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# TOWER<sub>AND</sub>TOWN

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**ARK**

**Action for the River Kennet**

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**OCTOBER 2022**

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# TOWER<sup>AND</sup>TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

NUMBER 730 OCTOBER 2022



## ARK

Many of us take our rivers for granted, but hopefully if you live in or near to Marlborough, you'll have heard that you are lucky enough to live near an internationally rare chalk stream.

There are 260 of these special chalk streams in the world and here in England we have 224 of them, including the Kennet and its tributaries.

What makes them special is their cold, clean and clear water, which supports a wealth of native wildlife and sadly some invasive non-native species too!

It was back in 1990 that a group of fishermen, concerned by the river's poor health decided to form an action group to bring pressure on bodies, including Thames Water and the Environment Agency. Jack Ainslie, Roger deVere, and friends formed Action for the River Kennet (ARK). Their main focus was the abstraction on the Kennet and the impact this was having on the wildlife, including fish.

Abstraction is the extracting of water from the chalk aquifer. The chalk aquifer is the underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock. Chalk streams rely on plenty of winter rain to filter down into the aquifer, which acts like a giant sponge. When the aquifer is saturated the water feeds into the river from the source and natural springs along its path.

The water that comes out of your taps has been extracted by the water company from the aquifer. So, valuing water is paramount. The less we can all use, the more that can reach our rivers and keep them flowing.

This is a particularly timely message, given we are in drought. It is though something we should be thinking about and acting on long-term.

Since those early years ARK has become a registered charity and is now a Rivers Trust hosting both the Kennet Catchment and more recently taking on the Pang Catchment.

We are still firmly based and very active in Marlborough, *continued overleaf*

Cover photo: ARK River School with Ogbourne Primary at Stonebridge WRR

but are also busy downstream too, carrying out a range of projects at a breadth of scales and this includes working on the tributaries. To make bigger impacts today's thinking is very much at a catchment scale, so you'll see us not only working in the river but by it and sometimes quite far away from it too.

In this edition of Tower and Town you'll hopefully discover more about your local river, learn how you can help it, find out more about ARK and the opportunities to join in.

**Anna Forbes, Editor and ARK Senior Project Officer**

For more information do visit our website

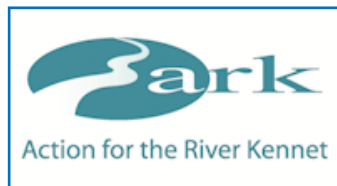
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## Join In – Practical Volunteering

Anna Forbes

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ARK has an amazing team of volunteers, but we are always ready to welcome more.

One of the joys of being an ARK volunteer is no experience is necessary and you can volunteer as regularly as you wish and only for the tasks that appeal to you.

In Marlborough there are often practical tasks to join in at Stonebridge Wild River Reserve and just out of town we are working on controlling Himalayan balsam on the Og.

Locations and activities vary according to what projects we are delivering, volunteering is a fantastic way to see lots of different stretches of river, including the private reaches. We often work closely with fisheries and other landowners large and small. After all we share a common goal of wanting to see a healthy river corridor, so working together and sharing skills and expertise is vital.

The majority of our volunteers love getting into waders and experiencing the river from a whole new perspective, however if you want to stay on land, there are often practical tasks that include a mix of in river and land-based roles or sometimes the activities are totally land-based, such as hedge or tree planting or faggot making. Faggots are large neat tied bundles of coppiced hazel, which are used in the river for some of our habitat improvement works.

A regular Volunteer Programme is emailed out and advanced booking is essential to allow good organisation of each task. Some are all day and others just half a day. There are volunteering opportunities throughout the year, mostly during the week but some weekend dates too.

We have a wide age range, from teenage D of E volunteers through to retired members of the community in their 80s.

ARK provides all equipment, waders and plenty of refreshments.

As well as practical river restoration, which is not about tidying the river (new volunteers are often surprised that we are sometimes actively pinning in large sections of tree not hauling it out), you might be part of a river litter pick, planting up a newly created wetland, building a rain garden, tackling invasive plant species or planting native ones.

If you would like to be added to our volunteer database, please email [anna@riverkennet.org](mailto:anna@riverkennet.org)



*ARK volunteers planting up the river bank*

**Letter to the Chairman Regarding the September Edition’s Family News  
Tribute to Vicky Sullivan**

This is a superb article on someone who inspired me as a LINK volunteer. She gave something of herself to one and all and was never happier than mixing with people from all walks of life, who were her life. Just being in her presence was so stimulating and ideas always flowed as a result! God bless her.

Marion Gordon-Finlayson

One of the most successful Citizen Science projects in the UK is riverfly monitoring. If you've seen someone in the Kennet with a net and a bucket peering into a large white tray on the riverbank, they are likely to be one of our trained volunteer riverfly monitors who are checking for pollution in our rivers.

We began establishing sites in Marlborough in 2007 and since then have become the Riverfly Partnership Hub for the Kennet Catchment and now have 64 sites, from Clatford down to Reading. Sites are monitored on a monthly basis, volunteers take a 'kick sample', this gently disturbs the gravel riverbed and the tiny freshwater invertebrates flow into the net.

Our riverfly monitors are looking for 8 indicator groups, including specific mayfly larvae, cased and caseless caddis, stoneflies and shrimp. These are the river equivalent of the canary in the mine. They are identified, counted, returned to the river and the count is turned into a score. If a trigger level is breached a protocol is followed and the Environment Agency should attend to investigate further.

This system proved itself back in July 2013, when an insecticide found its way into the river and our Elcot Mill monitors picked up this serious pollution incident.

Trained volunteers bringing in robust data is also helping us evidence the presence of water voles. Our team of volunteer water vole surveyors are out from spring to autumn surveying for signs of Britain's largest vole, they also log signs of otter. Spending a day wading in the river with likeminded individuals, searching for feeding signs and droppings is very exciting and rewarding, it lets us know these mammals are present even if we are not lucky enough to see them.

In the winter brown trout spawn, we stay out of the river where this is happening as if a trout nest is disturbed the eggs will float out of the gravel nest and get predated. The nests are called 'redds' and each year we train volunteers to identify redds. Our Redd Spotters walk a specific riverbank on a fortnightly basis during the spawning season logging new redds at each visit on our Redd App.

Without dedicated volunteers we would not be able to collect this valuable data.



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### VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are a vital part of KFR.

We simply could not function without them. In return for their commitment, we are able to offer on the job training with a wide variety of personal development opportunities including Health & Safety, CV writing and interview skills. Get in touch if you would like more information about becoming part of the KFR family.

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# ARK Healthy River Tips 2022

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## **Use water wisely**

All our water comes from the chalk aquifer that feeds the river. If you use less water there will more left in the river to keep it flowing. Try to take short showers and shallow baths, check if you have a leaky loo. These are some easy wins and if you are on a water meter you will save money too.

## **Don't mow right to the edge**

If your garden backs on to the river keep a 'buffer zone' between the bank and mown land. Well established tall plants above ground create a strong root structure below the ground. This means a strong river bank held together by roots, which reduces erosion and creates a good habitat for wildlife.

**A buffer of riparian vegetation slows down surface water runoff**, catching sediment before it reaches the river. Sediment clogs up gravel riverbeds and prevents wild fish from spawning.

## **Leave Watercress in the river**

This native plant naturally narrows the channel in times of low flow. The flow is then faster, keeping the water oxygenated and the gravel riverbed clean. Watercress also provides a refuge for small fish and invertebrates, it's also a favourite food for water vole .

## **Keep your compost heap and grass clippings away from the river**

Compost heaps are good, but not near rivers. As grass clippings and plant matter break down, they leach nutrients into the watercourse. High nutrient levels promote algal growth, which smothers healthy green aquatic plants and leads to eutrophication. Put your compost and grass clippings as far from the river as you can.

**Never throw garden waste into the river**, this is simply littering and will pollute the water and could cause obstructions, leading to flooding.

## **Septic tanks**

If your property is on a septic tank make sure it is well maintained and opt for phosphate free cleaning products. Septic tanks can't remove phosphate, which is a pollutant for rivers. You can reduce phosphate levels by buying household cleaning products that are phosphate free.

## **Slow the flow**

Look for ways to catch and slow water through your garden. This will allow water to slowly filter into the ground, recharging the aquifer with clean water, and keeping our river flowing for longer. See p.8 for more Rain Garden information.

# Rain Gardens!

Charlotte Hitchmough ARK Director

The long hot summer of 2022 may be a taste of what's to come as the impact of climate change plays out. Rainfall that arrives in heavy storms with long dry periods in between is difficult to manage, threatening to keep us yo-yoing from drought to flood, which is bad news for rivers like the Kennet and bad news for gardeners.

To live happily with changing rainfall patterns, we all need to make changes, and our gardens are a good place to start.

What is a rain garden

A 'Rain garden' is a planted depression in the ground that harnesses the power of soil and plants to capture rain, filter out pollution and then let the water soak slowly into the ground. Some rain gardens include rain water planters, which are specially designed planters that contain a reservoir to store rain water before slowly releasing it back to the drainage network or to the ground. Finally, a good rain garden will include some sort of water butt to hold on to rain so it's available for dry spells.



Figure 1 – Elements that make up a rain garden. You can choose one or all of them, depending what suits you.

Rain gardens do four things:

**Improve Water Quality:** naturally filtering water as it soaks into the ground, and keeping rainfall out of the sewer network. This reduces local surface water flooding and reduces sewer spills.

**Improve Water Quantity:** providing water butts and planter reservoirs making water

available for plants through dry spells, and creating safe spaces for water when it does rain.

Make your garden nicer for people by including some great design and beautiful plants.

Make your garden better for wildlife – a wide variety of tolerant plants will encourage biodiversity from the tiny creatures in the soil to the birds that will be attracted to your new garden.

A rain garden created by disconnecting a downpipe and sending the roof runoff to a planted depression is a simple, low budget project achievable in a weekend with a bit of planning. There are some basic rules to follow and ARK's Rain Garden UK training courses give you everything you need to know. If you can't wait until the next course there is plenty of guidance and advice on the internet, we have listed some of our favourite resources here: <https://www.kennetcatchment.org/kennet-rainscapes/>

ARK has been working with homeowners around Wiltshire and beyond through our Rain Garden UK training, which we developed with Ramsbury based garden designer Wendy Allen. The next courses will be in the autumn. Exact dates are not set yet, but you can pre-register your interest by emailing [julie@riverkennet.org](mailto:julie@riverkennet.org) or take a look at [www.raingarden.uk](http://www.raingarden.uk)

Perversely, rain gardens spend most of the time dry, only holding water for a few hours after a storm, so plants need to be drought tolerant but able to put up with periodic inundation. As part of Rain Garden UK training we've put together a list of tried and tested plants. But some examples you can try include Geum 'Totally tangerine' for sunny sites, or a good one for a shady spot try Liriope muscari.

If you'd like to see rain gardens ARK has built in local schools, designed for us by Wendy, there are some fine examples at Preshute, Ramsbury, Aldbourne, Shalbourne, Baydon and Chilton Foliat Primary Schools. All of them manage rain water and have some good ideas to copy at home.

Figure two: rain garden at Baydon Primary School, managing rain water and brightening the playground



# Marlborough's Own Wild River Reserve

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Walking through town there are lots of opportunities to enjoy the Kennet, including The Priory, Cooper's Meadow and The Waterfront Garden.

A few minutes' walk beyond the High Street on the eastern edge of Marlborough is the multi-award winning Stonebridge Wild River Reserve, a 15 acre water meadow (jointly purchased in 2011 by ARK and Marlborough Town Council) and land north of the river, which ARK leases from the St John's Foundation Trust.

The site is managed to be a place to preserve and enhance the rich biodiversity, where people have the opportunity to be inspired and enjoy a high quality natural environment. There are also lots of opportunities to volunteer and get involved. We want the community and visitors to the town to witness the amazing diversity of wildlife in and around a chalk stream. At the beginning of 2015 Stonebridge Wild River Reserve became an officially recognised Wildlife Site.

A healthy chalk stream supports a thriving and unique natural environment and is home to iconic British species. Water vole, kingfisher, otter, brown trout and many other species are present at the reserve. The surrounding habitats are equally important too; several years ago we discovered our mixed native hedge planting and wetland creation were supporting a population of harvest mice!

This year the first orchid was recorded, which is a good indicator that the conservation grazing area is heading in the right direction.

Recently we ran a corporate volunteering day for a local business, the team restored the two gravel 'beach' areas, which have been created to allow easy access into the river for those wanting to explore and paddle. By focussing river use at these points we are leaving space for nature to go about its business undisturbed in between.

Following the creation of a wetland in 2015 we installed a recycled plastic boardwalk and dipping platform to improve access and enjoyment of this new habitat. The wetland cleans road surface runoff that before the wetland was going straight into the Kennet.

The Town Council grounds team play an important role, they maintain the circular walk in the water meadow and mow sinuous footpaths within the other areas; they also empty the bins and remove the litter our volunteers clear from land and river.

Each autumn we run community Snake's head fritillary bulb planting days, this year it will be Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 11am -3pm. Everyone is welcome to help for as little or as long as suits.

I've always loved rivers. When I first looked for caddisfly at the age of eight, who knew I would return to it so many years later? With more time on my hands, it seemed an ideal opportunity to volunteer with ARK. Having enjoyed working with others in teams I wanted to find something where I could be part of a group. When you spend the day restoring a river bank with 10 to 12 like-minded individuals it's hard but enjoyable work and there is banter a plenty.

The other concern about stopping work is how to keep your brain active. In the last 3 years I've learned how to conduct a water vole survey, riverfly monitor (checking for pollution) and spot brown trout nests (redds). I also regularly support ARK's educational outreach; I help young children learn about what they can find in their river. Last year ARK worked with 1,453 children!

There is a wide range of tasks you can get involved with and the tasks are always well organised.

As a volunteer you get to work on some lovely stretches of river and I send my daughter's photos of 'my office' for the day.



I began my retirement about ten years ago and wanted to get involved in new activities. A growing family meant I didn't want to make rigid, regular commitments, and I had had enough of meetings and committees. I think I first became aware of ARK at a recruiting stand behind Waitrose; the outdoors beckoned and messing about in rivers sounded like my cup of tea! (Though ARK's purpose is much more serious than that!).

Since then, I have learnt a great deal about nature and the environment, acquired new skills and had many enjoyable days in some beautiful stretches of river, in all weathers! A typical ARK Day begins with me checking the weather forecast, collecting everything I might need to deal with the task and weather, (not forgetting lunch) and heading off to a meeting point anywhere within the Kennet Catchment. Sometimes I drive ARK's own truck loaded with materials and equipment. Tasks are led by an ARK Project Officer, and are usually maintenance or improvements of either the river or adjacent land. Education of young and old is also a very important aspect of ARK's work and I have been involved in the construction of two or three school Rain Gardens which show children how flooding can be reduced by better management of rainwater.

I'm sometimes anxious as I set out for the day, often wet, dirty and exhausted by the end, but always return satisfied after a worthwhile day's work alongside a great bunch of fellow volunteers.



# Leo the lion – An important part of Marlborough History

Anna Forbes

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Whilst out in and by the river our staff and volunteers often get asked, “Do you ever find anything interesting in there?”

The answer is yes, we are often surprised at what finds its way into the river; microwaves, suitcases, car exhaust systems! However, I think the most interesting item is a very heavy medieval stone lion which was discovered by volunteers whilst we were working on our Team Stream river restoration project at the rear of the Marlborough branch of Waitrose back in 2015.

Leo, as he was named, remained hidden until quite a time after the project. In July 2020 a small group of strong ARK volunteers were convinced to heave Leo onto boards in the river, secure him with ropes and haul him out. This was all pretty challenging as the riverbank at this stretch is steep and we were in the midst of the pandemic!

David Dawson from Wiltshire Museum was very helpful and confirmed Leo is a very fine 14<sup>th</sup> century corbel. A corbel is a projection, usually of stone, that acts as a base for an arch. Given the location where Leo was found, he felt the most likely origin was White Friar’s Priory Church. It is an unusual corbel in that it has two wall faces at right-angles. This suggests that it was from the junction of the nave or chancel.

Local historian David Sherratt, who inspired us to get Leo out of the river, cleaned him up; and if you wish to see Marlborough’s very own medieval stone lion he now resides in The Merchant House gardens.



# What's On in October

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## October calendar:

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### (From September) to 9<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)

10am-5pm The gardens at Avebury Manor. Autumn Sculpture Exhibition

### 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)

2pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Marlborough Floral Club. Sandi Draper – Inspired by Nature. Treat yourselves to an enjoyable afternoon out on the first Thursday of each month. There is a Guest Demonstrator and the arrangements are raffled at the end of the demonstration. For more information, please call Micky Graham on 01672 514301

### 13<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)

7pm-9pm St Peter's Church. The Merchant's House presents a talk by Dr Kate Vigurs 'Women Spies of WWII'. Tickets (£18/Friends of MH £15)  
For further details, and to book, visit [www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events](http://www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events)

### 14<sup>th</sup> (Friday)

Marlborough College: Half Term starts - to 30<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)

### 15<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) to 17<sup>th</sup> December

10am-4pm St Peter's Church. Charity Christmas cards on sale

### 15<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)

11am-3pm Stonebridge Reserve. ARK (Action for the River Kennet) Bulb Planting Day. See further information on page 10.

### 15<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)

7pm St Peter's Church. The Magnificent AKs Concert. Men's singing group, inspired by Georgian harmonies and attracted to the musically irreverent and absurd. For more information, visit [www.themagnificentak47.com](http://www.themagnificentak47.com)

### 16<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. 11<sup>th</sup> Series of Brilliant Young International Musicians: Ingmar Lazar (piano). Tickets (£15/Members £10) on the door on the night or from [www.stpetersmarlborough.org.uk](http://www.stpetersmarlborough.org.uk) in advance

### 19<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)

St John's: Term 1 ends  
St Mary's: Term 1 ends



## **20<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)**

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Marlborough History Society. A talk by historian Graham Bathe covering the evolution of Savernake 'A Thousand Years of Savernake'. Guests very welcome, £5 entry. See further information below.

## **31<sup>st</sup> (Monday)**

St John's: Term 2 starts

St Mary's: Term 2 starts

## **31<sup>st</sup> (Monday)**

Wesley Hall. Emmanuel, Marlborough. Bright Lights Party.

3.30pm-4.45pm for children in school years Reception to Year 2, 5pm-6.15pm for Yrs 3 to 6

Come and celebrate Jesus, the light of the world, with us. Refreshments, games and storytelling from the Bible. Contact [office@emmanuelmarlborough.org](mailto:office@emmanuelmarlborough.org) for more information and to book your place

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### **“A Thousand Years of Savernake”**

**By Graham Bathe (historian of Wolf Hall)**

Thursday, October 20, 7:30 pm, St Peter's Church.

Guests are very welcome, £5 entry.

(Covid safe provisions are in place)

By combining ancient documents and latest landscape technology, the talk will cover the evolution of Savernake from a Saxon wilderness, through its establishment as a royal hunting forest serving Marlborough castle, to its landscaping as private parkland under the guidance of Capability Brown

## **Queen, Elizabeth II**

At Tower and Town we give thanks for the life of our Queen, Elizabeth II; her dignity, her sense of duty and service, her love of her people and her sense of humour inspired huge love and respect. She will be greatly missed. We send our condolences to the King and the Royal Family at this very sad and momentous time.



*County and Town Councillor James Sheppard helping ARK carry out some wetland maintenance at Stonebridge*

*Adam Matthew Digital staff taking part in a corporate volunteering day*





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*Water vole, River Kennet*



*Water vole surveyors*

Who am I to say whether a book is good or bad? It's a matter of taste, and if you love something that leaves me cold - well, so what? (Although if you violently dislike a book that's one of my favourites I shall naturally dismiss you as an ignorant dullard!) A recent read *was* just plain bad though, a historical novel, (no, *not* the Big Historical Novel of this autumn) with a good if predictable storyline, all fine. But the dialogue was stilted and unconvincing, with paragraphs of overworked exposition, just all very clunky. Bad. How very unlike *Shrines of Gaiety* by Kate Atkinson, with plot, setting, characters and prose harmoniously skipping along, clever and complex, somehow both clear and ambiguous, highly satisfying. Good.

Two other good novels, one a mystery-thriller, one very much not. *The Skeleton Key* by Erin Kelly is positively gothic in its convoluted plot, centred around a book which is both an artistic masterpiece and a publishing phenomenon. The closely linked families of the creator and his best friend and collaborators have been both enriched and handicapped by acclaim for the book and the obsessive fandom it engendered. It's twisty, and worryingly convincing in the depiction of delusional mania, exacerbated by social media which feeds into real life and creates genuine threat. Atmospheric, intriguing, a real page-turner.

India Knight's *Darling* is an updated version of Nancy Mitford's *The Pursuit of Love*. I approached this with slightly sniffy caution, as there are some truly awful, pointless examples of attempts to make classic novels 'modern' and 'relevant'. Just think what various people have done to Jane Austen, and shudder. But it can work, after all, Shakespeare stole or adapted nearly all of his plots, and if it's good enough for him...so I read *Darling* and was won over. (I'm not comparing India Knight to Shakespeare, you understand.) It's a real homage to the original, and whether you like it or not will depend on your view of *Pursuit*; some people love the bright, sharp tragi-comedy with the confident, confiding narrative voice, others can't get past a fuming exasperation at the obliviously posh inter-war protagonists. So, it's up to you, if you think you'll hate this, then give it a miss. But if you're a Mitford fan, India Knight has remained faithful to the original, while unjarringly updating the setting and characters. I was looking to find things wrong with it, but I found it sweet, convincing, as funny, and only slightly less moving than *Pursuit*.

# Sir, what is the Commonwealth?

Tim Novis

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Having just departed Chapel at Marlborough College after special prayers for Her Majesty during which she had heard the word, a pupil asked me, ‘Sir, what is the Commonwealth?’ Mustering up my best answer from my understanding of Civics, I responded, ‘It is the worldwide organisation of countries who consider the Monarch of the United Kingdom to be their Head of State.’ Pleased with my response I thought that was the end of it, but she persisted by asking if my country of birth was a member. She must have intuited it was, but I felt chuffed to be asked because it’s a reality that the vast majority of Canadians still take great pride in treasuring. As a Constitutional Monarchy, I explained to her, Canada was one of the first countries outside of Great Britain to have proclaimed King Charles III as its leader, with a sombre looking Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, standing and holding the hand of his son whilst the proclamation was declared from the steps of Parliament in Ottawa.

I remembered singing both ‘God save the Queen’ and ‘O Canada’ at the start of every day in school, and the classic portrait of Her Majesty no less familiar here than there, adorning the wall of the School Assembly.

My primary school was called ‘Prince Philip Elementary’, and I went to a High School called ‘Governor Simcoe’. In sport we were known as ‘The Redcoats’. My sisters went to a High School called ‘Laura Secord’. She was a United Empire Loyalist who, during the War of 1812 between Britain and the United States, walked twenty miles through American lines to warn the British in Upper Canada of an impending American attack. The Americans didn’t bother her as she strolled through their ranks on her secret mission, leading a dairy cow. And Canada to this day is not the 51st state. The motto of the Province of Ontario reads, ‘Loyal She Remains.’

But history aside, I never fully appreciated the Commonwealth until I moved here with my family 14 years ago. It was comforting to see the profile of Her Majesty on British currency, and it reminded me of my other home over the sea.

When I was told by a colleague that I could vote, I was stunned. I rang the local constituency office just to check that a Canadian passport and residency status meant that I could indeed visit a polling booth and was bowled over at the honour. To this day, I always take the time to vote, and I always study candidates’ platforms to ensure I am taking this right very seriously.

A tax treaty that means I’m not taxed on my income in both Canada and the United Kingdom is also a benefit beyond measure!

And I’ll never forget, after coming back from vacation in Europe and landing at

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Heathrow, going through UK Customs and Immigration and hearing the Agent say, 'Welcome Home.' Honestly, to this day, it still makes me shiver a little – in a very good way!

I saw a mini-documentary on Queen Elizabeth II and her love of the Commonwealth during this past week of National Mourning. In a news clip of her in Canada in what must have been the 80's, probably around the time when Justin's father Pierre Trudeau was 'repatriating the Canadian Constitution', she says, 'It's good to be home.' Shivers again.

You never know the significance of the Commonwealth until you're no longer living in the land of your birth. My pupil had found just the right person to ask.

It's possible that Canada might engage in national debate about the future of the Monarchy, but the fact that King Charles III has so quickly been declared Canada's King is for me very good news. It means that my fellow Canadians realise what a treasure it is to have a Constitution whose key purpose is to ensure, in its own words, 'Peace, Order and Good Government'. And the best of government is one with the Monarchy at its Head. I will always miss Queen Elizabeth II, but I look forward to seeing Canadian currency with a new profile very soon. God save the King.

## Fungi, Spiders, Daddy Longlegs and Creepy Crawlies

By the beginning of October most of our summer visiting birds have disappeared. Swallows and Martins, Warblers, Pipits and Flycatchers have all gone south, whilst flocks of Ducks and Waders, Starlings, Redwings and Fieldfares from all quarters are coming this way. The “Twitchers” are heading for migration “hot spots” such as Fair Isle,

### *Fly Agaric*

Portland Bill and the Scillies to seek out a rare Warbler, a Wryneck or a Shrike.

But now that the flowers have withered, the butterflies all but gone and the days shorter and colder, what can we less besotted nature lovers seek out as the leaves steadily fall from the trees?

Well, we could start with a visit to Westonbirt Arboretum where Acers and Maples as well as native trees provide a spectacular range of leaf colours as the month progresses - fiery reds, vibrant oranges and bright yellows.

Back at home it's a good month for sorting cupboards, tidying up sheds, and hoovering behind the sofa, and a very good time to find woodlice, spiders and a hibernating Red Admiral or two. Spiders come into their own from mid-September to early October and feature in various shapes and sizes: the Cellar Spider, Giant House Spider (a fast mover), Mouse Spider, Cupboard Spider (can bite, causing “mild side-effects”) and another biter - the Noble False Widow Spider! As for woodlice we suddenly find a small host in a dark corner by a skirting board and we obsessively Hoover them up in the name of good house-keeping.

On a warm evening in October I find a swarm of Craneflies (I prefer the old-fashioned name “Daddy Long Legs”) hovering over the long grass on Fyfield Down. Meanwhile Bats are seeking hibernation sites for the winter months. I discovered one clamped behind a wall panel in our garden room in late September and took it to the National Trust office in Avebury- there are incidentally reckoned to be five different species in the Great Barn.

My habit of picking mushrooms in our local fields ceased after I brought home a crop in a handkerchief and was sick for two days. There are fewer appearing locally these days, so I have switched allegiance to the fungi of Savernake Forest, which include the hallucinogenic magic mushroom and the fly agaric toadstool, attractive to the eye but be warned- it's poisonous!

All this in preparation for the festival of Halloween on the 31<sup>st</sup>, images for which find inspiration from some of the above.



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With the loss of Queen Elizabeth II, it feels, to quote Psalm 46, like the earth has given way and the mountains fallen into the heart of the sea.

Most of us remember nothing before the Queen's reign. On the day I took my first steps, her eldest son married. Humanly speaking, her 70 year reign has been the one constant of the post-war era, not only for the UK but for the Commonwealth and beyond. The Queen has been, with Prince Philip, an island of uprightness as scandals brought down so many; a giant of history as tyrants rose and fell; and the figurehead around whom the nations of our Kingdom were proud to unite.

Yet in the whirlwind of one afternoon, she is gone. The family rushed to her bedside. The sign was posted on the gates of Buckingham Palace. The news-screens turned black. More than once this week, I've shed a tear, as the news and tributes pour in; maybe you have too. What a world of trouble she leaves us in! War rages in Europe and the balance of global power shifts. Our new Prime Minister grapples with the economy, the NHS and rising fuel prices, while the pandemic is not over. Some of us feel illness, weep for loved ones or fear poverty.

Psalm 46 says, God is our refuge and strength. Yes, the Queen was a rock - but God was her rock. Yes, the Queen has been ever present these 70 years, but God is ever present from the birth of time to the end. Yes, the Queen was noble, but God alone is perfect. At Christmas 2011, the Queen said,

“Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person — neither a philosopher nor a general (important though they are) but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.”

In this world of trouble, let us find refuge in God.

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### **Weddings** - *we congratulate:*

- 2 September Laura Willoughby & Mark Richards; *St George's*  
10 September Nicola Crossley & James Miles Hobb (blessings); *St George's*

### **Departed** - *we pray for the families of:*

- 3 August Wendy Knight (74), Savernake View; *St Mary's, Marlborough*  
14 August Elenora 'Maureen' Ponting, River Park; *St George's Presbute*  
16 August Peter Davison, Hughes Close; *St George's Presbute*  
6 September Ken Culley, Cross Lane; *North Wills Crematorium*  
9 September Edmund 'Joe' Smith, Hyde Lane; *St John the Baptist Minal*

# News from the Churches

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## **Harvest Festival will be celebrated with services at :-**

St John the Baptist, Minal on Sunday **2<sup>nd</sup> October** at 9am  
St George's, Preshute on Sunday **2<sup>nd</sup> October** at 10.30am  
St Mary's on Sunday **9<sup>th</sup> October** at 10.30am  
Christchurch on Sunday **16<sup>th</sup> October** at 10.30am



## **MAPAG**

Our next Open Meeting will be held on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October** at 5 pm. Please contact Rachel Rosedale if you would like to join us: [rachelrosed1@gmail.com](mailto:rachelrosed1@gmail.com)



## **Women's Fellowship**

Meet on Tuesdays **4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October** in the Crush Hall at Christchurch, New Road at 2.45pm for tea, coffee and chat.

## **Christchurch** <http://christchurchmarlborough.org.uk/>

All are warmly invited to our services at 10:30 on Sunday mornings. Rev Stephen Skinner will be leading a Bible Study course starting on **4<sup>th</sup> October**, 7:30 - 9.00pm. The course rediscovers the Bible: "Whether you are new to the Bible, or want to go deeper, 'The Bible Course' is for you. It shows how all the books, characters and events fit together to form one **BIG** story from Genesis to Revelation. The course also provides **tools** and **skills** to help apply the Bible to everyday life". Please let Stephen know ([rev.stephen.skinner3@gmail.com](mailto:rev.stephen.skinner3@gmail.com); 512457) if you are interested in joining. Christchurch celebrate their Harvest Festival on **16<sup>th</sup> October** at 10.30am and at 6pm that evening there will be a meditative service.



## **Marlborough Quakers** <http://www.marlboroughquakers.org.uk/>

Unfortunately due to political uncertainty the Meeting with Danny Kruger to find out more about government policy on Climate Change and to discuss the issues we feel should be taken on renewables and saving energy had to be postponed again. However, we hope that the third time is lucky. It has now been arranged for Thursday **10<sup>th</sup> November**, 7 pm at St. Peter's Church. All are welcome. The church newsletters will hopefully confirm this date nearer the time, alternatively contact Rachel ([rachelrosed1@gmail.com](mailto:rachelrosed1@gmail.com)).



## **Emmanuel Marlborough** <https://www.emmanuelmarlborough.org/>

We are grateful to meet for a weekly Sunday service at 4pm at Christchurch, New Road with crèche and Sunday School groups.

EMMANUEL  
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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 below - for more details and the latest updates, please check our website at [emmanuelmarlborough.org](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org):

**Little Friends Toddler Group**, Thursdays, 10-1130am at the Marlborough Community and Youth Centre. Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers.

**Sparklers Monday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct**, 3:45-4:45pm (Doors open at 3:30pm) at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. A monthly kids club for school years Reception to Year 2. Games, Snacks and Bible Stories!

**Explorers**, Fridays, 6:00-7:15pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Our kids club for school years 3-6. 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!

**Hope Explored** A 3 session short introduction to Christianity, from Luke's Gospel. All welcome to come and ask any question or just listen! For more details, email [office@emmanuelmarlborough.org](mailto:office@emmanuelmarlborough.org).

**Bright Lights Party, 31<sup>st</sup> October** at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough 3:30-4:45pm for kids in School years Reception to Year 2  
5:00-6:15pm for kids School Years 3-6.

Come and celebrate Jesus the light of the world with us. Refreshments, games and storytelling from the Bible. Contact [office@emmanuelmarlborough.org](mailto:office@emmanuelmarlborough.org) for more information and to book your place.

## **Marlborough Anglican Team** [www.marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk/](http://www.marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk/)

**Barn Dance, Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October**, 6pm to 8pm in St Mary's Church with a Bring and Share supper beforehand . For tickets please contact Penny Reader in the Church office.



**Saturday Friendship Café, St Mary's Church Hall, Silverless St:**

Open to anyone who would like to talk to others who are feeling lonely, from 10am to 12noon on

October 8th

November 5th

December 3rd

Contact Louise Seddon (07917 248339) or Mark Whitehead (07814 895127)

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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 November issue by Tuesday 11th October 2022 please.

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