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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

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Gunjur

From 1983 to 2009, through the Marlborough Brandt Group, people in Marlborough and beyond welcomed an estimated 400 visitors from our partner community in Gunjur in The Gambia. Our Gambian friends came in groups of 15 and lived with different families in the town, working alongside young Marlburians on projects such as constructing the cycle track along the old railway line; working with students in Wiltshire schools to introduce them to people of colour from Africa, African music and the Islamic faith; even cooking Gambian meals for school lunches. Some Gunjurians came for training in early childhood education, hotel management, engineering, seamstressing and refrigeration mechanics.

Simultaneously, young people from St John's, Marlborough College and beyond lived with families in Gunjur, either as groups working on a building project - a classroom block for the primary school; a fence around a women's vegetable garden to keep the cattle out - or as gap year volunteers teaching English in the secondary school in the community.

Having spent time with us in Marlborough and been introduced to a very different community, many of our Gambian visitors later decided to leave home and live in the West, becoming personally better off and able to send money home. It is estimated that three times the money given for development in Africa by aid agencies reaches families in Africa as remittances from family members overseas.

In this edition, Gambian friends who have benefitted from the relationship with Marlborough and are now living in the West share their experiences. In particular, Lamin Bojang, our first long-term visitor and a student at St John's from 1984-86, writes movingly about the impact his time in Marlborough had on his life.

I am grateful to all the correspondents who have contributed to this edition.

Nick Maurice, Editor

Cover photo: Marlborough and the Global Community

My Time In Marlborough

Lamin Bojang

Lamin Bojang was our first long-term visitor from Gunjur who studied in the sixth form at St John's School 1984-86

I arrived in Marlborough from Gunjur with the late Mr. Sandang Bojang on August 24, 1984, and approximately one week later we held a farewell party for “my sister” Sally Lovelace, who left Oare and St John’s School to teach for a gap year at the Elementary School in my native Gunjur. I unofficially became the adopted son of the late Pat Lovelace & Alan Lance in Oare. They lived in (for me, coming from a community without access to electricity or clean, piped water) a luxury home featuring first-class amenities; a large two-storey staircase, fully stocked kitchen, 4 large bedrooms upstairs, fully furnished living room with a sizeable TV-set, eye-catching soft carpet flooring, and a gorgeous garden at the back.....incredible!

Both Pat & Alan had a huge heart and a voracious tolerance for people. They welcomed me with wide open arms and unconditional love. “Mother” Pat in particular, was a bundle of energy, drive and enthusiasm. She really did everything and more to make me feel at home. She literally took me to every nook and cranny in Marlborough and its environs to help me settle down into my new life. They showered me with new clothes and precious gifts. In Gambian terms, they must have spent a fortune on me! I dare say Pat was also the best cook in all of England! Her recipes were simply out of this world! She even taught me how to cook scrambled eggs & mushrooms! Sensitive to my Muslim faith, she cooked separately for me on days that pork chops were on the family menu. Bless her heart!

The culture shock was almost immediate and intensely intriguing. Initially, Pat gave me Sally’s room to stay in. The English are great pet lovers. Sally had a cat in her room that actually had just given birth to several kittens, and having to navigate my way around in the room was rather spellbinding! Sensing my discomfort, Pat later moved me to another room to help me keep my sanity! Even more intriguing, I quickly found out that household chores were a shared responsibility in Pat’s house. All of us (Pat, Alan, Mark, Kevin & I) took turns to lay the dinner table, load/run the dishwashing machine, and then unload it afterwards each night. We also took turns to turn on the coffee percolator, and served coffee to everybody. In Gunjur, men would have been completely excluded from such chores.

I also saw first-hand the loving, affectionate and jovial relationship between parents and offspring. After we finished eating dinner, Pat & Mark often pushed and shoved to get the best seat for television viewing in the living room. Mark often pushed her to the floor, and he would have the seat. Even more perplexing

was when Mark would burst into her conversations, and dared say; “***Stop telling fibs mom!***” Knowing that I was in shock, Pat would turn to me with a smile and say; “***Lamin, will you tell him that I’m his mom... he cannot talk to me like that.***” It took a while for me to process and digest all this, and in the end, I absolutely loved it! It was a beautiful rhapsody of Western family dynamics. Ours is a rigid system that wouldn’t tolerate any such expression of endearment.

The idea of my staying with families of different income levels was instructive, if you will. I found out that each family had its own nuances and intricacies so to speak. Ellen & Chris Firth, living at the foot of the hill on which St. John’s School sat, were also very warm and hospitable. They looked after me well, and it was fun being around their young children. Their proximity to St. John’s was a great convenience for me. No waiting in the cold for the bus into Marlborough!

John and Libby Spanton too were warm and accommodating. With their meagre resources, they looked after me with care and compassion. I do recall though that they had no central heating system, and I had to sleep under 8 layers of blankets! At one point, I even tried using an electric blanket, knowing that a sudden rip of the power cord could electrocute me! Hypothermia was in the back of my mind but Dr. Nick assured me that I was too young to catch hypothermia!

I enrolled in ***St. John’s Comprehensive School*** in September 1984 to study A - Level English, Sociology & Economics. Here, everyone was warm and friendly - from the Principal (Mr. John Price) & teachers to the students. I made a lot of friends, and several invited me to their homes for dinner and family events. I especially remember going on a French study trip to the South of France in March 1985. We stayed in the beautiful ***Hotel Ibis*** in ***Caen, Normandy***. I quite vividly recall taking pictures by the famous WWII landmark, ***Pegasus Bridge***, and we also visited the ***American War Cemetery*** where some 9,000 + American military dead were interred. A long stretch of white tombstones dotted the green landscape as far as the eye can see! In the words of WB Yeats; “***A terrible beauty is born***” indeed!

Another indelible memory was the May 1985 visit to Stratford-upon-Avon to see the Royal Shakespeare Company Production of “***As You Like It.***” Having read so many William Shakespeare plays/books in high school back in The Gambia, I was thrilled to visit his birthplace, and witness an actual production of one of his classics!

In July 1986, I went on a sailing trip to ***The Isle of Wight*** with Lorri Lovelace (Sally’s dad) in his luxury boat.

I had a keen interest in current affairs and my favourite television station was ***The BBC***. I tuned into BBC Radio almost daily to listen to world news, and to have literally, unfettered access to English television was a huge deal for me! I hardly ever missed ***The Six O’clock News by Sue Lawley & Nicholas Witchell.***

I still remember **Michael Buerk's** insightful award winning reports from Ethiopia with images of a Biblical famine in our own 20th century world! He once opened up with these words; "***The sun is getting hotter and hotter. Nature hardly shows any compassion for the people of this land. As many as a hundred people are dying each day...***" thus prompting **Live Aid** and **Band Aid** for the **Horn of Africa** nation. The BBC was my window to the world. To this day, I'm mesmerized by the rich, colourful and poetic language that characterizes their reporting. And you know what? I had the rare honour of walking into **Bush House, London** with Dr. Nick to talk about '**Linking Communities**' on **BBC Radio**. That was June 19, 1986!

I had a fantastic first Christmas in Marlborough. Pat actually had a live **Christmas Tree** in the house, adorned with colourful decorations. The generosity was overwhelming. People showered me with all kinds of gifts. **Father Christmas** looked after me rather too well! And the very next day, December 26, there was a heavy snowfall. This was my first sight of real snow, and it was quite a thrilling sight. I remember venturing outside into bone chilling, nose numbing temperatures to take memorable pictures. I even got in a snowball fight with Mark and Kevin!

Before Sandang returned to The Gambia, towards the end of September 1984, he reignited the debate on Gunjur's request for funding for the construction of a **4-Classroom Block**. **The Brandt Group** presented the matter to the community in a **Town Hall Debate** Dec. 4, 1984, and I was literally placed in the dock to present Gunjur's defense! A rather ferocious debate ensued...People touting **The Brandt Group's** core philosophy of forging friendships accentuated by the exchange of ideas and people between the 2 communities, and some citing such a project as a Gambia government responsibility. I was somewhat mortified. I simply evoked the popularized philosophy of "**TESITO**" (**Self Help**) (*The Gambia government edict that opined that communities were basically on their own...they must come together, tighten their belts, pool resources to improve their communities.* After the dust settled, not only did Marlborough agree to fund the PROJECT, they even selected a group of youngsters from St John's (myself included) and Marlborough College to travel to Gunjur for a month to participate in the actual construction of the 4 - Classroom Block at the Primary School. The adults in the group included Alan Lance, Anita Bew, Mike Polack English teacher from St John's School, Nicholas Fogg Mayor of Marlborough and Dr Nick.

Coincidentally, 1985 was **International Youth Year**, and I do recall embarking on that historic trip in the summer. When we reached London Heathrow Airport, everybody else had a flawless check-in. I had to do an exit interview! A middle-aged female Immigration agent looked at my travel documents and said; "Your passport indicates that you've been living in England for a year. Where

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exactly have you been staying?” I politely gave her Pat’s address. She then said; “What have you been doing for a year?” I replied; “I’m a student at ***St. John’s Comprehensive*** in Marlborough.” She still won’t let me go, and while all this was going on, I could hear my friends howling; “Come on Lamin, we don’t want to miss this flight.” The agent finally asked; “Who pays for your education?” I quite deliberately replied; “You probably pay part of it because it comes from taxpayers’ money!” She concluded; “Obviously, they didn’t teach you any manners in school!” She then let me crossover to join the group in the boarding area.

Perhaps I should infuse another incident here. Having been to Westminster to see **Buckingham Palace** (600+ rooms facility with a spectacularly large, eye-popping garden) and to Berkshire to see **Windsor Castle**, I quite casually remarked in a private chat with a Marlborough resident that, if England were to convert the 2 Royal residences into public housing, and erect additional structures on the vast properties, they could probably accommodate a million London squatters. Come Christmas, the lady sent me an earful - a Christmas card with this loaded message...”The Royal family is a symbol of our past and pride. You just have to leave it alone.” I obviously touched a raw nerve, and that hurts. I offer my sincere apologies, my dear.

Some 35 years on, no one can fully assess the benefits of ***The Marlborough / Gunjur Link***. I never thought my visit would take on such significance. I was a bit of a celebrity in Marlborough! I had a diary packed with dinner invitations, meetings, conferences, carnivals/cultural festivals, speaking engagements, etc. I must have visited just about all the historic sites in England! Even notable visits to Marlborough by Gambian luminaries like late ***Dr. Lenrie Peters, Dr. Bakary Touray, Gambian Health Minister, Mrs. Louis Njie*** and the towering ***Mr. Bai Bojang***, who submissively prostrated himself on the floor in St Mary’s pre-school for kids to get an accurate measure of his height, all deserve a chapter in a future book on the Link! It gave me so much exposure to the world! In short, it made me a much better person. In the larger context, the constant flow of people, the exchange visits and lasting friendships have enriched both communities in a variety of ways. We acquired greater insights into one another’s psyche; our cultural heritage, our sensitivities/sensibilities. There were also indirect economic windfalls as many Gunjurians acquired a vocation and training in Marlborough that landed them a decent job upon returning home, and many more gained access to the EU job market, and to this day, make regular remittances to families back in Gunjur. So much more left out!

Far away China’s Covid-19 tsunami sent ripples to the ends of the earth in a very short space of time. Just who is safe or immune from the deadly coronavirus? We are all vulnerable. What a startling/glaring manifestation that the world, as we know

it, is a system of links. Our world is interdependent. We are all connected. We truly live in a global village, and as such, LINKING fosters international understanding and cooperation on a myriad of issues and challenges confronting us. As the world yearns for greater international cooperation to find a vaccine for Covid-19, communities all across the globe are yearning for meaningful grassroots linkages. 17th century English poet John Donne admonished; “*No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...*”

LAMIN BOJANG (LONG LOST FRIEND OF MARLBOROUGH)

Lamin Bojang lives in Atlanta, Georgia where he gained a BA in Economics & MA in Public Administration . “I’ve since worked as a Student Recruitment Specialist for a University, Supervisor for a major Parking Company for many years, and most recently, Customer Service Agent in the Hospitality Industry. Currently on furlough due to lockdown prompted by the coronavirus pandemic. He is happily married with 3 teenage boys. Life continues to be inviting”.



Sally Lovelace, Sandang Bojang and Lamin Bojang in Marlborough 1984



Gambian Visitors Dancing, Drumming and Selling Mangoes in Marlborough High Street 1990

Sally Touray

Sally Touray was influenced in Gunjur by people visiting from Marlborough and for the past five years has lived with her husband and young family in Finland.

It is a great honour for me to write this important article about my experiences and encounters with the Gunjur Marlborough link. First of all I would like to talk about my encounters with Marlborough people in Gunjur.

The link between these two was established before I was born and since then there have been group exchanges between the people of Marlborough and Gunjur.

I encountered many of the group visitors from Marlborough, some of these visitors became friends and very close to me and my family. My own namesake Sally Lovelace, is one of them and she is very close to my family.

One of them (we'll call him John) is our family member not just a friend; he is our second Dad and very dear to us. He has done lots for us - he helped pay for my education - and for the link, in terms of all kinds of supports and assistance. In the 90s John even sent medicine to my husband through my Dad. We couldn't thank you enough for what you have done for us.

The link has played a vital role in the development of the Gunjur community and people. My greatest regret was the stopping or termination of the group exchange between the communities. Group exchange visits have played such significant roles for both communities in terms of projects and so on.

My purpose of coming to Finland was the decision made by me and my husband that we should live together as a couple (he was living in Finland when we got married) – that is the best and right way.

In Finland the weather is totally different from Gambia. It was very difficult for me to adjust during my first winter. I really wanted to return home but after a time I became used to the weather conditions bit by bit. And now I am learning the Finnish language which is not easy to learn. Finnish people are very quiet and shy.

As I say, I am going to school and caring for my children at home, I still manage to do a little to support my family back home. As we all know, Gambia is a very hard country, life there is very difficult. Of the little money I also get, I send some of it to my family.

Congratulations!

Our very best wishes to
EUNICE HILLMAN

who notched up 100 years this September

Sukai Jobe

Sukai Jobe was one of three female members of the first group from Gunjur to visit Marlborough in 1986.

The arrival and community welcome of a group from Marlborough in 1985, led by Alan Lance, Anita Bew, Nick Fogg, Nick Maurice, Mike Polack and students from St John's School, and subsequent visits by Pat Lovelace, Patrick and Sam Woodhouse, Henry Pearson and others were my very first encounters with the Marlborough people. The then-Alkalo (Mayor), the late Alhajie Sabaki Touray and the entire community of Gunjur, welcomed the first group, a bus load of extremely popular guests that made a tremendous and significant, lasting impact on the entire community and not only people in Gunjur but many people in Marlborough and beyond.

One such impact left by the first group is the five-classroom block which stands at the Gunjur primary school. That first group were traditionally entertained on their arrival in the 'multipurpose centre' in the middle of Gunjur by the "KANYELLENG" group of women dancers and drummers.

They then dispersed with their Gunjur hosts into the dark night with no street lights, running tap water or green grass. It was the year of the "BANJUL BELLIES", but it was a remarkable experience for both hosts and guests. Some guests never returned to Gunjur but many did.

In 1986, I was lucky to be part of the first group of 15, with only three girls chosen, to travel to Gunjur's link community of Marlborough. Never before had either hosts or guests had such an experience. It was a significant, life changing experience and impact for all. It was summer but many of us where chilly in the air-conditioned bus ride from Heathrow.

The countryside, the never dark evenings and the neat landscapes were amusing first impressions, as well as the peaceful cool, calm and collected atmosphere. This game changer trip to Marlborough significantly influenced my whole future. I was inspired and motivated to get good grades in school and to achieve higher living standards for me, my family and my community. Thus, I travelled back to UK in 1998 when I attended the London School of Management Education for one academic year before travelling to the U.S.A. to get married.

I was inspired by the several young teacher volunteers from Marlborough like Sally Lovelace, Simon Lane, Simon Chandler who had given up their lives in U.K, to volunteer in the Gambia. With all the weather and other challenges that they faced, they motivated and inspired me to thrive in different/ difficult conditions.

Racism was not an issue in Marlborough or, maybe not recognised because, we

simply were not familiar with it. The children at a preschool in Chippenham surely had never seen a black person and asked innocent questions like “why is Mr Bojang so black? Does the dark skin come off during a shower?” “Can we touch it?”

Such issues are everywhere. In the Gambia tribalism, like racism in the West, America, Asia and the Arab world is prevalent and a huge barrier to progress as a world and nation. It’s due to several factors including ignorance, insecurity, and lack of wisdom. One has to recognise it and embrace wisdom to react appropriately. It is how we react that significantly impacts on racism and racists. The only significant and known racism I encountered was in 1996 ten years after the group visit. At the bus station on Swindon highway, on my way to an invitation to a meeting at the Town Hall in Marlborough, a group of young teenagers were quite abusive but I simply ignored them and then the bus arrived. The significance of living in Marlborough taught me that only a very few whites are racists and this is mostly due to their own insecurity, ignorance, misinformation and background.

Summing up, I have worked in U.K. as a student with agencies in various institutions like cover staff, support staff, mail sorting, Macdonald’s, Coventry garden, and cleaner. In U.S.A I have worked in plastic factories, Macdonald’s, and since 2009, settled in a career as a carer caring for people who need my support and getting paid. The impact of the Gunjur Marlborough link on both sides of the aisles cannot be measured in size or quantity. We can only be grateful to its initiators and members of the Marlborough Brandt Group. Thank you for a significant life time exposure and its impact.

Sainey Darboe

Sainey Darboe is a renowned journalist from Gunjur who worked for all the major newspapers in the Gambia but encountered considerable difficulties under the dictatorship of President Yahya Jammeh and now lives in the US.

Growing up in the sprawling coastal town of Gunjur, the sight of white people from Marlborough staying with local families became a familiar occurrence.

Living in the family compound with my grandmother, Matida Manjang who was the head of women, I had an early encounter with these people.

As I grew older and learnt to speak English, news of the arrival of yet another group would fill me with excitement. I would go to Momodou Bojang’s shop in the Market Square where I would meet visitors from Marlborough.

On their walks to visit the leaders of the town, the Imam, the Seyfo (Chief), the Nyansimba (Women’s leader) Alikali (Mayor) to pay their respects and give the traditional kola nuts as a peace offering, I would follow them, asking questions

about their lives, education and religion among other things. They also were not without questions. They would ask me questions about my family, my faith (Islam) and education with genuine interest.

For a young person with no experience of life anywhere outside of my immediate environs, the Gunjur-Marlborough link gave me my first encounter with difference. That people could live their lives differently from what I was accustomed to in my community, was a substantial shock to me. I was surprised to meet people who worshipped a different God, or believed in no religion at all. I was shocked to hear of men and women living together and having kids without getting married..... and drinking alcohol, and eating pork all of which was taboo in my community.

I was as scandalized and shocked as they would be when I would tell them my father had multiple wives and dozens of kids all of whom lived amicably on the same compound.

My encounters and experiences with people from Marlborough nurtured in me a high threshold of tolerance, even a love of difference. When I left Gunjur for high school, university and work, I was able to effortlessly build personal and professional relationships with people of different backgrounds.

When I moved to the United States from the majority Muslim country of The Gambia in 2015 at a time of immense change, even for the US with legalization of gay marriages, amid a coarsening of political culture, I didn't have any problems with culture shock. I have been able to build relationships, hammered on the anvil of experience I had with our friends from Marlborough, with all people regardless of their politics, religion, race or sexual orientation.

Culture shock and struggles with integration, more often than not, pepper the stories of many immigrants in the United States, but thanks to Gunjur-Marlborough link I was prepared for life and living in a country and among people different from my own. It has nurtured in me an acceptance of difference and today I can say of my neighbours, friends and work colleagues of different backgrounds 'in this place and with these people I feel safe'.

Being able to achieve integration in the United States has opened economic opportunities for me that support development back home. I remit substantial funds to The Gambia to pay school fees, hospital bills and food for family members. I have invested about \$200,000 over a period of five years in buying and building property in Gunjur which has benefited the local economy by creating jobs for the local population.

And this is thanks, in no small way, to the Gunjur-Marlborough link.

Fatou Darboe

Fatou Darboe, (a pseudonym) originally from Gunjur, has lived in UK for the past ten years.

My whole life has been associated with the Marlborough Link up to the present time. My dear late father has been one of the key members for so many years, and he has participated in many events as well as meetings both in the Gambia and the UK.

We have hosted several guests from Marlborough in my compound that we all have shared. The bonding becomes very special. The bonding my family and I have had with Marlborough people is incredible, and strong as ever. I have participated in many events during the years such as assisting the guests with their daily activities while staying in Gunjur, as well as exploring the South of the Gambia with them.

One Marlborough man, “David”, has been a father figure to me and my siblings. He has contributed hugely to our lives up to date as well as being the person from whom I will seek advice. He has invited me to come and visit his family in the UK and has guided me through my time here and taken good care of me during my stay. He is not just a friend but a member of my family.

The link with Marlborough has had a huge impact on the people of Gunjur and has changed so many lives of Gambians, not least those that came to the UK under the auspices of the Marlborough Brandt Group, and many of those have moved on to change the lives of their own families and their local communities. MBG has also provided sponsorship for many young Gunjurians to undertake courses at the Gambian Technical Training Institute in such skills as construction and electrical engineering that is benefitting many young men.

Since living in the UK, I have benefitted in many positive aspects. However, my family and I have encountered many negative and unpleasant moments. I do remember it was one afternoon when I went to pick up my daughter from school, one of the children was calling her names related to black people, by saying to her that it is not good that she was wearing a black jacket as she was very black and that “you are from Africa and can’t be from here!”. To hear such a thing from a young child is very upsetting as I wasn’t expecting such in the 21st century. I think we should educate our children for them to understand that we are born equal and the same, with positive differences. Good education and parenting should be very helpful in eradicating such from our communities and around the globe.

Last month, having reached the age of 70, I retired as an Associate Minister after 19 years service. So a time to reflect. Many reading this will know that I was a GP in Marlborough for 29 years and retired from medical practice in 2009.

Like this month's editor Nick Maurice who is my cousin, I was born and brought up in Marlborough. Nick's father and my father were brothers and we both took over from our fathers as GPs in the Marlborough Medical Practice. I joined the Practice in 1980.

My wife, Rachel, and I moved to Marlborough and joined St. Mary's Church. We quickly got involved with an ecumenical homegroup which led to further groups which have become a backbone of the church. A further initiative was the start of a monthly ecumenical informal service which met in St. Mary's Church Hall. This was led by lay people from St Mary's and Christchurch and usually one of the clergy would attend to keep an eye on us! This continued for a number of years and several of those involved went on to be ordained. I think it was as a result of this that I was invited to preach at the main morning service on an occasional basis. As time went on it was felt that I should have my ministry approved, either becoming a Licensed Lay Minister or becoming ordained. Over the years I was quite often asked by my patients whether it was true that I was leaving General Practice to become ordained and I always strongly denied it! However, after much prayer and consultation and going through a formal selection process it was felt right for me to seek ordination. I then had to do three years' course work with regular tutorials (while still a fulltime GP!) and was ordained in December 2001. During this process the Team Rector was Henry Pearson who was very supportive. Six months after I was ordained I was able to go part time in the medical practice which enabled me to do more for the Church. Now my patients would come into my surgeries and say how pleased they were that I was doing what I had always wanted to do!

So as I enter a new phase of life I will continue to take services as do the other retired clergy in the Team.

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Lamin Touray

Lamin Touray has been the Chair of the Kombo Sillab Association, the Gambian diaspora organisation which supports Gambians in UK who run into difficulties and also provides assistance to Gunjurians at home.

I have very fond memories of my first trip to the UK. In 2000 I was a first year student at a teachers' training college - the Gambia College. I was selected as part of a group of 15 to travel to Marlborough on an exchange visit. It was the wish of every young person in my village to be on the trip. I was grateful to be on the list at the first time of asking. A childhood dream was coming true.

Weeks and months of preparations followed the selection process. Unfortunately, I couldn't initially be with the rest of the group as planned. Negotiations to have my end of year exams before everyone else were rejected by the College authorities. The group left me behind in Gunjur. My air ticket was amended to allow me to sit the exams and join my team in Marlborough a week later. I arrived at Gatwick airport on Friday 30th June 2000 and was met by Alan Lance. We drove for just over two hours and arrived at my hosts for the next three weeks - Anthony and Pauline Berryman, on 1st July 2000. I was up early the following morning to join my team for a weekend camp in the Brecon Beacons in Wales.

It was a trip like no other. I got to know all of my team members more than ever before. That was the highlight of my visit. That was an essential element of the link as well - getting to know each other to clear class and social barriers.

The rest of my stay was spent on school visits across Wiltshire and the surrounding counties. I had the singular honour of working with journalist Nigel Kerton at the *Wiltshire Gazette and Herald* in Marlborough. It was a sharp contrast to the kind of news gathering I was doing as a young freelance journalist in the Gambia.

Then I was on the plane with the rest of my friends heading back to the Gambia. There was a party to welcome us home to our beloved Gunjur. I went on to finish College and was posted to Gunjur Upper Basic school as a teacher. I taught for 18 months and moved over to TARUD as a project manager for a pilot scheme, SMILE - Smallholder Improvement for Livelihood Enhancement.

It was here that I decided to move out of my country of birth. The stakes couldn't be higher. I had a job that was well paid in the Gambia and was married with a six months old baby boy. Life was getting increasingly constricted under the prevailing dictatorship of President Yayha Jammeh, for those of us who were journalists. A lot of my colleagues had left the country. Some were attacked by

strange men believed to be state security personnel. Some were imprisoned. One was killed and another disappeared without trace. Media houses were fire-bombed and printing presses burnt down. No one was spared. Civil society organisations like the NGO I was working for either shut up or became praise singers of the government.

On the eve of Christmas 2005, I arrived in the UK not knowing when I would return home. Emotions were mixed. On the one hand, I was happy that I had left the country but on the other, I was terribly sad at leaving my young family behind.

My journey to the UK might not have taken place without the link between Gunjur and Marlborough. I see it as the most successful community link between a developed western country and a developing, so-called, third world country. Overall, the advantages of living in the UK outweigh any disadvantages. From work ethics to self-discipline and a general perspective on issues, the opportunities that I have come across might not have been the same had I stayed home.

Based on the kind of orientation that I had gone through to prepare us for the exchange visit to Marlborough, I found it easy to fit into the British society when I visited for the second time five years later. It's worth noting that by this time (2005), there were thriving Gunjur communities in Bristol and Leeds and all of those helped to give me a great and positive experience.

I have come across racism in the UK in two forms - openly and covertly. I have lived in predominantly white areas in Birmingham where mainly younger drivers will yell at me as I walk to the corner shops. Juxtapose this with the streets of Gunjur where people of different races (there are eight different ethnic groups living in and around Gunjur) are warmly embraced. I work for Dräxlmaier Group, a German company, contracted to build dashboards and interior finishings for Jaguar Land Rover.

In the workplace, you feel like you're overlooked for promotion because of the colour of your skin. When it comes to employment, I think the USA has more black people in white collar jobs than in the UK. Moving forward, this must be addressed to create a fairer society.

My short and medium term goals are to prepare the ground work for sustainable horticulture. There are gaps in the supply chain that offer real opportunities for self-employment. I want to be around to make the most of that opportunity.

Lots of goodies this month, so I shall just dive in - Richard 'Pointless' Osman really doesn't need me to help promote his first novel **The Thursday Murder Club**, but I'm going to because I so enjoyed it. All the adjectives; it's intelligent and gently twisty, readable, funny, warm and kind. There are writers who appear on TV, and there are people off the telly who write a book – this is the former. **Eight Detectives** by Alex Pavesi is a crime novel about writing crime stories, spiralling in and out and back on itself. At times it's a bit 'trying to be clever', but highly diverting.

Talking of twisty, Ferdinand Mount has investigated the life story of his aunt in **Kissing Myself Goodbye**. I started dipping into this book thinking 'why should anyone care?' but it's an eye-popping read. Most families have the odd skeleton, but really...'Munca' as she was nicknamed fabricated her entire life and ended up as 'twice-divorced, triply bigamous, four-or-five times married' with a 'seven-times-married illegitimate son'. Plus motor-sports, county cricket and a permanent suite at Claridges. It's a social history of the C20th and a reminder of how lies blight lives other than the liar's.

'We have become accustomed to being told how, when and what we should be eating' says Tim Spector in **Spoon Fed: Why almost everything we've been told about food is wrong**. The author is a professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London and writes clearly and critically about the hugely complex subject of nutrition. Looking at the alarming power of the food industry, and the over simplistic reporting of science in the media he reminds us to follow the money – who funded the research, and who benefits from the findings about super/dangerous/miracle foods or supplements? It's challenging enough for the scientists, so Humanities types like me don't stand a chance without books like this (and one of my favourites **Bad Science** by Ben Goldacre) to guide us through the morass of genetics, allergies, and fads.

Running out of space – I've also enjoyed **The Great Godden** a Young Adult novel by Meg Rosoff, in which family's long summer holiday is hi-jacked by a dangerously charming interloper. Finally I'm just starting **Epic Continent** by Nicholas Jubber, a journey round Europe exploring national myths and epic poems and their continuing resonance. *Njal's Saga*, anyone?

Having lived in many homes, I am appreciating enormously the one where I found myself at the beginning of the lockdown in March here in Virginia. I had just resolved a family dispute over a big chunk of mostly swamp land my cousins and I inherited from our two grandfathers. For years it had been a source of conflict among a few of the cousins, and a pain in the neck for the rest. As the largest shareholder, I felt I should try to resolve the situation. In a court case that took four years, I ended up with nearly 500 acres of forest and some great young ally cousins who wanted to keep our shares in the family and work together under a written agreement to maintain it as a wildlife habitat and sustainable hardwood forest.

That was October 2019. So when I arrived at the property in late February, with a long list of improvements to begin, the pandemic simply lengthened my stay. It is a half hour out to the grocery store, pharmacy, post office, bank, farm- & auto-supply and hardware; further to anything else; but I rarely need more.

‘Weatherall’ is at the end of a five mile long country road and two miles of dirt track. I am alone out here, but should anyone want to try to reach me with less than kind thoughts, they have to pass a goodly number of neighbors, all with guns. ‘Trump’ signs and Confederate flags abound along the road, but they know me and will protect me. So I don't need a gun. Plus, all my neighbors planted huge gardens, of which I am beneficiary. One hunter friend even supplies deer meat.

The Spring was very long and slow and lovely, lasting from March through June. July was very hot and dry and horrible, but with no bugs. Lots of work down in the bottom land. Then August arrived, with 100% humidity and 16 inches of rain, a huge bloom of edible mushrooms, and a voracious population of biting bugs: mosquitoes, deer flies, horse flies, gnats. The perspiration washes off bug spray quick as can be. Now we are getting a taste of autumn, with temps in the 70s and a breeze out of the north.

I greedily count the days I don't need to leave the property. Several of my neighbors are helping with major projects, like the barn and cabin rebuilds, the stone bridge reinforcement, walking paths through the woods, wisteria eradication. They have the big tools I don't have: tractors and excavators. Or we rent them. Everyone in the construction trades is



continued next page

Brilliant Young International Musicians in St Peter's Church

With all the current uncertainties with regard to gatherings and social distancing we are having to be cautious in advertising the recitals in this the Ninth Series of "Brilliant Young International Musicians in St Peter's Church".

We are currently restricting the audience to 40 and this policy may have to remain in place for the foreseeable future but, clearly, prior to each recital we will inform people of any restrictions that will have to be observed.

As things stand, and in a spirit of optimism and recognising the crucial role that live performance of music can play in terms of our sense of wellbeing, we have a wonderful group of musicians playing for us in seven recitals over the next season, many of whom we have heard play in the past.

25 October	2020	Harry Fox (piano) and Alisa Liubarskaya (cello)	
22 November	2020	Ben Schoeman and Tessa Uys (piano duo)	
28 February	2021	Altea Narici (cello)	Gianluca Papale (piano)
28 March	2021	Hayley Myles (piano)	
25 April	2021	<u>Quartet recital</u>	
		Joana Ly (violin)	Kirsty Macleod (violin)
		Edward Keenan (viola)	Molly McWhirter (cello)
23 May	2021	Louise Cournarie (piano)	
20 June	2021	JP Ekins (piano) and Judith Choi Castro (violin)	

The programme for the recital by Harry Nowakowski-Fox (piano) and Alisa Liubarskaya (cello) on 25th October will include **Beethoven's** Moonlight and Waldstein sonatas and in the second half **César Franck's** Violin Sonata adapted for cello and piano, **Tchaikovsky** - Nocturne Op 19 no 4 for cello and piano **Tchaikovsky** - Pezzo capriccioso, Opus 62 for cello and piano

A limited number of tickets will be available and in addition we hope to zoom the recitals.

Please contact drnickmaurice@gmail.com for further information

working, as so many people are caught at home with nothing else to do. Since I can provide all sorts of projects in clean air and quiet, I'm a preferred customer.

We don't wear masks out here, but I take one to the village for the interior places where one is required. There are no shortages at the stores anymore, and of course I can order online. The children are all headed back to school on the school buses now. So I am keeping away from friends' children until I see how that works out. I may well be here through Christmas!

Autumn is a time of outstanding beauty, when deciduous trees produce a glorious burst of colour before the onset of winter.

Leaf colour is due to pigments which absorb sunlight and use its energy to produce sugars by the process of photosynthesis. The three pigments that colour leaves are chlorophyll (green), carotenes (yellow, orange) and anthocyanins (reds and pinks).

Most leaves are green because chlorophyll is the primary pigment which absorbs red and blue light, reflecting the green light which we see. Carotenes and anthocyanins are accessory pigments which help to harness different wavelengths of light. In spring and summer, these yellow and red pigments are masked by the dominant green chlorophyll.

As the days become shorter and cooler, the green chlorophyll breaks down, and leaves turn yellow and orange as the carotene becomes visible. In preparation for leaf shedding, a layer of cells forms across the base of the stalk. This restricts the movement of sugars back to the main part of the tree. Sugars become trapped in the leaf and are eventually converted to anthocyanins, producing red or pink colours.

Cold, dry autumns produce the best colours because low temperatures speed up the breakdown of chlorophyll, yellowing the leaves. Dry weather concentrates the sugars in the leaves so more anthocyanin is produced and redness is enhanced.

Deciduous trees shed their leaves in autumn and enter a period of hibernation until the following spring. Leafless trees require far less water and energy to survive; a considerable advantage during the winter months when there is little sunlight and the ground may be frozen. In addition, high winds can whistle through the bare branches, making it less likely that trees are blown over in the winter storms.

Coniferous trees have different adaptations which enable them to retain their leaves over winter. The leaves are rolled tightly into needles whose small surface area and waxy coating enables them to resist cold and conserve water.

Some conifers, however, do shed their leaves in winter; the classic example is larch which boasts bright green foliage in spring and beautiful yellow colours as the needles are shed in the autumn.



View in colour on the website

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FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptism - we welcome:

23 August - Francesca Whinnett at St George's, Preshute

Weddings - we congratulate:

5 September – Emily Spargo & Christopher Hurd at St John the Baptist, Minal

5 September – Heena Rai & Matthew Glover at St George's, Preshute

Funerals - we pray for the family of:

7 August – Joyce Evelyn Crane (90) formerly of Back Lane, Marlborough
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett

A Virtual Tour Through Marlborough and Some of its Place Names (Part 3)

Conclusion

David Chandler

The new estate on Salisbury Road is named “**Marleberg Grange**” or “Chalk Town” and resurrects an ancient name for the town. This was the name given in the “Statutes of Marlborough” in 1267 in the reign of Henry III. The Statutes were enacted at Marlborough Castle and a blue plaque on the entrance pillars to College Court records this event.

Roads in **Marleberg Grange** are named after Marlborough residents who served in World War I: controversially “**Knocker Road**” is after a nurse from Marlborough who volunteered for service on the front line in France; she also featured on special stamps which



commemorated the centenary. Roads in **Barton Park** and **College Fields** are built on the land of Barton Farm which was owned by the College. The roads are named after famous literary Marlburians such as **Siegfried Sassoon** and **John Betjeman** but the most famous literary figure of all is **William Golding**, who went to Marlborough Grammar School.

The names for new developments in the town are decided by the Town Council (formerly the Borough) with the agreement of the Post Office. The Town Council and Borough avoid the sort of names dreamt up by developers but this is not necessarily popular with everybody. For example **Reeds Ground**, named after Captain Reed RN who organised an appeal for a new lifeboat in 1864, remained the same in spite of an appeal from residents in the 1970s. Also the name **Tin Pit Lane** was retained rather than being changed as requested by some of the residents in the 1990s.

May the tradition continue, of giving names that have an historical significance to our ancient market town.

P.S. In 2012 I wrote a book “Place Names of Marlborough” which is unfortunately out of print but the Library has copies.



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News From The Churches

All Age Harvest Services

St George's Church at 10.30am on Sunday 4th October

St Mary's Church at 10.30am on Sunday 11th October

St John the Baptist Church Harvest 18th October at 9am



Please note due to Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to receive donations of fresh produce this year. Other donations will be given to our local Foodbank, based at Devizes. Current shortages are for tinned items of the following: meat, fish, vegetables, potatoes, fruit, rice pudding, custard, spaghetti / ravioli, and macaroni cheese. Non tinned items required: long life sponge puddings, chocolate biscuit bars, chocolate, toothpaste, shower gel and soap.



Marlborough Churches Together Fraternal

meets at 12.30 on Tuesday 6th October. Please contact the clergy if you have anything you would like them to discuss.



Rev Dr David Maurice



David has been an Associate Minister at St Mary's Church, Marlborough for over 19 years. David has now retired as Associate Minister and has a 'Permission to Officiate Licence', which is the license retired clergy hold.

We thank you David for your love, care, and kindness. And we appreciate your wisdom, preaching and leading services and trust this will carry on, even in retirement.

Rev Pete Sainsbury

Pete was licensed as Team Vicar at St George's on Wednesday 23rd September. Further details and contact confirmation will be available in November's Tower and Town edition. We wish Pete and his family every blessing as he starts his ministry with Marlborough Anglican and Ecumenical Teams.



Zoom Communion

Continues during October – do join us if you can at 9am, the link is: <https://>

us02web.zoom.us/j/8536813793 Meeting ID: 8853681 3793

Live Worship continues with the Anglican Churches during October:

Holy Communion Services

St John the Baptist, Minal at 9am on the 1st Sunday of the month

St George's, Preshute at 10.30am on 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month

St Mary's, Marlborough at 10.30am on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month

Morning Worship Services

St John the Baptist, Minal at 9am on 3rd Sunday of the month

St George's, Preshute at 10.30am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month

St Mary's, Marlborough at 10.30am on 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month

St Thomas More RC

Mass Sunday at 11am

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday at 10am

Thursday at 6pm

Holy Family, Pewsey Friday 12noon,
Saturday at 6pm

Marlboroughandpewseycatholics.org.uk



Christchurch

Sunday Worship started at 10.30am during September. For details of October worship, please check the church website: christchurchmarlborough.org.uk .

Marlborough Quakers

Meetings for Worship by zoom on Sunday mornings at 10.30am. We welcome visitors; for more information please contact Rachel: 512205.

Emmanuel Marlborough

Please check details on Facebook and the website for October Services: emmanuelmarlborough.org

Prayer Requests

During this uncertain time many people find prayer can be helpful; if you need any pastoral support or individual prayer requests please email or call the ministers (see contact page 21)

We pray for all who are suffering and bereaved.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

All Souls' and Remembrance Sunday

At the time of going to print the Ecumenical All Souls' Service on 1st November and Remembrance Sunday on 8th November are still being risk assessed. Please check out individual church websites.

SWINDON & DISTRICT SAMARITANS: ALWAYS THERE

Despite some of our listening volunteers isolating and shielding, your local branch has remained open throughout the pandemic to provide a confidential listening service by phone and email. Many of our wonderful volunteers took on extra shifts during the most difficult times so we could continue to provide much needed emotional support. Even now, every six seconds Samaritans answer a call for help.

Frontline health, care, emergency and key workers have put their physical and mental health under pressure as they confront coronavirus. To help the helpers, Samaritans have partnered with Shout, Mind, Hospice UK and The Royal Foundation to offer round the clock, one to one emotional support to those on the front line to help ensure they get the right support with their own mental health.

Given the constraints of the pandemic, we've all had to adapt: we are now able to recruit and train all of our listening volunteers online using video conferencing. We always welcome new volunteers and hold regular information events where you can have the opportunity to speak to some of our volunteers. If you'd like to find out more, please contact us: samsrecruitment@btconnect.com

The first of our volunteers to be virtually trained are about to start the next phase of their volunteering by providing emotional support on the phone and by email. This is a time when listening has never been more important.

We are hoping to run the **HTB Bereavement Journey** course soon. The course helps the bereaved talk about and come to terms with their loss and broadly covers these topics:

- Attachment, separation and loss
- The impact and pain of bereavement
- Adjusting to change
- Anger and Guilt
- Coping with others' reactions
- Moving forward healthily
- And an optional 6th session on the Faith Perspective

If you would be interested in joining us for this and have thoughts on when and how we could best run it, please contact Mark Whitehead on Mark.Whitehead@cff.org.uk or Louise Seddon at the _seddons@btopenworld.com

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Website, searchable article archive

<https://www.towerandtown.org.uk>

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 November issue by Tuesday 13th October please.

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