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TOWER AND TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

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Making the most of life

As 2020 draws to a close, we can look back on an extraordinary year in which everyone's life has been changed. For some, it has been an inconvenience: missing a holiday, the challenges of home schooling, missing meeting up with friends and family. For others the impact has been much more severe: the loss of loved ones, months of isolation with little human contact, the loss of a job and income, missing out on medical treatments. We have all felt the uncertainty of not knowing what comes next.

It has been encouraging to see the growth in community support in this challenging period including the council, the churches and other voluntary organisations.

This issue of Tower and Town features the activities of u3a, formerly known as the University of the Third Age. Formed to support people to make the most of life when full time work is over, u3a is a UK-wide movement which brings people together to explore new ideas, interests and activities in a friendly and informal environment.



Make the most of life once you're no longer in full time work by exploring new ideas, skills and interests with your local u3a

You can read about several aspects of u3a in the rest of this issue: the local dimension, how u3a has continued and adapted during the Covid-19 crisis, a couple of examples of our groups, the contribution u3a makes to health and well-being, the plans for a Special Interest Day on Climate Change and a national u3a day in 2021 and how we reach out to new members.

There is more information about u3a on the national website: u3a.org.uk or on our local site at u3ainkennet.org.uk

David Hammond, Chairman u3a in Kennet, Editor

Cover photos: Socially distanced Walking Group by John Martin; Zoom Philosophy Group

Over nearly 40 years, the national u3a movement has grown to over 1,000 local u3a organisations with more than 430,000 members in the UK. u3a in Kennet was launched in 1992 and is centred on Marlborough and the surrounding villages. With around 600 members, it offers over 60 interest groups on subjects ranging from American History to Website Management and activities ranging from Backgammon to Walking. Our members come together in a friendly and informal environment. Members are entitled to join as many of our interest groups as they can manage. Whatever your level of participation - be it energetic or more relaxed, thought provoking or gentle leisure, developing skills or just chatting, there is something for you... and if there isn't, we are always keen to start new groups.

The Group Leaders are volunteers who organise and support their particular groups. They don't have to be experts and most rely on their group members to support them and contribute to their group in many different ways. Any member with enthusiasm and basic organisational skills can start a group at any time where there is sufficient support.

Groups include indoor activities, outdoor activities, the arts, sciences, languages and a variety of discussion and history groups. Prior to Covid-19 restrictions, many groups met in members' homes or in various meeting venues including Kennet Valley Hall, Wesley Hall and the Friends Meeting House. Over the last few months, this has changed to on-line meetings using Zoom or conference calling with some limited outdoor gatherings.

Both members and non-members are invited to attend our monthly Coffee Exchange held on the last Thursday of each month. This was set up to be an opportunity to meet other u3a members, get the latest news, hear a local speaker and chat over a coffee. This is also continuing on-line (but participants have to provide their own coffee!).

There is also a regular series of Kennet u3a Talks which are held four or five times a year and cover subjects as diverse as Gilbert and Sullivan, Wiltshire Archaeology, How to stay well and increase well-being during the lockdown, and Making Science work for Refugees. Until we are able to gather again at Kennet Valley Hall, these talks will again be held on-line. If anyone who is not a member and is interested in joining one of these sessions, they can ask for an invitation from our Chairman at chairman@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

John Martin is Publicity Officer of u3a in Kennet

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant that we have had to change our systems for the time being and many of our interest groups are meeting on-line or using conference call arrangements and others such as the walking and cycling groups have been meeting outdoors in groups of 6 or less until the latest lockdown. But it is still working, despite the physical restriction of one of the important advantages of membership for many being the actual companionship with friends.

Since the original lockdown and going forward, u3a has adapted in order to survive, support our members and flourish by grasping the digital nettle of Zoom and other web-based technologies such as email, YouTube and the WhyPay telephone conferencing facility. Like many things, it is easy when you know how. Every little helps and so, until the latest lockdown, we found ways, within the complicated government rules, for many groups to continue to meet outside face-to-face much as before. Among these are the groups of dog walkers and the four walking groups from the leisurely strollers, the four and six milers and the adventurous striders. Add to these the Cycling Group and the Flora & Fauna group. In the fine summer weather, some language learners also met outside, socially distanced of course.

Zoom and similar systems have become the friend of many groups. Here are some enjoying this facility: Spanish, Controversial Discussion, Italian, German, French, Book Clubs, American and English History, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics, Art, Photography, Music and Jazz Appreciation, Poetry and Philosophy.

A few groups have decided to suspend their activities to see how Covid-19 develops and then reactivate at the appropriate time. These include Patchwork and Quilting (a bit difficult to do on a computer screen!), and some other groups.

Thus, Covid-19 has not succeeded in breaking u3a and we have even started some new groups during the pandemic including Philosophy and the Marlborough High Street Project.

So, if you, or someone you know, might benefit from being a member, why not join us? Just make contact and ask whatever you want. Learn something new or refresh an old hobby. Share your experience or skills. Enjoy making new friends. Make time to learn, laugh and live life now.

Jeff Hide is Groups Coordinator of u3a in Kennet

One of more than sixty u3a interest groups here in the Kennet area is the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Group. You can find out more about all the interest groups on our website: www.u3ainkennet.org.uk

The STEM group was formed about 5 years ago - although the “M” has only just been added. It has 30 members from a wide variety of backgrounds and one or two with no STEM background. Members, and occasionally guests, give monthly talks of about 40 minutes on a wide variety of subjects broadly covered by the STEM definition. The skill is to explain sometimes quite involved ideas to non-scientists. The meetings last for about 90 minutes as there is usually a lively discussion with questions and answers following a talk. Recent talks have included the St Petersburg Flood Barrier; Climate and CO₂, and the Tactical Capabilities of the Apache Attack Helicopter.

The slides from each meeting are usually converted to a YouTube video which members can access to remind themselves of the talk.

The Group also has outings - usually once a year. In recent years, visits have been to the Joint European Torus (JET) Fusion centre at Culham, BMW Mini car construction plant at Oxford and the ISIS Neutron and Muon Source at Harwell.

Covid-19 has meant a slight alteration to our approach as we are too large a group to meet together. The presentations, all with commentary, are now published on YouTube as unlisted videos, which means only members have access to them. They can now watch each new presentation when they want and revisit as many times as they like. We have also started an online “Discussion Forum”, where members can make comments on presentations, raise questions on any subject or even bring up an entirely new topic of interest. The Forum is open to all u3a members. Details of how to apply can be found under the STEM Group entry on the main u3a in Kennet website.



Nick Stedman is Leader of the STEM Group at u3a in Kennet

Nick Stedman in the JET tokamak at Culham. When operating, the temperature reaches up to 300 million degrees C – about 20 times hotter than the centre of the sun.

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The Marlborough High Street Project

A major national u3a research project has been launched, aimed at finding out how Covid-19 has changed the shops in our high streets. The project was initiated by Peter Cox of North London u3a who was interested in comparing today's high streets with those of the past. The coronavirus pandemic caused a refocus and a need to gather information as soon as possible to include what was there before the pandemic.

Project teams from across the country are recording today's details of properties along their local high street including photographs of shop fronts, pubs, restaurants and other premises. The intention is to visit the same high streets in 18 months to note what changes have taken place.

The results will form a landmark report for publication to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the U3A Trust in 2022. u3a in Kennet has registered for the project and a small study team has recently completed the baseline survey. The team have collected details of each building in Marlborough High Street and have fed them into the national survey.



Having supplied information to the national survey, a small group is currently considering how to extend the work to form the basis of a locally-led project specifically for Marlborough. The scope for this is currently being decided. Ideas include expanding the study to include all the town centre, publishing a guide to Marlborough, or linking with other projects like the currently suspended Oral History project or working with other local groups.

If you are interested in local places and would like to get involved in this very interesting project, more information can be found at www.u3ainkennet.org.uk/marlborough-high-street-project-launched/.

David Hammond

In accordance with the vision of the u3a movement to offer lifelong learning to those no longer working, u3a in Kennet offers a range of activities and learning, fulfilling a valuable role as a means of providing a range of opportunities for:

- social contact: monthly Group meetings, Coffee Exchange sessions and ‘Kennet u3a Talks’ (*connecting*)
- physical exercise: walking, cycling and some sports (*being active*)
- exploring new interests (*taking notice*)
- learning without pressure – no exams (*keep learning*)
- sharing knowledge and expertise (*giving*)

This broad focus aligns with research on maintaining positive physical and mental health in the report: “The 5 ways to wellbeing” from the New Economics Foundation, October 2008.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, most of the u3a in Kennet Groups have continued using online technologies: Zoom, telephone conference calls and outdoor activities with social distancing.

Reflecting this focus on health, Sir Muir Gray, CBE, MD delivered a presentation on ‘Living Longer Better’ in June 2020. A well-respected national figure in public health (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muir_Gray) Sir Muir explained that the number of UK residents over 80 will double during the next 10 years. Although medical research has produced many treatments which increase life expectancy, most people want to increase their healthy life expectancy, to live longer better and not spend their latter years in a care home or dependent on children. He confirmed that research has proved that this is possible and ageing is not normally a problem until we are over 90.

Knowledge is the key to understanding how the risks of dementia, frailty and dependency can be reduced by focussing on increasing physical, social and intellectual activity. This knowledge can help people to become physically fitter, increase their brain ability and reduce the risk of dementia. He explained the difference between ageing, loss of fitness, frailty and wellbeing and stated that we should all take more (not less) exercise as we age. He recommended activities such as taking up a new hobby or language to stimulate the brain, helping others providing a sense of purpose, positive thinking and a sensible diet.

Jill Turner is Vice Chair of u3a in Kennet

Special Interest Day on Climate Change

Jill Turner

u3a in Kennet provides a range of regular talks for members and potential members including the monthly Coffee Exchange sessions and the programme of Kennet u3a Talks. The Special Interest Day is an extension to these events and is as a one-off event to which u3a members outside our Kennet region are invited.

With an active focus on current affairs and issues of relevance to all generations including the important topic of climate change, plans have been developed jointly with Marlborough College for a Special Interest Day on Climate Change and Sustainable Futures. The event will adopt a balanced and positive approach to the significant climate changes that are being experienced now across the world. A panel of qualified climatologists and scientists has been assembled to set out the main issues and to identify some potential ways forward.



The speakers include Penny Tranter from the Meteorological Office who will address the question of whether climate change is real; Robin Stafford Allen, formerly with the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, will explore the potential for fusion power; Professor Peter Edwards from Oxford University will speak on the Circular Carbon Economy; and Dr Katherine Steentjes from Cardiff University will outline society's current perceptions of climate change and support for low carbon lifestyles.

u3a in Kennet has collaborated previously with Marlborough College in arranging educational events for u3a members and College students and generous support has been offered. The Special Interest Day will take place in the College Memorial Hall on the rescheduled date of Tuesday 4th May 2021.

Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic causing the cancellation of the scheduled National u3a Day in June this year, the planning had already started and the concept of publicising our own u3a in Kennet Day is now set for Wednesday 2nd June 2021.

We have provisionally booked The Mayor, Town Crier and local celebrities to attend our special day and we began the arrangements for a representative number of our over 60 groups of varied interests to go on show to the public in Marlborough that day. Whilst the continuing and increasing dangers of the virus have now put any future plans into an uncertain state, we do hope to find ways of contending with social distancing and presenting what our groups offer. The focus will be at the Town Hall and will involve groups such as art, backgammon, birdwatching, bowls and Flora & Fauna and from the other dozens of interesting and varied groups. Outside plans to have a mobile display of classic cars, cycling, photography and music plus dog walking and wine appreciation are also envisaged. Members of groups in tabards may offer pamphlets and answer questions – at a proper social distance of course.

Members leave us and new members arrive. However, with around 3,500 adults over 50 years of age in Marlborough and over 7,000 in the wider Kennet area, we only have a small percentage of them as members. There is plenty of space for more! There is no minimum age, though the focus is on people who are no longer in full-time employment and have time to spare.

Whatever happens on a national or local basis regarding the pandemic, u3a plans to demonstrate and publicise its attractions to the general public and, hopefully, new members. We will keep you informed on our web site.

Jeff Hide is Groups Coordinator of u3a in Kennet



u3a Coffee Exchange brings us together

Chris Webb

A key reason that people join u3a, in addition to learning or enhancing skills or interests, is the opportunity to network and meet other like-minded members. Our highly popular monthly Coffee Exchange gatherings provide just that.

Until Covid-19 hit us all, many members would meet every last Thursday in the month at the Wesley Hall in Marlborough. Over coffee and biscuits, it offered the opportunity meet up with colleagues from our various interest groups and to hear from our Chairman, David Hammond, on news and developments within our own u3a in Kennet as well as national u3a issues.

However, after listening to our members' views, it was decided to revamp these monthly meetings to include a guest speaker to add a new dimension to the event. For just ten minutes or so, as well as time for questions, a stream of interesting speakers has engaged our attention during the last year or so. Guest speakers have included current members, business figures, and local experts and enthusiasts.



So far these have ranged from environmental and countryside spokespersons, local history enthusiasts, political figures such as our former mayor, and former professionals recounting their previous working lives. According to a recent poll of our members, subjects that interest them most are health and keeping well, travel and leisure, local history and the environment.

As a result of Covid-19, our Coffee Exchange meetings are now continuing via Zoom. And the numbers attending have not diminished in the slightest either. Also, after our guest speaker and question time has finished, attendees can now join break-out groups to continue to socialise and chat.

Details of future Coffee Exchange events and speakers are regularly updated on our website. And if you have ideas for future topics or speakers or would like to volunteer to speak, then please contact our Speaker Secretary: speakersec@u3ainkennet.org.uk. *Chris Webb is Speaker Secretary of u3a in Kennet*

u3a in Kennet Groups

u3a in Kennet has over 60 interest groups. The majority have managed to adapt their activities to the various lockdown restriction. Here is a sample list of activities including some with more than one group (number shown in brackets). Some are currently suspended. Full details are on u3ainkennet.org.uk.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| American History | Dog Walking | Philosophy |
| Art and Art History | Embroidery | Poetry |
| Art group | English Use and Abuse | Quiz |
| Backgammon | Exploring English | Really Usefuls |
| Birdwatching | Flora and Fauna | Science Tech Eng & Mathematics |
| Book Group/Club/Circle | French | Scrabble |
| Bowls (indoor, outdoor) | German (Conversation/Advanced) | Spanish |
| Bridge (2) | History (2) | Table Talk Luncheon |
| Build your own website | Human Science | Table Tennis |
| Classic cars | Italian | Theatre |
| Controversial Discussion (4) | Jazz Appreciation | Travel |
| Current Affairs | Mahjong | Walking |
| Cycling | Marlborough High Street | Website Management |
| Day Trips | Music Appreciation | Wine appreciation |
| Digital Photography | Patchwork and Quilting | |
| Discovering Neuroscience | | |



The Cycling Group

At this time last year, could anyone have imagined that we would hear such terms as 'Lockdown', 'Covid-19' and 'Social Distancing'; these were unknown to us. But as we enter a new month what can our future be?

Into a confused world. A very different and difficult world for us all, the presence of God's greatest gift is once again made known to us each and every day, especially during the days of Advent and Christmas. The gift is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born for us - a gift given and received.

The word "Advent" means 'coming'. The Bible makes known in reading and prayer the coming of the Messiah. Advent holds out to us the opportunity to share in the drama of Christ's birth, His first coming and at the same time renew our desire for His second coming at the end of time. These days invite us all to rediscover the child within us and to become a child in relation to God whom we love and address as "Our Father". This means humbling ourselves before the Christmas mystery: through the poverty of the manger the glory of God is revealed, the shepherds were the first witnesses. This is why we never tire of celebrating Christmas when God became man, revealing Himself as "God-with-us", Emmanuel.

Will Christmas be different this year? Almost certainly in the way we can or cannot celebrate - limited in numbers, places, traditions. But it will be the Celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ and it will be, even though we are frightened and uncertain about each day and our future. It is a season of prayer, and by that it is an acknowledgement that we are not in control, we need help and hope. To lift our hearts in prayer to God, in thanksgiving, praise, fright, tears and smiles the time of Advent and Christmas is such to give us what we seek: the peace, joy and love that does not fade.

May we celebrate these thoughts and share them with each other as we trust in God for Advent, Christmas and the New Year, staying safe in God's love for us.

Father John Blacker
Saint Thomas More

As the new nature correspondent I thought I ought to introduce myself:

Fully retired from a lengthy career as a music teacher, latterly at Marlborough College, I now live in a village partly managed by the National Trust, which attracts many tourists, dog walkers, bikers, druids and stone-worshippers. Not the obvious place perhaps to encounter much wildlife but I have been surprised at what there is within the parish of Avebury.

Even in the centre of the village the great barn houses five species of bat and the adjacent pond is home to the protected great crested newt. On the sports field thirteen apple trees have recently been planted and hedgerows replanted with natural enrichment in mind. As an offshoot of the Marlborough Downs Natural Improvement Area Project a so-called 'Bee Road' has been created between Marlborough and Broad Hinton, passing through Avebury, and this has ultimately led to an increase in the number of visiting bees and other pollinating insects, as well as wild flowers.

Up on the higher levels we frequently see groups of roe deer, and hares are often spotted running back and forth. Because of the increased cases of hare coursing the local farmer has blocked off access to some fields with huge tree trunks, even creating ditches that make vehicular access impossible.

My main interest in the flora and fauna is in the birdlife that occurs in what is a rural farmland habitat nestling below the Marlborough Downs. During the lockdown periods in particular regular dog-walking along local tracks has been an important antidote to cabin-fever and as a result I have seen more species than usual, from early Spring through to late Autumn.

Chiffchaffs, blackcaps and whitethroats were singing from late March onwards and April saw the arrival of our swallows and house martins. Migrants have included spotted flycatchers, redstarts, wheatears and whinchats and one of the most glamorous of our local breeders, the yellow wagtail. A delightful surprise was the brief sighting of a wryneck on the approach to Windmill Hill in early September, a real rarity.

Skylarks, corn buntings, yellowhammers and tree sparrows are absent from some parts of the U.K. but they are holding their own here. Now the hedgerows are full of chattering fieldfares and 'seeping' redwings, a flock of chaffinches include a brambling or two and golden plover move as one in a tight flock above Windmill Hill.

A Good Read

Debby Guest

As I write this we've just gone into lockdown again. I'm typing, so I can't cross my fingers, but I do hope we're out again by the time you read this. Do you have plenty to read? The following have kept me entertained.

Not new, but enjoyable escapism, just what I want at the moment, is *False Lights*, by K J Whittaker. It's a 'parallel history' in which Napoleon won at Waterloo, and the Duke of Wellington is a prisoner on the Isles of Scilly. Our heroine gets caught up in a plot to rescue him. It's pacy and adventurous, one for those of you who like the world of Poldark, or Daphne du Maurier's Cornish novels.

The Flavia de Luce novels by Alan Bradley have also been around for a while, but I've avoided them until now because I thought they sounded preposterously twee. The narrator/heroine is an eleven-year old chemistry enthusiast who solves crimes. I rolled my eyes so hard I gave myself a headache, but I was wrong, it works. There's a charm and lightness of touch to Flavia, tormenting and tormented by her sisters, brewing up poisons in her home laboratory and cheerfully making the best of what the reader realises are actually fairly grim circumstances. I've just finished *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*, and am looking forward to the rest of the series.

Scoff: A History of Food and Class in Britain by Pen Vogler is all about what, when, where and how we have eaten a variety of foods over the years. I love this kind of social history, and I devoured this book (oh, ha ha). Eating is a game of social Snakes and Ladders – is tea a drink or a meal? Scone or 'sconn'? How thick is your gravy? I think I concluded that one's social position is almost entirely dependent on the approach to avocados. I don't like them at all, so I slither down the social scale, but I drink Earl Grey tea, so can haul myself a couple of rungs back up the class ladder. Ultimately of course, it's unimportant, but fun. I mean, it couldn't matter less whether someone puts the milk in first or last, could it? (But would you want him to marry your daughter?)

Finally, for 8 to 12 year olds, I'm plugging *The Unadoptables* by Hana Tooke, an eccentric adventure story, a bit like (a better) Lemony Snicket.

A final hurrah to a year that has been rather dreadful. But, with all the doom and gloom, we must try to optimistically look forward to a great 2021.

I have missed trips to London to see shows, exhibitions, friends, family and many other things. In addition to this, most of the wonderful exhibitions we had lined up at The White Horse Gallery had to be postponed until next year. It was great however to have Alison Grant's exhibition *No Ruined Stones* fill the space of the gallery from March till October. Hopefully many of you got a chance to see it online, or in person when the bookshop and gallery re-opened in June.

I want to end this year on a positive note by saying how much I (and I'm sure all of you) are looking forward to returning to museums, galleries, exhibitions, theatres, cinemas, festivals, concerts, workshops and everything and anything else that the creative industries have to offer. We all know how much they have suffered these past twelve months; they remain central to things we should be looking forward to and in the meantime supporting in whatever way we can.

As you may know I work as a bookseller in The White Horse Bookshop. All of us at the bookshop are delighted and very grateful for the continued support shown to our independent business during this difficult time. Thank you!

I'll finish by inserting a few photographs of some pieces I have discovered online that left me feeling elated and excited. (I have actually seen Cuneo's magnificent painting at the National Railway Museum in York, but had no idea it had been damaged in 2014 and needed serious repair. The full article can be read on the National Railway Museum's website.)

Here's to a bright and happy New Year. Take care all, and Merry Christmas.



Japanese raincoat (1790-1800)
made out of linen, silk and an
organic glaze. An early example
of protective outerwear made out
of natural materials before
synthetic fabrics.



Tailored white cotton jacket
from Burma, made in the early
1800s which 'would have been
worn by fashionable Burmese
women during the second half
of the nineteenth century.'
Although difficult to see, it is
embroidered and quilted in
yellow silk in a typical
Burmese style.

Evening cape by Elsa
Schiaparelli, 1938. This is a
remarkable example of a three-
dimensional embroidery design
created by Christian Bérard
featuring the mythical Greek god
Apollo, flying through the air in a
carriage with horses.



Opposite:
Waterloo Station
Terence Cuneo, 1967

Sheila Hanson has a new helper when she delivers Tower & Town around College Fields. Her grandson Harry, aged 5, loves delivering the magazines and she is not allowed to go without him! He and his little brother Jack have recently moved to Marlborough from Devon, together with their parents who grew up here and went to local schools.

Revd Michael Cripps, who had a background in history teaching, was ordained in 1959. Ministries followed in Cambridge, Kandy in Sri Lanka, Swindon (working ecumenically with a Methodist minister), Aldbourne and Baydon, until 1981 when Michael joined the Marlborough Anglican Team. Working alongside Wilfred Down, then Henry Pearson, his enthusiasm and gifts of encouragement saw him quickly become a much-loved member of the team. He was totally committed to the Marlborough Ecumenical Partnership and Christian Aid.



He is remembered for his care over baptisms and bereavements, his skill in confirmation and house groups, and for his stimulating sermons. People also recall his lively conversation and debate. Later, he flourished in a Quiet Group that brought together Anglicans and Quakers for times of shared reflection and silence.

He 'retired' in 1994 and then took up a post as Chaplain to St Andrew's Church in Pau (SW France), returning to Marlborough in 1996. As Chair of Tower & Town from 1999 until 2004, he established Bill Spray's new ways of working, with a rota of compilers and editors; this magazine has thrived ever since.

Music was a constant part of his life. He played the piano with enthusiasm and loved listening to classical music (and conducting the radio!). He spoke French, and some German, having done his National Service in Austria. He and Kay enjoyed getting out onto the Marlborough Downs, and loved their walking holidays in the Lake District, and in Scotland and Wales.

Most importantly, he revelled in family activities, enjoying his children and

grandchildren, particularly the special family holidays and Christmas celebrations with all 23 getting together.

Michael died peacefully at home in the early evening of 14th October 2020. He was 92. A family funeral took place at St George's Church, Preshute, on 3rd November. He leaves his wife, Kay, five children, five sons-/daughters-in-law, 11 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild – plus another one expected in November.

Sir John Sykes who died on October 15th was a familiar sight at 6' 4", striding down the High Street. Sue, supported by their three sons, Charlie, Edward and Alexander and their six grandchildren with close family, celebrated his life at St. John's, Minal on October 29th. They moved to Marlborough in 1974 and John continued working in Swindon until he retired. They felt very privileged that their sons enjoyed the stability of a childhood in Marlborough and its glorious countryside.

A wholehearted family man, John enjoyed introducing the grandchildren to many of his favourite country walks. He earned an Oxford Half-blue (twice) as a Modern Pentathlete and in retirement took up Venetian Rowing, participating in 13 annual Voga Longa regattas in Venice, a course of 21 miles through the city canals and its islands.

John was a key and enthusiastic founder of The Merchant's House Trust with Michael Gray, Vic Chinnery and Diana Keast, which is looking forward to its 30th anniversary in 2021. He also worked hard for the Wiltshire Community Foundation, the Marlborough Literary Festival, the Wilson Trust (Swindon) and was President of the Reading Centre of the National Trust and the Swindon Strangers Gallery. He was a keen member of the Marlborough History Society, u3a in Kennet and St. Peter's Trust.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2020

All the churches of Marlborough wish you every blessing for a peaceful and happy Christmas

NB Service times are uncertain as we don't know how long the lockdown will last - please check with individual churches nearer the time. Please contact relevant church for ticketed events.

St Thomas More 513267, marlboroughandpewseycatholics.org.uk
Marlborough Anglican Team 514357 or 512364,
marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk
Christchurch 512457, christchurchmarlborough.org.uk
Quakers 512205
Emmanuel Marlborough Church 07894 048146,
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Sunday 13 December

5.00pm Carol Service (St John the Baptist, Minal) ticketed event
7.00pm Carol Service (St John the Baptist, Minal) ticketed event

Wednesday 16 December

2.00pm Carol Service for those shielding (St Mary's Marlborough) livestreamed

Sunday 20 December

10.30am Zoom Christmas Service (Christchurch, Marlborough)
5.00pm Carol Service (St George's, Preshute) ticketed event
6.00pm Zoom Meditative Service for Christmas (Christchurch, Marlborough)
7.00pm Carol Service (St George's, Preshute) ticketed event

Wednesday 23 December

5.00pm Carol Service (St Mary's, Marlborough) livestreamed
7.00pm Carol Service (St Mary's, Marlborough) livestreamed

Christmas Eve – Thursday 24 December

4.00pm Family Mass with Carols and Blessing of Crib (St Thomas More, Marlborough)
9.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass - Carols from 8.30pm (St Thomas More, Marlborough)
9.00pm Midnight at Bethlehem - Pewsey Methodist Church
10.00pm First Communion of Christmas (St George's, Preshute) ticketed event
11.15pm Midnight Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough) livestreamed

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2020, Continued

Christmas Day – Friday 25 December

- 9.00am Christmas Mass (Holy Family Church, Pewsey)
9.00am Zoom Communion (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8536813793>)
9.00am Communion (St George's, Preshute) ticketed event
9.30am Family Communion (St John the Baptist, Minal) ticketed event
10.30am Family Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough)
10.30am All Age Worship for Christmas (Christchurch, Marlborough)
10.30am Zoom Quaker Meeting for Worship
11.00am Family Communion (St George's, Preshute) ticketed event
11.00am Christmas Mass (St Thomas More, Marlborough)

Sunday 27 December

- 10.30am Morning Worship (St Mary's, Marlborough)
10.30am Communion Service (St George's, Preshute)
10.30am Section Service (Christchurch, Marlborough)
11.00am Sunday Mass (St Thomas More, Marlborough)

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FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals - we pray for the families of:

- 1 October Tracy Jane Howell (48) of Jasmine Close, Calne
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 13 October Lavender Joy Maclachlan (94) of St Lukes Court, Marlborough
North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 14 October Michael Frank Douglas Cripps (92) of Irving Way, Marlborough
St George's, Preshute and North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 15 October Francis 'John' Badcock Sykes (78) of Kingsbury Street, Marlborough
St John the Baptist, Minal and North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 25 October Alan Thomas Rix (94) of Highfield Residential Home, Marlborough
St Mary's, Marlborough
- 27 October Iris Sophia Best (93) of Home Farm Cottages, Mildenhall
St John the Baptist, Minal

To All Our Readers, Online and In Print 2021 Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2021 will remain at £5 and are due in December/January.

For printed editions, payment to distributors is acceptable, but to minimise door-to-door contact, online payment is encouraged.

For online readers the magazine continues to be free, but any contributions you make help us with overheads and will be gratefully received.

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News From The Churches

Our Carol and Christmas Services are correct at the time of going to print; however, please check with individual churches in case of any changes - the service times and dates can be found on page 20 and 21 Please contact our clergy if you are in need of prayer support.

All Souls' Update



The ecumenical All Souls' Service which was held in November was a very moving occasion and appreciated by friends and families of those who attend. We give thanks to all the clergy and lay people within Marlborough Churches Together who offer support and care to those bereaved.

Christmas Hampers for local families Request for financial support



Many of us will have started our Christmas shopping, but not everyone is in a position to do so. This year instead of gift donations we are requesting financial support to enable us to work within Covid safety parameters. MAPAG (Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group) will be coordinating the Christmas hampers. Please email Rachel Rosedale for further details about how to donate: rachelrosed1@gmail.com

Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group (MAPAG)

Meets via Zoom on Monday 7 December at 5pm. The date for January to be confirmed. These are open meetings and all are very welcome to join. Please contact Betty Dobson for agenda and Zoom details: betty.dobson@btinternet.com

A Thousand Christmas Angels

Imagine walking into St Mary's Church in December to a feast of colour, light and sound! Light draws you to a crib and overhead a 'heavenly host' of angels hangs in a starry sky!

During November those young and not so young in our community have been making angels that will form this display.

We want as many angels as possible and we need your help. Angels can be downloaded from www.marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk/thousandangels.htm or collected from St Mary's Church.

Decorate your angels with words, colour or collage, or simply cut some out and drop off in St Mary's porch or at The White Horse Bookshop by November 30th. Visit this glorious celebration of Christmas in St Mary's Church Marlborough from December 5th in your family group or bubble.

Wednesday prayer meetings

8am in St Mary's Church from 9 December (unless lockdown 2 continues). Our prayer meetings, every Wednesday afternoon, continue throughout lockdown at 5pm via zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6726727777>



The Anglican Team of Churches remain open for private prayer

St Mary's (Mon-Sat 9am-5pm), St George's (daily) 9am-4pm, St John the Baptist (daily) 9.30am-4pm. Our 9am Zoom Communion Service continues: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6726727777>. Please visit the church website for other services or our YouTube link:

<https://youtube.com/channel/UCLNKtUKXSXWxfemiPfrXXDw>

Open the Book

The Open the Book teams have been unable to go into the local primary schools during the Corona crisis and are exploring ways of "filming" their Bible stories. The Marlborough St Mary's team are looking for a volunteer to help record and upload their sessions for the Schools to use in their class assemblies. If you can help us please contact Alison for further information: alison@crossmead.net. Please also continue to pray for guidance for plans for the future.



Love Marlborough 'Kid's Meals'

The Kid's Meals project is going well and we are currently providing two meals a week for 27 families in and around Marlborough. To find out more please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MarlboroughKidsMeals/>

Methodist Covenant Service

The Covenant Service is planned for early January 2021. Please contact 512457 for further details.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18th - 25th January 2021

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, 'Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit', is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community's vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family. <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

St Mary's Organ Restoration Appeal by David Du Croz

On Friday 30th October there was an organ recital in St Mary's to launch the appeal for the restoration of the pipe organ due to take place in the second half of 2021. Music was provided by three local organists: Michael Reynolds (St Mary's), Andrew Brown (St George's); and Ian Crabbe (Marlborough College).

The St Mary's pipe organ is a fine, 140-year-old instrument but it is in need of professional treatment. The work that is planned will "bring the organ back into first rate condition ready to tackle the next 100 years of service". It will take Cooke Organs of Salisbury and Westbury over 3 months to complete all the dismantling, cleaning, mending and reassembling that is required. The total bill will come just short of £42,000.

At the time of the launch 62% of this has been secured by means of donations, grants and gift aid, leaving us with about £15,000 to find. The bulk of this is to be raised by our 'Pledge-A-Pipe' campaign, whereby donors can donate any multiple of £10, either as a one-off payment or by monthly payments spread over a year. There are 1098 pipes, so 1100 pledges at £10 a pipe will raise £11,000, which with gift aid will get us close to the target.



West-facing pipes of the St Mary's organ repainted by David Sherratt

All necessary information about this appeal and ways of giving can be accessed from the St Mary's website under *Organ Restoration Appeal*. If you have any questions about this appeal please do not hesitate to contact me at du.croz@btinternet.com or 511725.

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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 February issue by Tuesday 12th January please.

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