
TOWER AND TOWN



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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

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Love Books

We feel very sad that the Marlborough LitFest will not take place in its usual form this year due to the coronavirus. It was a difficult decision but one we had to make after consulting with our sponsors, publishers and the venues involved in the town. So much of the festival is about lively debate, authors mingling with the audience and the buzz of the Town Hall, all of which are hard to replicate while following the essential guidelines to keep everyone safe from Covid-19.

We have been very excited to see the range of virtual events on offer from other larger festivals and would love to have created something similar. But as a small volunteer team we decided to focus our energy on our outreach programme, running activities for the community – mainly online – including our annual Big Town Read and free events for schools as well as competitions for all ages and support for Home Start.

We are really grateful to be able to use this edition of Tower and Town to give you more information about these together with an exclusive glimpse of what we had planned. We hope this might tempt you to explore some new books and to support our wonderful White Horse Bookshop which was sorely missed during the lockdown.

You might also find yourself inspired to start writing your own story following Nick Maurice who talks about his autobiography, join a book group or listen to your book rather than read it!

If you haven't done so already, do visit www.marlbroughlitfest.org to listen to our new patron Sir Simon Russell Beale reading extracts from nature writer Richard Jefferies. And please make a note of the dates for next year's LitFest: 30 September to 3 October 2021.

**Genevieve Clarke, Chair of the Marlborough LitFest
Virginia Reekie, Editor**

Cover photo: Kate Fry

The Big Town Read

Fran Del Mar

The 2020 Big Town Read is *Platform Seven*, the latest novel by Louise Doughty who was due to come to Marlborough for the festival. Every year the Marlborough LitFest, along with the support of local libraries, chooses a book which is suggested for local reading groups and individuals to read, ahead of the author appearing at the LitFest. The author event will take place as an online session at 6pm on Saturday 26 September during which the audience will be able to put questions to Louise. (*Details for joining will be on www.marlbroughlitfest.org in early September.*)

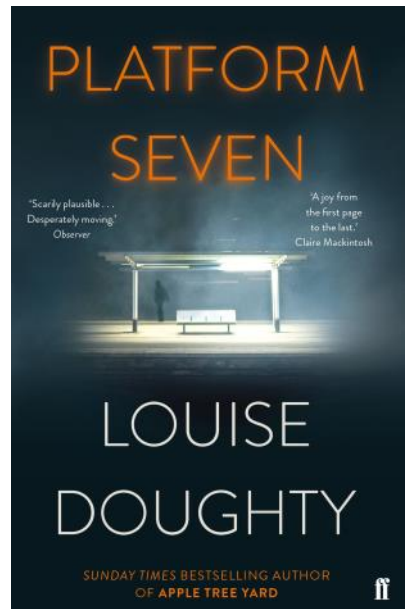
Louise Doughty is the bestselling author of nine novels. Her previous novel was the top 5 bestseller *Apple Tree Yard*, which was chosen for the Richard & Judy Book Club, shortlisted for the Specsavers National Book Awards Crime & Thriller of the Year and the CWA Ian Fleming Steel Dagger, longlisted for the *Guardian's* Not the Booker Prize, and translated into over twenty languages. The novel was also turned into a successful television adaptation. She has won awards for radio drama and short stories; she is a critic and cultural commentator for UK and international newspapers and broadcasts regularly for the BBC.

Previous Big Town Read authors have included Laline Paull, Sathnam Sanghera, Jackie Kay, Rachel Joyce and Raynor Winn.

Hilary Mantel said of *Platform Seven* that “Louise Doughty leads her unnerved readers into dark territory.”

Platform Seven at 4am: Peterborough Railway Station is deserted. The man crossing the covered walkway on this freezing November morning is confident he’s alone. As he sits on the metal bench at the far end of the platform it is clear his choice is strategic – he’s as far away from the night staff as he can get.

What the man doesn’t realise is that he has company. Lisa Evans knows what he has decided. She knows what he is about to do as she tries and fails to stop him walking to the platform edge. Two deaths on Platform Seven. Two fatalities in eighteen months - surely they’re connected? No one is more desperate to understand what connects them than Lisa Evans herself. After all, she was the first of the two to die....



Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo

Bernadine Evaristo was Joint Winner of this year's Booker Prize.

Bernadine Evaristo was coming to the Literature Festival this year as our Golding Speaker. She first came to the LitFest in 2013 with her book *Mr Loverman*. Shortly after becoming joint winner of the Booker Prize last Autumn, she accepted our invitation to come back with her prize winning book *Girl, Woman, Other*.

The story quickly pulls you into the life of Amma and the lives of 11 others (mostly black women) as they navigate life in different eras. Each chapter tells the tale of one of these vivid characters while their lives also intertwine in numerous ways – as friends, relations or chance acquaintances. You encounter one, then their child, their mother, their friend, their school teacher or work colleague.

As their lives are described, Evaristo also explores (at times in some depth) issues which are recognised by many of us – single parenthood, being a teenager, being old or divorced, an unloved orphan, being controlled, lesbianism and other sexual relationships.

The book starts with Amma at the opening of her play at the National Theatre. She has finally made it! The penultimate chapter describes many of the characters present at the party after. There is a lovely final twist at the end in the Epilogue.

When asked about her motives for writing this book, Evaristo said she was frustrated that black women weren't visible in literature. She wanted to explore their relationships and lives from being teenagers to those in their 90s.

The book is written in a hybrid of poetry and prose which looks beautiful on the page and is beautiful to read. There is a lightness to it, and there is humour.

The annual Golding Speaker event highlights Marlborough's connections to the Nobel Laureate and Booker Prize winner William Golding, and is sponsored by William Golding Limited. Golding grew up in Marlborough in a house on The Green. His father was a science teacher at Marlborough Grammar School, where William and his younger brother were pupils.

Virginia Reekie

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Swindon & District Samaritans has remained open throughout. Anyone can contact Samaritans free at any time from any phone on 116 123, even a mobile without credit. Or email jo@samaritans.org.

New volunteers very welcome; contact samsrecruitment@btconnect.com

After 48 years in Marlborough. I recently moved to Sussex to be nearer my family. I knew I would miss Wiltshire and many friends but how would I cope without a book group!

A few friends and I decided to form a book group about 15 years ago. We all had many books we wanted to share and more we wanted to read. Ten members seemed the ideal number, meeting ten times a year in each other's houses. We start at 6.30 with a glass of wine and discuss the book for an hour or so before enjoying supper together. This was meant to be a simple affair but before long members were displaying their culinary as well as their literary skills!

This format has proved successful but the outstanding outcome for me was the breadth of reading matter that we covered. We are a diverse group and the choice of reading reflects this. I enjoy being pushed out of my comfort zone – it is more uncomfortable when a book chosen by me fails to impress, but that is part of the learning process. I dislike the term a 'good book' and think that reading is a subjective activity. I was interested to discover that some of the books I enjoyed in previous decades now appear dated whilst others are set to be classics. Our first title was *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith who was a new author to me - I loved it! We read mostly fiction but some members prefer non-fiction and we read a whole range from *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Wall to *This Boy* by Alan Johnson. Classics are also popular with some. We occasionally have a poetry evening when everyone brings a poem and explains why they have chosen it. Some books like *The Slap* by Christos Tsiolkas have raised eyebrows but no one has left yet because of book content. In the summer, we try to have an outing with a literary theme. Last year we had a lovely day paying homage to Jane Austen at Chawton.

I have read many books that have had a profound influence on me. It is very difficult to choose a favourite but for me *Half a Yellow Sun* by Chimanda Ngozi Adichie is a book I recommend over and over again.

In one respect Lockdown has been kind to me as I have managed to stay with my group via Zoom. When this ends I will have to try and find a Sussex group who are prepared to take me on. Or perhaps start one of my own....

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



The LitFest and Home Start Kennet

Home Start Kennet is a charity which helps local families with young children experiencing tough times. Volunteers provide weekly support in the home to help parents cope with challenges such as: isolation, mental health issues, multiple birth and bereavement. Support is free and as individual as the families need; it could be giving a hand, taking the children to the park or helping sort out a problem a parent can't face alone. Often listening makes all the difference. The volunteers are continuing to help families during these difficult times, offering phone support whilst the pandemic restrictions apply although they look forward to resuming home visits as soon as they can.

The LitFest has given a donation to buy books and so provide opportunities for the children, their parents and the volunteers to share the joy of reading. The volunteers will take the books on their family visits, which will sometimes be as gifts for a child on a special occasion, when it's time for a volunteer to say goodbye, or simply to have some fun time.

Sarah Sharland

Audio Books – Another Way of Accessing Books!

It is a great moment when you start a new book – but frustrating if you have to leave it for a car journey or a long day cleaning out the shed. There is music and the radio but for me, nothing beats an audiobook to while away the time on a boring journey or task.

I generally download something that I do not want to read as a hard copy and so often it is a thriller or perhaps a classic that I have loved. Timothy West reading Anthony Trollope is a complete joy.

A subscription to an online audio book company will bring books to your computer, phone or iPad or you can buy boxed sets of CDs so they can be lent to others – especially children's books. Again, these can be bought on line or from bookshops such as The White Horse Bookshop.

Pat Cutforth

The LitFest Competition for Primary Schools

We have invited the children from six local Primary Schools to enter a competition with a Greek mythology theme. The schools have been sent the templates for a Trump Card with the picture of a Greek god or goddess and spaces for four of their 'superhero' qualities. These qualities can then be elaborated on in a short piece of writing.

The schools will be collecting the entries with a closing date of 11 September. Haine and Smith are sponsoring the prizes for each age group.

Louise Tinker

Bird Quiz

In the May issue we included a Bird Quiz. One submission was received, from Sheila Hanson who scored 28½ out of 30 . Here are the answers:

Layer in the heather	Moorhen	Shellfish fielder	Oystercatcher
Royal angler	Kingfisher	Division on mountain crest	Partridge
2.5 cm of grain husks	Chaffinch	Horsey pastime	Hobby
Friend of John and the friar	Robin	Arthur's magician	Merlin
Painful with a sore throat	Swallow	Price of the blade	Razorbill
Muddy happy pooch	Grey Wagtail	Tethered by string	Kite
Mourning for pet cat	Kittiwake	Castle	Rook
Slice liquid	Shearwater	Steamed up record breaker	Mallard
Gale force fuel	Storm Petrel	Wolf's wintery abbr. call	Snowy Owl
Fear might make you...	Quail	Cowardly striker	Yellowhammer
Elizabethan neckwear	Ruff	Mariners' curse	Albatross
Seaside musician	Sandpiper	Sounds like a victor of talk	Whinchat
Boxing practice line	Sparrow	Fleet-foot Jonathan	Swift
Astral heather	Starling	Dark time of storm	Nightingale
Flipping small rock	Turnstone	Moon bird (has settled)	Eagle



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Events for Children - Live Zoom in Schools this Year

A key part of Marlborough LitFest are the free events we provide for local school children. Since 2010 we have been able to invite schools to join us at the Town Hall so their ten and eleven-year-old pupils can hear wonderful authors talk about their books and how to write stories. In the past we've had Abi Elphinstone, Jane Hardcastle and, last year, the very funny John Dougherty. The teacher feedback we get from these talks is brilliant, and it's lovely to hear the children buzzing with inspiration when they head back to their schools. Since 2015 with the help of St John's School we've also been able to provide The Big School Read for secondary school pupils, who have heard Tamsyn Murray, Matt Dickinson and Geraldine McCaughrean amongst others. For our tenth festival last year we were very happy to be able to extend our free events to primary schools in the Calne area, and this year we were going to cover not only Marlborough and Calne, but Pewsey too! Whilst we cannot provide any group events this year, we are going to offer schools live Zoom calls with the authors we had booked for September, so that they can talk about their writing and books and then have an interactive question & answer session with the children in the classroom. All these authors are worth discovering, so here is a little bit about them all.

Gareth P Jones is an award winning author whose Dragon Detective books have been republished this year. In *Catnapped*, the first in the series, detective Dirk Dilly is asked to find a missing cat belonging to a young girl called Holly. Can Dirk & Holly discover who is taking all the pets? Will Dirk be able to stop setting fire to things? And can they prevent a dragon invasion and further cat-as-trophe?! Suitable for 6-9 year olds. Older readers will enjoy Gareth's *The Considine Curse*, an exciting family mystery story which won the 2012 Blue Peter Book Award.

Maz Evans' fantastic four book series starts with *Who Let the Gods Out?*, a brilliant and funny read for 8-11 year olds. Elliot Hooper is having a tough time looking after his mum, whilst avoiding trouble at school. Suddenly, teen-goddess Virgo is sent from the Heavens to take care of captured death-daemon Thanatos, and Elliot's involvement means that Thanatos escapes. Virgo and Elliot need to get him back before Zeus and the rest of the gods find out; can they do it and how will Virgo manage the modern world?

Ross Montgomery is a Costa shortlisted author, with wonderfully written books suitable for 9-12 year olds. His new book, out in September, is *The Midnight Guardians*, a story set in World War II at the time of the Blitz. Following the death of his father, Col has been evacuated from London to live with his aunt in the Malverns, but he misses his older sister Rose and wants to be with her for

Christmas. When he runs away to see her he is amazed to find his old imaginary friends have come to life and need his help. Together they set off on a quest to beat the Midnight King who is bringing darkness and horror to the whole world. This is a must read - one of the best children's books since *The Explorer*. In the meantime try *Max and the Millions*, an exciting, funny and adventurous story about a miniature civilisation at war and the real-size boy who discovers them.

Finally, Mimi Thebo is a Carnegie nominated American author who is currently Reader in Creative Writing at the University of Bristol. Her young adult books are often on the theme of recovery from trauma and the power of the natural world to heal. 12 year olds and older will find messages of hope and resilience in her lyrical books, try *Hospital High* or *Coyote Summer*.

Kate Fry

Love Books Competition

Genevieve Clarke

To mark its tenth year, the LitFest wanted to establish a new annual prize to celebrate the power of reading. At the start of last year's festival weekend we were delighted to announce a partnership with the English Literature Department at Bath Spa University to do just this. Since then we have worked with English lecturer Nicola Presley, also New Media Manager at William Golding Ltd, and her students to design a competition which invited young people and adults to respond to a book with a piece of text or short film.

Luckily the Love Books Competition (www.lovebookscompetition.org) was launched in February so we were in a good position to encourage schools in particular to use it as an activity during lockdown. The competition was open to anyone across the country in three age groups – 13-16, 17-19 and 20 and above – but we are especially grateful to teachers at St John's Academy and Marlborough College for encouraging their classes to take part.

Once the deadline of 17 July had passed, student volunteers from Bath Spa sifted the entries in order to pass on a shortlist to the three judges – Jan Williamson, former chair of the Marlborough LitFest; Judy Golding, CEO of William Golding Ltd and writer; and Professor Neil Sammells, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Bath Spa University – to decide who should win first prize (£300) and be runner-up (£100) in each group. Stand by for the winners to be announced in September!



A Virtual Tour Through Marlborough and Some of its Place Names (Part 2)

David Chandler

Going down one of the alleyways from **Back Lane** and into the **High Street** we turn right by the **Town Hall** to go down **The Parade**. We are now following the line of the “A4 - Great West Road” before **New Road** was created in 1810 to avoid the sharp turn at the top by the Bear Inn. **The Parade** used to be called “The Marsh” because it flooded frequently and even in my early memory used to flood every other year in winter.

Passing by the old Congregational Church on the right and the old rope works of St Katherine’s House on the left we cross the river Kennet into **Town Mill**. This is

built on the site of a corn mill, on the right, which operated until 1922 and was a Youth Hostel until the 1950s and, on the left, the town swimming pool until 1985. Carrying on the footpath through **Town Mill** one crosses a second bridge over the Kennet which is on the line of the



rope walk which stretched from St Katherine’s House to the Police Station.

On the left is **Culvermead Close** named after “culver stones” which were placed in the river bed and measured the height of the water in the river. There were endless disputes between the millers on the river Kennet because some millers held back water to protect their operations. The culver stones helped settle these many disputes.

On the right is **Cooper’s Meadow** which is named after Henry Cooper who had a butchers shop in **The Parade**. He was mayor of the town in 1933 and 1945 and his descendant, Mark Cooper, is Mayor of Marlborough this year. Cooper’s Meadow was used to graze animals bought at market before going on to the slaughterhouse in **Angel Yard**. The meadow is now a public amenity where occasionally sheep are grazed.

After crossing **Cooper’s Meadow** and the car park we come to **George Lane**, named after the George Inn (demolished in 1945) which was at the east end on the

site of the Catholic Church. We keep heading west and come to **Pewsey Road** and Cow Bridge. On the right is one of the last two pill boxes from the war. The road has been built up since it was in use in the war and now the lower half is buried.



Crossing the road we pass on the left the new development of **Canning Place** named after the Canning family who were prominent in Wiltshire in the early 19th century. We are now going along **Treacle Bolly** which has two tracks.

The bottom track, on the right, is full of interest and passes the site of the **Castle Mill** (corn) and the bathing place for the town, before the swimming baths opened at **Town Mill** in the 1920s. The site for bathing looks more like a mud bath these days!

The top track of **Treacle Bolly** goes past **Butterfly Alley** on the left (known as the Mule Track to College Boys). This deep track is on the line of an old road up **Pewsey Hill** before the modern road was created in 1798. **Butterfly Alley** used to be the Cresta Run of local tobogganing but is now heavily wooded. The name **Treacle Bolly** is believed to originate from a steamed pudding at Marlborough College named by the boys as ‘Bolly’.



We are now on the line of the old Roman road through Marlborough: not very straight and following the twists and turns of the river Kennet. On the left, on the hill and behind the running track is **Marlborough White Horse**, cut by boys from the Marlborough Academy in 1804.

At **Preshute House** we come to **Preshute Lane** which is much straighter and on the line of the Roman Road. The origin of the name **Preshute** is Old English for “Priest’s Cottage”. The Parish of Preshute encircled Marlborough until boundary adjustments of 1934. This more or less straight bit of road carries on through **Manton Village High Street** and on to **Clatford**. We pass **Throg Cottage** on the left, a remnant of the old name for **Preshute Lane**: a throg is part of a wooden plough. **Manton** was mentioned in the Domesday book: the name is of Saxon origin and means “habitation of the workers of the common fields”

Sculpture in a Landscape 1969 – 2020

In 1969, against the backdrop of a modernist architectural home in Wiltshire, a major exhibition of sculpture took place. It was one of the first exhibitions of contemporary sculpture exhibitions held in a private garden in this country. The layout of the landscape in the garden is relatively unchanged and we are delighted to be holding an exhibition there again. This year it will feature work by over forty of today's sculptors from across England and Wales as well as the work of a small number of those who were here in 1969.

This late summer event takes place at West Leaze, Ogbourne Rd, Aldbourne, Wiltshire SN8 2LD.

It will be open from 3rd – 27th September, 11am – 6pm every day except Mondays and Tuesdays. There will be a popup café run by village charities serving light refreshments. Entry is £7.50 including a catalogue. Accompanied under 18's free.

Please note in order to allow us to manage visitor numbers tickets must be pre-booked on line at www.friendsofthegarden.org.uk where you will also find further details.

The Arts Society, Pewsey Vale

is pleased to announce that, notwithstanding Covid 19, its monthly lectures are continuing online. The next lecture, lasting approximately one hour, will be as follows:

Tuesday 8th September 2020

The Ancient Olympic Games and the True Olympic Spirit

a talk by Stephen Kershaw

For further details on the lecture go to Lectures at www.theartssociety-pewseyvale.com. New members are most welcome. For membership and for information on how to join the lecture please contact pewseyvale@theartssociety.org.

There will be further online lectures: on 6th October 2020 *They Make No Noise - What do Conductors Do?* a talk by Nigel Bates; and on 10th November 2020 *John Singer Sargent: The Power of the Portrait* a talk by Alexandra Epps.

For this month's Clergy Letter, Bishop Andrew has suggested taking something from one of his weekly blog pieces at andrenrumsey.wordpress.com.

We have chosen an extract from his blog of 1st May:

‘Every human being has at their roots here below a certain terrestrial poetry, a reflection of the heavenly glory, the link, of which they are more or less vaguely conscious, with their universal country.’ Simone Weil

That our shifting, temporal existence might be partnered in a dance with eternity is an idea old as wisdom, and has choreographed the Christian understanding of space and time. Our ‘terrestrial poetry’ finds pinpoint places that map this instinct, requiring ‘you are here’ arrows, to indicate the way. Even the most outlandish scriptural depictions of the next world are necessarily rooted in this one (St John’s apocalyptic monsters still have wings and eyes, even if uncannily numerous) – the biblical heaven, in other words, is an extrapolation of the biblical earth.

A church spire is thus an upended map pin: a stake in empyrean fields, as if our mortal tent will swiftly blow away. From Martinsell – Iron Age hillfort and one of the loftiest, as well as most peaceful spots in Wiltshire – you can, on a clear day, see across Salisbury Plain to where the foremost spire in England lances the skies, glorifying God in the highest. It remains a kind of eternal trig pillar for pilgrims, including Thomas Fuller: an army chaplain from the English Civil War (‘A good Church of England man, with his heart in heaven and both feet on the ground’, according to Canon Charles Smyth). In his memoir of those stricken years, *Mixt Contemplations*, he reflects:

‘Travelling on the plain (which notwithstanding hath its risings and fallings) I discovered Salisbury steeple many miles off; coming to a declivity, I lost sight thereof; but climbing up on the next hill, the steeple grew out of the ground again. Yea, I often found it and lost it, till at last I came safely to it, and took my lodging near it. It fareth thus with us whilst we are wayfaring to heaven. Mounted on the Pisgah top of some good meditation, we get a glimpse of our celestial Canaan; but when on the flat of an ordinary temper, or in the fall of an extraordinary temptation, we lose the view thereof. Thus, in the sight of our souls, heaven is discovered, covered, and recovered; till – though late, at last – though slowly, surely – we arrive at the haven of our happiness.’

***Shadow State: Murder, Mayhem and Russia's Remaking of the West* by Luke Harding**

June, 2016: in a referendum on whether to stay in the European Union, the British people vote for Brexit. But the vote is dogged by allegations of Russian involvement, with a US senate report stating: "The Russian government has sought to influence democracy in the United Kingdom through disinformation, cyber hacking, and corruption." Four years on, the Russia report, completed last year by parliament's intelligence and security committee, has only just been published. Why did the Boris Johnson withhold its release for so long?

March, 2018: Sergei Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter Yulia are poisoned with Novichok, a nerve agent, in their Salisbury home. They survive, but a British woman, Dawn Sturgess, later dies after coming into contact with Novichok. Two Russian intelligence officers are identified as the murderers but the suspicion is that responsibility for the attacks lies at the heart of the Russian government. The foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, says it is "overwhelmingly likely" that the poisoning was ordered directly by the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. Two years on, why has no one been held to account?

These and many other questions form the basis of Luke Harding's riveting *Shadow State*, the fourth of his books that investigate the nefarious ways in which Putin's Russia is infiltrating western politics. Few are better qualified to take on the task: among many stints as a foreign correspondent, Harding spent four years in Moscow, where his apartment was bugged ("I had no private space for years," he said in an interview with the Guardian. "My wife and I talked in the garden next to a plum tree."). He was deported in 2011 and his books are, he says, "literary revenge".

Spies, subterfuge, poison... it all sounds like the stuff of a James Bond novel. Yet for Harding, the truth is more banal, and all the more chilling for it: "Putin is not a super-villain sitting in a cave in front of a console with red flashing buttons. His talent is sniffing out weakness."

Ben Tarring

The Bass Rock by Evie Wyld

This is Evie Wyld's third novel and is the story of three women who lived at very different times on the Scottish mainland within sight of the Bass Rock which surges out of the sea.

Their lives are however inextricably linked to the place and each other.

There is Sarah who was accused of being a witch in the early 1700s, who is fleeing for her life.

Ruth, who is navigating a new marriage and the strange ways of the local community just after the Second World War.

Fifty years later, Vivienne, whilst mourning the death of her father, is cataloguing her grandmother Ruth's belongings in the now empty house, which they all knew and which to some is haunted.

As each woman's story unfolds, it becomes clear that their lives are influenced by the men in them, some very controlling – but there are also strong pulls of sisterhood.

Evie Wyld came to the Literature Festival in 2011 as one of the LitFest's debut authors. We were looking forward to having her with us again.

Virginia Reekie



It is an autobiography, but more importantly a history of the relationship between Marlborough and the predominantly Muslim community of Gunjur in The Gambia.

In fact the two are closely related. The good fortune I had to be born and brought up in Marlborough and be educated at Marlborough College gave me a very strong appreciation of my identity and the self-confidence to leave all I knew and loved and, thanks to Voluntary Service Overseas, aged 18 to work my passage with strange Liverpoolian seamen on a liner from Liverpool to Lagos in Nigeria and thence to teach English in a College in Sokode, Northern Togo for one year. While still a medical student, I worked for 15 months as a medical assistant in a remote part of Papua New Guinea, and having qualified as a doctor, in 1973 took Kate and our 15 month old baby Daisy to Nepal, for me to work in the field of tuberculosis control, thanks to Dr Barney Rosedale who had helped set up the Britain Nepal Medical Trust.

I joined the Marlborough Medical Practice in 1977 and in 1980, thanks to my partners in the practice, I took four months away, working as a nutritionist in Kampuchea (Cambodia) for Oxfam's emergency team, following the fall of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

That challenging experience was a fulcrum around which my life revolved. My return to Marlborough coincided with the publication of Willy Brandt's Brandt Report, *North South – A Programme for Survival* which included the recommendation that 'partnerships for peace' should be developed between communities in e.g. Europe and Africa.

'The rest is history...?', recorded in my book *Never Doubt...* which comes from a quotation from Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist "Never doubt that a small group of committed, intelligent people can change the world – indeed it is the only thing that ever has!"

In addition to the story of the Marlborough Gunjur link, the book records excerpts from Brandt lectures given by HRH Princess Anne, Jon Snow, Glenys and Neil Kinnock, Archbishop George Carey, Mark Malloch-Brown, etc.

I would strongly recommend writing an autobiography (it took 2½ years to complete) as a form of therapy. As one gets older one inevitably becomes more 'useless'! Recording one's life, even if only for the grandchildren, can be remarkably helpful.

Never Doubt... is on sale at £18 in the White Horse Bookshop.

It always struck me as rather unfair that my History-teaching colleagues could specialise in a particular era, whereas us biologists were expected to be masters of the entire natural world. Despite having a degree in Zoology, there are some alarming gaps in my knowledge of the animal kingdom. As for plants, I'm reasonably confident with trees and have spent many happy hours testing myself in Savernake arboretum where, helpfully, most of the fine specimens are labelled.

Summer School usually provides the opportunity to refresh my botanical knowledge as I organise an afternoon course in Week 1 which visits the forest and four Wiltshire Wildlife Trust reserves at Morgan's Hill, Langford Lakes, Jones's Mill and Lower Moor. Guided by experts, we are shown how to identify some of the species which thrive on these superbly managed reserves. Fortified by this knowledge, I then try to pass some of it on to those who accompany me on my morning walking courses.

This year, Covid-19 has put paid to the Summer School refresher course so I've had to do the hard yards myself, equipped with the excellent laminated Guide to Grassland Plants 2 (chalk and limestone), produced by the Field Studies Council.

By late summer, many plants have flowered and set seed but some of my old favourites hang on in there and certain locations always come up trumps. For a beautiful array of plants, there is no better place than Morgan's Hill, just off the road between Beckhampton and Devizes. From the car park, follow the track uphill and enter the reserve through the wooden gate by the interpretation board. At the top of a steep rise you will be rewarded with marvellous views and the most amazing display of flowers of every hue and colour. The yellows include Lady's bedstraw, Birdsfoot trefoil, Ragwort and Rock rose. Various shades of blue, purple or lilac encompass Harebells, Field scabious, Knapweed and Self-heal, whereas Yarrow and Wild carrot are predominantly white. That's just ten species – plenty to start with and a good foundation to build upon.

Closer to Marlborough, the flanks of Knap Hill are rich in chalk grassland plants as is the area west of the Alton Barnes White Horse. On our doorstep, Granham Hill, particularly the Mule Track gulley near the Pewsey Road is a fine place to begin one's botanical journey.

The Field Studies Council produces a variety of simple to use, beautifully illustrated guides to many forms of British wildlife, all of which can be purchased for a few pounds from their website (www.field-studies-council.org)

***The Rise of the Ultrarunners: a Journey to the Edge of Human Endurance* by Adharanand Finn**

Lockdown has been a challenge for everyone and we all found different ways to cope: gardening, reading, TV box sets, making scrubs for frontline workers, taking up running. Many of those who opted for the latter followed the Couch to 5K programme - a gentle build-up over several weeks, culminating in a 5-kilometre run. Good effort. Now imagine it had been Couch to 500K...

Ultrarunning has taken off. Once the preserve of a dedicated few, the sport, in which competitors cover dozens and sometimes hundreds of miles, often over inhospitable terrain, has gone mainstream, with events taking place all over the world and selling out almost as soon as they are announced. Once a marathon was the definitive mark of a long-distance run. No longer.

In *The Rise of the Ultrarunners*, shortlisted for the 2019 William Hill Sports Book of the Year, Adharanand Finn gets to the heart of the matter: why do people put themselves through almost unimaginable pain just for the sake of - well, for the sake of what? "The call of the wild," was Finn's response in a newspaper article. He went on: "To cross a vast stretch of barely charted land, with only myself and a backpack of energy bars to keep me going, was a thrilling prospect."

Over two years, Finn ran ten ultra marathons. He began by focusing on the outcome, the cathartic moment when he would cross the finishing line and bask in the achievement. "The process, however, kept breaking me. In every single race, I reached a moment of crisis, where I sat down on the side of the trail and wanted to give up, where I asked myself why I was in this stupid race."

And so begins a philosophical quest, a journey into the terrain of the mind: "Yes, in the oblivion, deep in the pain cave, if we dig deep enough, if we push on through, we come to a place where it is strangely peaceful, where everything else melts away... And there, out in the mountains, or even on a city running track, we find ourselves fully present in the moment."

It's time to dig out your Lycra.

Ben Tarring

The Arts Society Swindon & Kennet

Monday 21 September, 11am

On line lecture by Chloe Sayer. Gold of the Gods: Treasures of South America and the Search for El Dorado.

Further information: theartsocietykennet.org.

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FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals - we pray for the families of:

- 17 July Thomas 'Tom' Richard Cridland (81) of Preshute Lane, Manton
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett and St George's, Preshute
- 31 July Barbara 'Jean' Carter (76) of George Lane, Marlborough
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 7 August Joyce Evelyn Crane (90) of Back Lane, Marlborough
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett

Marlborough College Concert Series

**7:30pm Sunday 20th September in Marlborough College Chapel.
The Tallis Scholars**

Tickets £20 (£10 students) must be purchased in advance. Please visit:
www.marlboroughconcertseries.org for details. Strictly no tickets available on the door. Government guidelines will apply.

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange

World by Elif Shafak

Virginia Reekie

This tells the story of a Turkish woman reflecting on her life in the immediate moments after her brutal death. Leila, a fortysomething sex worker in Istanbul, has been murdered and dumped in a wheelie bin in the dark outskirts of the city. But in the 10 minutes 38 seconds after her heart stops beating, her mind continues to work ranging over memories, scents and flavours (such as lemons and cardamom coffee) and so her past history is revealed as she recalls friends she made at key moments in her life.

The novel which opens in 1990 is not only a sensual journey into the complicated life of a prostitute known as ‘Tequila Leila’ but the story of five social outcasts who were her cherished friends. Shafak wants to give a voice to society’s untouchables such as immigrants, underdogs and those considered freaks by their own families – all considered ‘trash’ in an increasingly illiberal Turkey. You can feel the kindness and support they all give to each other despite the odds against them in their lives. Shafak conjures up Istanbul as the struggling, competing and clashing place it probably is, and somewhere she loved but can no longer visit.

This book was shortlisted for the 2019 Booker Prize.

Many of you may know Shafak’s first novel *The Architect’s Apprentice* which is the story of a young boy who travelled to Istanbul in 1540 and became the apprentice to Sinan, the Sultan’s architect, responsible for many of the most famous buildings in the city today.

Shafak is a Turkish-British writer, storyteller, academic and women rights activist.





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News From The Churches

Marlborough Anglican Team Vicar

The Bishop of Ramsbury is pleased to announce that he has appointed the Revd Pete Sainsbury to be half-time Team Vicar in the Marlborough Team. Also, the Revd Chris Smith is pleased to announce that Pete has been appointed half-time Worship Director for the Marlborough Team.



Together this means a new full-time priest in Marlborough, which is wonderful news. Please pray for Pete and his family as they prepare for the next stage in his ministry. Pete will be licenced on Wednesday evening, 23rd September (please contact the church office for further details). www.marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk

Zoom Communion

led by Rev Mark Philps continues during September – do join us if you can at 9am, the link is here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8536813793> Meeting ID: 853 681 3793.



Live worship with the Anglican Churches continues during September:

Holy Communion Services

St George's, Preshute at 10.30am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.
St John the Baptist, Minal at 9am on the 1st Sunday of each month
St Mary's, Marlborough at 10.30am on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Morning Worship Services

St George's, Preshute at 10.30am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month
St John the Baptist, Minal at 9am on 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, Tues, Wed, Sat at 10am.
Thursday, 6pm.
Holy Family, Pewsey: Friday 12 noon, Saturday 6pm.
marlboroughandpewseycatholics.org.uk/notices



Christchurch (christchurchmarlborough.org.uk/)

Christchurch worship is starting on 6th September at 10.30am. No Harvest Festival planned at present, nor Women's Fellowship.



Rev. Stephen Skinner has been with us for a year; in a letter to the congregation he writes: "Thanks for the warm welcome from all members and members of the ecumenical parish over the past year to me and my wife Jane and our daughter Hannah. We have enjoyed the forests and countryside, and watching the changing seasons and then coming to terms with lockdown; everything we take for granted falling apart; but we have managed to function as a church but not in church and God with us. Our challenge is how we can Worship and Witness in a way which meets the need of our community."

Marlborough Quakers (marlboroughquakers.org.uk/)

Meetings for Worship by Zoom on Sunday mornings at 10.30. We welcome visitors; more information from Rachel 512205.



Emmanuel Marlborough

We plan to restart gathered Sunday afternoon services from September, including children's groups, in line with Government guidance. Venue TBC. Further details will be on our Facebook page and on emmanuelmarlborough.org

EMMANUEL
MARLBOROUGH



Marlborough Churches Together: Fraternal

at 12.30 on 1st September at the Rectory.

MAPAG



We may hold an open meeting at the Friends Meeting House, the Parade, at 7.30pm on Monday September 7th so that we can take stock of where we are. If interested, please contact Rachel Rosedale rachelrosed1@gmail.com.

Ride and Stride

Assuming government regulations remain as they are, Ride+Stride will take place as usual this year on Saturday 12th September. There may not be so many churches open, and they will probably not be able to provide refreshments, but otherwise there is no reason why a day out exploring Wiltshire's glorious countryside and handsome churches should not be as enjoyable as ever. As usual the aim is to raise sponsorship money by cycling or walking to as many or as few churches as you can manage. Half of the amount raised goes to the church of one's choice, and the other half is used by the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust to provide grants for repairs and enhancement. Simon Mills (St Mary's), Charles



Graham (St George's) and David Fishlock (St John the Baptist) can give further information, and instructions and sponsorship forms can be downloaded from www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/ride-stride/.

St Non's Retreat

has had to be cancelled this year, but we hope that we shall be able to gather in Pembrokeshire Sept 14th to 17th in 2021.

***The Good Bee: a Celebration of Bees and How to Save Them* by Alison Benjamin and Brian McCallum**

Bees are in trouble: habitat loss, climate change, pesticides, disease, invasive species... the list goes on. But the insects on which our food supply depends have an ally in the form of Alison Benjamin and Brian McCallum, who for a decade and more have been writing about bees and what makes them buzz.

"Since humankind began honey hunting 20,000 years ago," they write in their introduction to *The Good Bee*, "bees have provided food, sweetness, candlelight and medicine. Now they are giving us a sign, like the canary in the coalmine, that their future is threatened and, with it, life on Earth as we know it."

In this short but sweet book, the authors - they are married - take the reader from the rudimentary (what is a bee?) to the whimsical (a colony producing blue honey after foraging on the waste products of a nearby M&M sweets factory) to uplifting tales of rewilding, improving farming and reintroducing extinct varieties.

The pages are peppered with illustrations: body parts, bees in flight, favourite flowers and examples of a few of the 25,000 species in existence, most of which live alone and don't make honey. We learn that the largest, Wallace's giant bee, is 4cm long, while the smallest measures just 2mm. And while much of the book is factual, it is suffused with warmth. As the authors write: "The poet Khalil Gibran beautifully described the symbiotic relationship between bee and flower that ensures both survive: "To the bee, a flower is the fountain of life; and to the flower a bee is the messenger of love."

Ben Tarring

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