lights Party'. The background is a dark blue gradient with several colorful light bulbs (yellow, orange, purple, blue, green, pink) hanging from the top. A white circular logo with a colorful, abstract design is in the upper right. The text 'BRIGHT LIGHTS PARTY' is written in large, glowing, yellow-orange letters. Below it, the date and time 'MON 1ST NOVEMBER 4:30 PM - 6 PM' are also in glowing yellow-orange. At the bottom left is a QR code, and at the bottom right is the text: 'All KS1 age children welcome Wesley Hall, Christchurch Marlborough RSVP at the following address or use the QR code <https://forms.gle/cf7oA18omjxovpmy6>'.

**BRIGHT
LIGHTS
PARTY**

**MON 1ST NOVEMBER
4:30 PM – 6 PM**

All KS1 age children welcome
Wesley Hall, Christchurch Marlborough
RSVP at the following address or use the QR code
<https://forms.gle/cf7oA18omjxovpmy6>

September... St Non's... It must be, except it wasn't last year for the usual covid reason, so this year it was an especial joy to return to that beautifully situated, welcoming house overlooking the sea on the Pembroke coast near St David's. A programme of Celtic style Christian meditation on the five senses was led by Lynne Busfield (team vicar at Preshute 20 years ago) while afternoon walks were arranged by Barney Rosedale; and we were more than amply fed by the three delightfully happy and helpful nuns who 'run the joint'. A week beforehand, six of us were invited to volunteer to lead a morning or evening prayer session that focussed in turn on the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, plus a rounding-off session that looked at the non-organic or spiritual senses such as justice, responsibility, compassion, humour.

The warm Indian Summer and calm conditions enabled some delightful cliff top walks and a certain three females of our number donned swimmers and pretended the Atlantic was still warm. On the last evening we adjourned to St David's magnificent cathedral and enjoyed the wonderful choral evensong.

On the morning of departure, to allow us to slot everything into perspective, Barney led a slow meditative walk. I recommend you try it in Savernake, on the Downs or even on the Common. Try one step with each breath and look at the ground. Initially one has to concentrate on balance but soon a rhythm and surety takes over and the mind is free to roam with or without the body... a peaceful and refreshing experience, and looking up from the ground, the world can seem refreshed too with more colour and more detail.

Let us now truly live in God's world.

Let us not just see but observe;

Not just hear but listen;

Not just touch but feel;

Not just taste but savour;

Not just smell but discern the many odours and fragrances.

And let us exercise our spiritual senses of justice, integrity and such, and have compassion for those who, through age or infirmity, are losing their senses.

Thank you God for all our senses.

The White Horse Gallery has re-opened, and this month's exhibition is *Room*, paintings and drawings by local artist, Victoria Jinivizian NEAC.

In 2017, Victoria's debut exhibition at The White Horse Gallery *Interior Lives* was an exploration of space and interior living, a theme which has dominated much of her artworks since Victoria began drawing and painting on Foundation, and then at The Slade thirty years ago.

The concept of interior spaces is explored through a combination of paintings, drawings and sketches, all of which interrogate this notion of living, and the immediacy of space and objects that surround us in our daily lives.

Room is a beautiful collection of artworks. They are still, quiet, warm and undisturbed. These emotions are captured by the use of colour and definitive lines marked on the paper. Studying the artworks, you feel as though you are standing in the rooms themselves, or that somehow you are able to transport yourself into these dwellings, whether it be a beautiful drawing room, or indeed a messy teenage bedroom. (I'm presuming it's a boy's bedroom...)

Sometimes, a painting of a room can leave you feeling detached, unwelcome and unresponsive. Victoria's depiction of rooms however have quite the opposite effect. They are enchanting – some epitomise the feeling of looking out of a dewy window on an early summer's morning, whilst others stimulate the feeling of a velvety, vamp bedroom oozing sensuality.

It's amazing how comforted a painting or a drawing of a room can make you feel – even though we might never have seen or been in these rooms before, sometimes the expression and technique of a drawing or a painting can spur your senses to tingle and twitch.

They are literally windows into other people's lives, and with that, display a whole variety of atmospheres, colours and surprises.

Room was at The White Horse Gallery between 8th October – 31st October 2021.

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(Fridays, 14:30 to 16:30)

MARLBOROUGH HISTORY SOCIETY

“Ham in the Middle Ages: how the Land Dominated Life in the Village.”

By Robin Buchanan-Dunlop

Robin Buchanan-Dunlop is retired and lives in Ham and has written and published a history of the village. As the title of his talk suggests, he will focus on how our Wiltshire forebears saw the countryside and worked the land in the Middle Ages from the 10th to the 14th centuries.



Thursday, 18 November, 7:30 pm, St Peter's Church.
Guests are very welcome, £5 entry.
(Covid safe provisions are in place)



Beth Greenwood

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News from the Churches

Bright Lights Party on Monday 1st November, 4.30 to 6pm

meeting at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. For children in school years Reception, Y1 and Y2. Celebrate the start of the Autumn term with us with lots of food, games and storytelling from the Bible. Come as you are or in your favourite costume! Free admission - please book at tinyurl.com/brightlightsparty



Remembrance Sunday 14th November

Christchurch commemorate Remembrance Sunday with Geoff Lewis, local preacher from Swindon, starting at 10.30 am. An opportunity will be given for those who wish to, to leave the service to join with the Service at The War Memorial at 11 a.m.

Remembrance Services will be held at St John the Baptist, Minal at 9am; St George's, Preshute at 10.30am ; and St Mary's, Marlborough at **11.15am** (N.B. Later start to allow joining in with the short act of Remembrance and the Parade at The War Memorial at 11am)

Messy Church for Advent: 20th November

Children and their families are warmly welcomed to Messy Church for Advent - Saturday 20th November at 2pm at St George's Church, Preshute. An opportunity for families to come and enjoy informal worship, activities and refreshments together. For further information, please contact Amanda Brown - amandabrown46@hotmail.co.uk; 07900 198386.



Christchurch Advent Service on Sunday 28th November

will be led by Alex Scott from Swindon - at 10.30am. All are welcome to join us.



Choral Evensong for Advent: 28th November

Sunday 28th November, 7pm at St George's Church - with The Georgians Choir

"Falling Leaves and Early Snow": 3rd December

Friday 3rd December, 7pm at St George's Church - - a seasonal concert of music and words. Tickets £15, available from dbeacom@aol.com

Women's Fellowship

Meet on Tuesdays. Christchurch in the crush hall at 2.45pm

2nd November

16th November

30th November



Emmanuel Marlborough.

We are grateful to meet for a weekly Sunday service at 4pm at Christchurch, New Road, with creche and Sunday School groups. All are welcome to stay afterwards for refreshments and a sandwich tea for children. Mid-week we are also delighted to offer a variety of activities including homegroups meeting in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George and community groups as detailed below:



Little Friends Toddler Group, Thursdays, 10-11.30am at the Marlborough Community and Youth Centre. Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers.

Explorers Fridays, 6-7.15pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Our kids club for school years 3 to 6. Fun, games, tuck and a short Bible talk (bring 50p for tuck)

Friday Nights Fridays, 7.30-9pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Our youth club for school years 7-11. Friends, fun & faith – everyone welcome!

Christianity Explored Explore the life & claims of Jesus through Mark's gospel using this video based course in a friendly, interactive setting. All are welcome to come and ask any question or just listen. For more details, email office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group (MAPAG)

The next meeting will be at 5pm on Monday 8th November by Zoom; details from rachelrosed1@gmail.com

Marlborough Churches Together: Fraternal

The next meeting is Wednesday 10th November at 12.30pm.

Lighting up Marlborough for Christmas

The Christmas lights will be switched on at 6.30pm on Friday 19th November.

There will be a Santa's grotto in the Town Hall and some street entertainment. A Christmas Market will trade in the High Street between 10am and 7.30pm as well. A road closure, if approved, will take place from 5pm.

Christingle Services

Take place on Sunday 5th December at 9am at St John the Baptist and Sunday 12th December at 10.30am at St Mary's.

We invite you to join the lovely tradition of Christingle when a lighted candle symbolizing Christ as the light of the world is held by children at a special service. The tradition started in 1747 by John de Watteville in his Moravian Church congregation in Germany.



Farewells

Laura retired as our Anglican Team Administrator after 14 years in the role at the end of October. She came to this post without previous experience of church admin, but rapidly mastered the intricacies involved, and used both her skills and personality to make a huge success of the job.

Her quiet efficiency and attention to detail have been invaluable, and her kindness, warmth and approachability have been there for us all to take advantage of; from the clergy, to parishioners, to bereaved families getting her help to arrange a funeral.

Some of you may never have actually met her in person! However she has done her stuff quietly in the background, helping all 3 parishes to run smoothly.

There will be a small farewell occasion in St Mary's at 11.30am on Sunday 7th November, with tea/coffee and cake.

Christchurch

As a church community we are sad to be saying farewell to The New Road Centre, as they leave us for a new venue. We have enjoyed having them with us over many years and wish them well for the future.

Tower and Town staff

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Contributions and comments from readers are welcome.

Please send articles and letters to the Monthly Editor or the Chairman, other notices or announcements to the compiler. All items for the December issue by Tuesday 9th November please.

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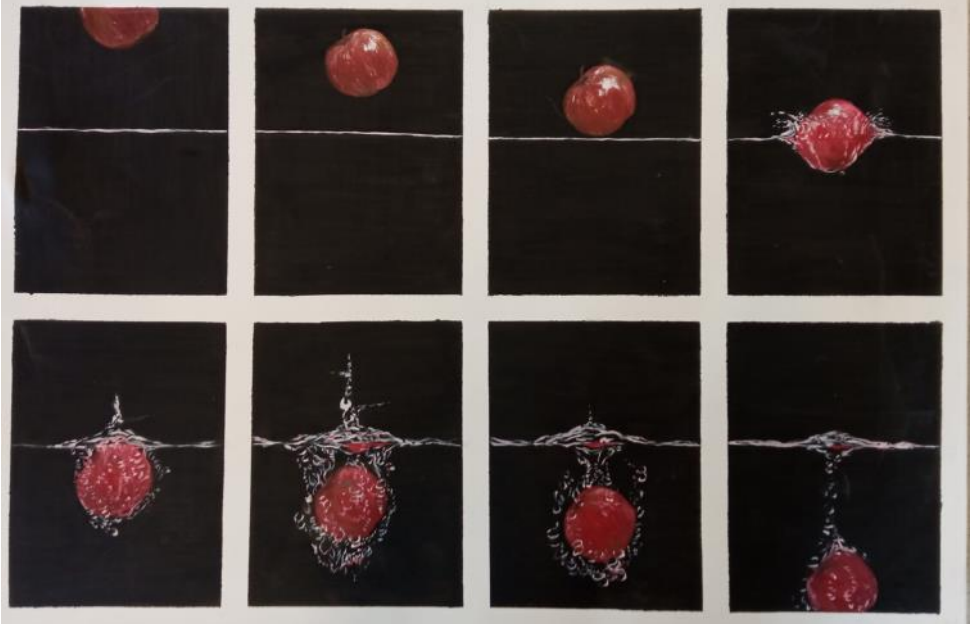
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