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# TOWER AND TOWN

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# TOWER AND TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



NUMBER 681 MAY 2018

## AWAKENING

There comes a time in the young person's life when searching for life trajectories becomes ever more pressing. A spark of awakening could hasten the process, bringing about a calling that dispels shadows. This calling could ignite visions of a journey which for some involves "going to the mountain top" (see insert at the bottom of page 4).

This edition contains two examples of youthful beginnings of such journeys. Arthur Clark, a Marlborough College student, eloquently expresses his growing interest in politics and how passion plays a part in bringing about awakening. Moreover *The Little Prince of the Terraces* explores "Seeing with the Heart" and journeys of high aspiration. Both articles acknowledge family and community inputs for discovering self-identity, which somewhat resonates with the self-identity discovery rather than invention thesis of Janneke Blokland's *Clergy Letter*.

It is also interesting to note the science fiction input of Roy Smith, in which he cleverly employs awakening and artificial intelligence (AI) in his *The Cassandra Curse*. In addition, science and existential threats are treated in my articles on pages 2, 12, and 13.

Moreover, recent events have awakened re-examination of social justices and political responsibilities. Hence the articles by Nicholas Fogg and Matt Gow are very timely indeed. Nicholas provides a critique of sexual exploitation, whilst Matt proposes some valid political introspection.

I hope that you will enjoy this edition as much as I did; but before I sign off, may I thank our contributing authors, reviewers, and compilers and commend their efforts to you.

**Raik Jarjis, Editor**

**Front Cover:** Nemat Jarjis

# Reality of the Elusive: Raik Jarjis

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Not many things could claim to be born at the dawn of time. Yet my story begins in the heat of the beginning when “everything” was squeezed to an infinitesimal point. Suddenly, Big Bang, I found myself in a vast emptiness invisibly hurtling at the speed of light itself for 13 billion years. Moreover, as you are now reading these words, billions of my fellows are penetrating the page and emerging at an antipode, (corresponding opposite side of the Earth).

I must have by now got you wondering. Well, I am the neutrino, an elementary sub-atomic particle, born at the Big Bang which started this universe. I am described as elusive because I am very hard to detect as I have extremely small mass and no electrical charge. This means that it is very rare for me to interact; and hence according to my reality this page, you, and earth itself are nothing but emptiness.

We harmless neutrinos are readily produced by a radioactive decay process of atomic nuclei, and hence we are copiously produced by the sun, other stars, nuclear reactors, rocks, and (wait for it) YOU! In fact some of the neutrinos produced just now by traces of radioactivity from potassium and calcium in your bones and teeth will be crossing the distant boundaries of the solar system in a few hours' time.

# The Westminster Effect: Arthur Clark

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I have always been intensely keen on politics, having been surrounded by it at such a young age; it was the topic of debate at most family suppers. However, I always felt that I was either never able to keep up with the speed of conversation, or fully understand what was making people hold such conflicting views. So, I felt that in order to know more, I must take the initiative; I began reading more about politics, how a democratic country such as Britain works, such as the legal frameworks in place to prevent individual rights from being abused from an arbitrary government; such as a constitution.

Yet, as I continued to read and learn more about politics, I only found myself going around in circles, or finding something else that I was not sure about, meaning I had to start again and approach my views towards understanding politics differently. I used various techniques to reach a better understanding of politics; from listening to the radio, to reading books and even trying to watch Prime Minister's Questions and giving my own answers to questions proposed to the then PM David Cameron. However, all my different approaches were having a limited impact on helping me to understand the true debates and conflicts that surround

politics. Yet, my awakening to understanding politics came about when I was lucky enough to do a week's work experience in the Houses of Parliament; here I was able not just to read about how such a complex and efficient machine runs. Rather I was able to experience life inside Parliament, and gain a natural insight into the home of democracy dating back hundreds of years. So, I believe that an awakening cannot truly happen until you take it upon yourself to experience your passions first hand, rather than in front of a screen, as this allows you to witness and hear things that you may well have otherwise never been able to.

## The Cassandra Curse:

Roy Smith

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The ship glinted in the leaden daylight, just visible to the naked eye in its geostationary orbit overhead. It was of little interest to the crew in the camp below as their comms implants kept them in constant touch with Cassandra, the on board AI.

Proxima B had been identified as the nearest habitable planet to Earth and the crew were investigating the cause of the loss of communication with the base built by the exploration team that had preceded them. The crew had expected to head the colonisation of the planet, but they had to leave the thousands of colonists in hibernation on board the ship while they landed to investigate.

They had expected to find damaged equipment and a team of relieved explorers at the base, but so far there was no sign of human life. In fact there appeared to be no sign of animal life at all, apart from insects that appeared to be completely vegetarian. The speculation was that perhaps the lack of animals had resulted in the evolution of vegetarian species, but why there were no animals was a mystery.

Using the open channel Matt, the captain, called out to the crew “OK people, let’s meet in the canteen in five minutes, we need to review and decide on the next move.” The crew all made their way to the largest of the structures which provided a mess, meeting room and dormitory facility.

After helping themselves from the coffee machine, Matt opened the meeting, “Right Anna, can you give us an update”. Anna glanced briefly at the screen on her arm and said “Well, so far we have checked out all the buildings and the campus area and found nothing unusual. The work seemed to be progressing well and they had made good progress in identifying potential vegetable food sources. Cassandra has interrogated their ship and found that normal communication ceased suddenly

after the explorers went to work on what appeared from satellite survey to be a good location for large mineral deposits....” Ben chipped in, “Yeah, they think they found diamonds!” “... they appear to have set up a small working area, then comms went dead and they dropped off the radar. The working is South from here and there is a track going that way” Anna finished.

There were various mumbles of agreement and additions regarding the apparent success of the work of the explorers. “Well” said Matt “They were a small team and it seems as if they all went to the site together, we will need to go and look but only a recce party. We’re a small group too, so we will have to be careful. Phil, you pick a couple of people to stay and carry on the work here, the rest kit up and come with me. Meet by the garage in ten minutes, they took the main RV but there is an ATV that will do”. The captain and the crew set off cross country following the track that came to an end in the foothills of a low mountain range strewn with a litter of large boulders, making their way on foot through the gaps, they discovered the entrance to a large cave. Evidence of their predecessors was everywhere, including a small array of solar panels with cables running into the cave “We have not seen any wildlife so far, but keep a good look out” said Matt, as the group moved into the cave. Wide angled torches sent brilliant beams into the darkness as they walked cautiously forward until, following the cables, one called “Hey guys, how about this.” With a click the cave was illuminated with overhead lamps leading to a wide tunnel off to the left .

While they worked, Phil and his two companions kept track of Matt and his team via the comms link bounced off the ship with occasional commentary from Cassandra. They went cold when the noise from the chatting search party suddenly became a loud grating noise, like a huge mortar and pestle then stopped, but they were relieved when Phil reasoned that Matt had found a cave and going underground could be the cause of the comms failure.

They were less reassured when, after two days, Matt and his reconnaissance party had not returned and they had decided they would have to go to see what had happened. It took much longer to reach the cave on foot, but Cassandra was not surprised when the sound from the three again became a repetition of the grinding noise then stopped. Orbiting in the ship high above the AI thought, “I told them there could be life other than carbonate, but they would not listen”. The colonists slept on.

**50 years....** “It really doesn't matter to me now, because I've been to the mountain top”.  
*Martin Luther King*



**Awakening**  
Editor's Highlight

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# Sexual Awakening: Nicholas Fogg

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At last we can declare the Swinging Sixties to be over – well almost. For this, I suppose, the main vote of thanks goes to Harvey Weinstein, who has succeeded in reminding us that all revolutions have their casualties. Then there was Oxfam and other aid charities and now the private schools and football and even Parliament. There seemed to be an historic common pattern for institutions dealing with sexual incidents. The perpetrator of the offence was too valuable to lose and was profuse in his apologies, swearing never to reoffend. Of course, if the issue became public, that would result in bad publicity, so the behaviour was quietly overlooked. The victim tended to maintain silence, often for precisely the reason that the predator was able to operate; that the complainant would not be believed and would be likely to be discriminated against as a result of the complaint.

All this has changed because following Weinstein: an awakening has occurred. People have been coming forward with their painful memories – and some of them are memories from decades ago, so the pain must have endured. A moral consensus has begun to emerge – that it is wrong that people should use power and influence to sexually subjugate others. Not all have caught the tenor of the times. To the horror of many feminists, the once-admirable organisation, Amnesty International, which was founded to campaign for the release of prisoners of conscience, is now campaigning for the decriminalisation of prostitution. If ever there was an area of life that involved sexual exploitation and coercion, this it. The recent spate of prosecutions for the grooming of young girls shows that protection of the vulnerable is desperately needed. In fact, prostitution is not illegal in the UK, but there are a number of offences associated with it. These would include pimping, trafficking, living off immoral earnings and underage sex. That anyone should desire to abolish laws which, at least in theory, seek to curtail the exploitation of human beings for personal gain is nothing less than amazing.

“Your vision will only become clear when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside awakens”. *Carl Jung*



**Awakening**

Editor's Highlight

# The Little Prince of the Terraces: Raik Jarjis

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*The 1943 universal classic of “Le Petit Prince” deals with love, friendship, and the desert. In the story a pilot crash-lands in the desert and meets a small boy from a distant asteroid. When Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, known simply as “Saint Ex”, wrote and illustrated the story he benefited from his own 1926 to 1929 flying experience and desert crash-landing whilst flying single-engine planes from Toulouse in France to North Africa.*

*The present take on “Le Petit Prince” employs “stars & flights” metaphors and real-life events of child awakening plus father/son friendship within a Christian/Muslim setting in Mosul, Iraq. Its backdrop is the gathering political storm over Suez, and the forthcoming publication of “Synthesis of the Elements in Stars” in the 1957 Review of Modern Physics.*

## **Awakening of the Heart**

When he was six the little prince had already been awakened to the magic of seeing things with the heart and to the enriching solitudes on roof terraces.

*“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”* *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

His “seeing with the heart” was honed on metaphorical flights with his beloved rational father, who we should now appropriately call the aviator. And because both the prince and the aviator saw with the heart they understood quite well that great love defies all spoken words and that humility is a virtue. “And when you finally discover yourself, my son, you will be basking in the knowledge that one is neither less nor more than the others, and that to love is to not own”.

The prince’s fabled life flourished in the city of Mosul, whose skyline consisted of a sea of roof terraces with occasionally protruding minarets. It was here across the river Tigris from ancient Nineveh that the prince’s seeing with the heart was refined, and his love of the aviator cemented.

It was also here on his home’s roof terrace that he played, brushed with nature by watching fighting sparrows, and listened to the sounds emanating from the alleyway below, the neighbouring houses, and the nearby leaning minaret. It was also on this roof terrace within the Christian/Muslim neighbourhood of Al-Sa’a, (Arabic for The Clock), that the time dials sometime stopped when he joined the aviator on thought flights over pre-1920’s Al-Jazeera plain, Arabic for Bit Nahren (Aramaic for the land between the Tigris and Euphrates in upper Mesopotamia, pre

-Iraq),. It was in Al-Jazeera that the aviator spent his formative years among the Muslim Arab tribes and acquired nomadic skills for reading the night sky.

### **Reaching for the Stars**

As spring gave way to summer, beds were carried up to the roof terrace. This was, of course, time for great excitement as lonely nights within the indoor featureless darkness are replaced by the sheltering under the monumental night sky. It was here that when the daylight failed, and the mu’adhin called from the minaret, the prince often sat beside the aviator on one of the beds, beneath the enormous leaning minaret, to go over the desert tales till the star studded indigo sky tuned to darker shades of blue and the prince climbed into his small bed.

Here a recurring thought often crossed his mind as he gazed at the powerful scenes played above. He should ascend the overhead darkened looming minaret and hop to the nearby stars in order to experience different worlds, look down at his empty bed and wave to his parents, brother, and sister. This should prove to be pleasing for the navigator, “You can fulfil your aspirations by aiming for the stars and not looking back”. However, it often seemed that once he fell asleep time galloped so quickly until he was awakened by the mu’adhin dawn call for Muslim prayers emanating high above his head.



The Mosul Great Mosque of Nur Al-Din, (Arabic for the Light of Religion), was built under Nur Al-Din Al-Zangi, Atabeg of Aleppo, who occupied Mosul in 1170. Al-Din defeated the Crusaders at Edessa and massacred its Armenian Christians. He also laid foundations for the success of Saladin.

The elaborate 15.5 m leaning minaret is called Al-Hadba (The Humped). Mosul is commonly identified with the iconic minaret, the city itself often being named Al-Hadba, an association abruptly ended in July 2017 when the minaret was blown up during the final offensive to dislodge Islamic State from Mosul.



# Arts Review: Gabriella Venus

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Textile artists Gemma Maclennan and Barbara Touati-Evans have produced a large-scale free form crocheted wall hanging of the Marlborough Downs, based on sightings from a road trip they embarked upon last spring.

The major piece in this collection (sharing its name with the entire exhibition) was inspired by a drive through the Downs. It is bold, imaginative and pleurably tactile. Research into this project did not solely derive from the road trip. Indeed, it was compounded by long walks and also aerial photographs from very far away and very close-up. Having masterfully, but I suspect, rather painstakingly assembled this complex piece consisting of famous Wiltshire landmarks, notably Silbury Hill, the Ridgeway and Savernake Forest's 'Big Belly Oak', as well as a chalk white horse, the piece artfully envelops the natural beauty of our surrounding landscapes. The artists have described it as 'a representation of our observations of the Downs from differing views and experiences. It is not geographically correct, but uses the shapes, colours and textures of these landmarks to describe the area in both abstract and textual form.'



The exhibition is enriched by examples of the artist's individual work. Gemma's portfolio focuses on Wiltshire wildlife, primarily birds and butterflies. The beautiful use of colour and pattern, strong attention to detail and emotional response to the wildlife around us is effective and vivid. Barbara's collection looks more at the roads in and out of Marlborough, considering the destruction and reconstruction of our roads. Her work reflects on the history of Marlborough, for example, the links between the town and the chalk found in the soil, and also the historical significance of the annual Mop Fair. Barbara's work is varied, inventive, and wonderfully textured.

A rich, skilled, original and organic exhibition that looks marvellous in the gallery, great work Gemma and Barbara!



*Yarning the Land* was at The White Horse Gallery between 4<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

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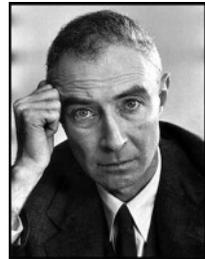
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# Now, I Became Death: Raik Jarjis

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*We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." I suppose we all thought that one way or another.*

-J. Robert Oppenheimer



The "American Century" was a concept put forward in 1941 by the publisher Henry Luce, who declared that in the years ahead the U.S. must "exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purpose as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." The eminent theoretical physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, as director of the Manhattan Project to build the atomic bomb, had much to do with forging the alliance between science and government that contributed greatly to the realization of Luce's concept. (This, however, came at a price).

"The Gadget", (implosion-design plutonium device), was already hoisted on top of a tower at Ground Zero in the New Mexico desert, USA, as groups of scientists and military personnel gathered at various locations and distances from Ground Zero in order to observe the "Trinity" test. Oppenheimer, who was inspired by the poetry of John Donne to assign the codename "Trinity", was with other key scientists at the command location 10 miles away from the gadget when an intense fireball lifted off the ground upon detonation at 5:29 am on 16 July 1945. A blast of 21 kilotons of TNT yield was accompanied by intense light. An eye witness, (Brigadier General Thomas F. Farrell), described it as follows:

The lighting effects beggared description. The whole country was lighted by a searing light with the intensity many times that of the midday sun. It was golden, purple, violet, gray, and blue. It lighted every peak, crevasse and ridge of the nearby



mountain range with a clarity and beauty that cannot be described but must be seen to be imagined.

Thunderous sound and air pressure wave soon followed as the ominous mushroom cloud began to rise to the heavens above the Trinity site. The explosion scattered radioactive particles from the poles to the equator, leaving an indelible signal in the surface strata of the Earth plus some images which have since burned themselves into the consciousness of the human race.

Here the man most responsible grappled with the unprecedented implications and sought some meanings within the lines from the Hindu scripture (above). Here was a moment of human awakening...here was a realisation that things will never be the same again.

And as measurable deposits of radioactive ash began to accumulate globally following the WWII bombing days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and subsequent arms-race inspired hundreds of nuclear tests a new geological epoch of planet earth began to emerge. Now it is the turn of the geologists to ponder if 16 July 1945 should be assigned the starting point of the new Anthropocene Epoch.

*The term ‘Anthropocene’ was first coined by Nobel Prize winning chemist Paul Crutzen who in 2000 suggested that man’s impact on the world was so substantial that we were no longer in the Holocene – the era which began at the end of the last Ice Age around 11,700 years ago and saw unprecedented human expansion and the emergence of towns and cities.*

## Two Minutes to Midnight: Raik Jarjis

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*“We’re in a strange place right now: they’ve advanced the doomsday clock. The number of minutes to midnight has been moving up and I worry about the world I’m leaving my children. Most people I know just have their fingers crossed that we can make it the next four years without starting a nuclear war over penis size”*

*Neil Gaiman, “Norse Methodology”*

At the end of the WWII some atomic scientists created a new bulletin. The cover of the bulletin contained an image of a clock to indicate the danger to humanity. When the clock was set at its highest, two minutes to midnight back in 1953, nuclear threat was high but global warming was a distant hypothetical threat. Since that time carbon dioxide pollution has increased six fold and not surprisingly the earth has warmed as consequence, now by about one degree centigrade. This might not sound much but let me put it in perspective. During the depth of the last ice age the earth was only around five degrees colder than it is now. 2017, however, ushered in rising existential nuclear threats and consequently the clock is now pushed up again to two minutes to midnight.



# What's on in May

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## Regular events

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### **Every Monday**

7.30pm: Christchurch. Marlborough Choral Society.

7.45-9pm: Bell-ringing practice at St George's, Preshute.

### **Every Tuesday**

2.45pm: The Parlour, Christchurch. Women's Fellowship.

7.30-9pm: Bell-ringing practice at St Mary's, Marlborough.

### **Every Wednesday**

10am: Jubilee Centre. Drop-in, Tea/Coffee. 12.30 Lunch.

1.30-3.30pm: Town Hall. Sunshine Club for the over 55s.

7.30-9pm: St Peter's Church. Marlboro' Community Choir.

7.30-9pm: Bell-ringing practice at St John's. Mildenhall.

2-3pm: St George's, Preshute (*every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed*) Teddy Prayers & Picnic. A service, tea & cakes for U5s & carers.

### **Every Thursday (or some Thursdays)**

10am: Jubilee Centre. Drop-in, Tea/Coffee. 12.30 Lunch.

10:30-12 noon: Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge. Singing for the Brain. Alzheimer's Support. 01225 776481. (*Every Thursday during term-time.*)

1.30-3.30pm: Wesley Hall, Christchurch. Macular Society (*last Thursday in the month*)

2pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Marlborough Floral Club. £30 a year membership. £5 guest. 520129. (*1st Thursday*).

### **Every Friday**

10-12 noon: Christchurch Crush Hall. Food bank is available but there is no coffee morning.

### **Every 2nd Saturday**

10-12 noon: Library. Marlborough & District Dyslexia Association. Drop-in advice. Help line: 07729 452143

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## May calendar

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### **2<sup>nd</sup> (Wednesday)**

7.30pm Wesley Hall, Oxford St. WI. Talk by Jean Watson: 'Prison – Retribution or Restoration'. Guests welcome.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday)**

7.15pm Town Hall. Live S Ballet: 'Manon'. £5 in adv.

### **5<sup>rd</sup> (Saturday)**

6:30pm St Peter's Church to Marlborough".

### **7<sup>th</sup> (Monday)**

11am-3pm Bushton Manor Fair. £2 (children & parking Church, Clyffe Pypard.

### **9<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)**

12.30pm 40 St Martins. V welcome. 514030.

7.45pm Wesley Hall, Oxford. Talk by Rosina Brandham world'.

### **13<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)**

7.30pm St Peter's Church (violin) and Gamal Khami MBG or St Peter's Trust).

### **14<sup>th</sup> (Monday)**

2pm Kennet Valley Hall, L Guild. Talk by Heather Ev Everyone welcome.

7.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pe Vale: Lecture by Barry Ve and Cartoons'. Members

7.30pm Slade House, St SN10 1EL. Lecture by Dr 1958 & Public Health'. Me

### **16<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)**

7.30pm St Peter's Church by Jane Fearnley-Whitting £15 (£12 Friends of MH).

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

7.30pm St Peter's Church Battle of Bedwyn and the welcome £4 (students £2 8pm Town Hall. Marlboron 'While & Matthews'. £14 f

Screening from The Royal  
£6 on door.

a. Fairtrade Group "Mangoes

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g free). In aid of St Peter's

Widows' Friendship Lunch. All

ord St. Gardening Association.  
: 'Plants that changed the

a. Concert: Brieuc Vourch  
s (piano). £10 (£8 Members of

Lockeridge. Embroiderers'  
eritt: 'Butterflies and Banners'.

wsey. Arts Society, Pewsey  
nning: 'Giles: His Life, Times  
visitors welcome: £7.

James' Gardens, Devizes  
Tom Crook: 'The Great Stink'  
embers £3, Non-Members £4.

h. Merchant's House Lecture  
g stall: 'Gardening Couples'.

: Lecture by Nick Baxter: 'The  
Rise of Wessex' Guests

ugh Folk Roots. Concert:  
rom Sound Knowledge.

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

9.30am - 12 noon. Wesley Hall. Marlborough Gardening  
Association: Plant Sale.

### 21<sup>st</sup> (Monday)

11am Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton. The  
Arts Society: Kennet & Swindon. Lecture by Kevin  
Karney: 'Telling Time through the Ages'. Guests  
welcome (£7) 01793 840790.

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

7.30pm Town Hall. Movie Night: 'The Party' (15). £5 in  
adv, £6 on door).

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

St John's Academy: End of Term 5.

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

Marlborough College: Prize Day and start of Half Term.

### 29th (Tuesday)

7:30pm St Peter's Church. Citizen's Climate Lobby.  
01672811515.

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**Sunday 13 May, 7.30pm**

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**Gamal Khamis (Piano)**

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4; Saint Saens -Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso ;  
Kreisler - Prélude and Allegro

**Tickets £10 from the White Horse Bookshop or Sound  
Knowledge**

# Marlborough Churches Together

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## Usual Sunday Service times

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### **Christchurch, New Road (Methodist)**

10.30am Morning Service with crèche

### **Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade**

10.30am Meeting for Worship

### **St George's, Preshute (C of E)**

8.00am Holy Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)

10.00am All Age Service (3rd Sunday)

Parish Communion (other Sundays)

### **St John the Baptist, Minal (C of E)**

8.00am Holy Communion BCP (2nd Sunday)

9.30am Parish Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)

### **St Mary's, behind the Town Hall (C of E)**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP on 4th Sunday)

10.00am All Age Worship (1st Sunday); Parish Communion and Junior Church and crèche on all other Sundays

5.30pm Informal service except on 1st Sunday.

### **St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)**

11.00am Sung Mass (See also below)

**Marlborough College Services** are shown at the College Chapel

## Weekday Services

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**St Mary's** Holy Communion: 10.30am Wednesday

**St Thomas More** Mass: 10.00am Mon, Tues, Wed and Sat Holy Days

**St George's** Tea Time followed by Evening Prayer: 4.30pm Weds.  
Teddy Prayers and Picnic: 2-3pm every 2nd & 4th Wed

## Some Political Thoughts: Matt Gow

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The great thing about awakenings is that they can happen at anytime and anywhere. As I shivered through the full impact of "the beast from the east" last week, I had an awakening about snow. Apart from seeing it as momentarily exotic and magical, I realised that snow can also have a transformative impact on one's own political thoughts too. Although the layer of snow muffles and softens all the hard sounds and edges around us, on a more abstract level it can exacerbate and heighten our awareness to the more pressing social issues of our times. How many stories did we hear of kindly community action where people stranded or isolated by the snow were helped out by strangers? The snow also brought into sharp focus those questions we ask our politicians but never really get a suitable backdrop in which to contextualise these grievances. The snow offered that and so an opportunity for introspection and an invitation to ask our leaders - both locally and nationally - some awkward questions. Why are so many people still sleeping in doorways or in makeshift shelters? Why isn't there enough money to actually resolve the most basic of human needs, shelter? Why isn't there an extreme weather contingency plan held in readiness now that these events are becoming more common and why isn't this provoking a more urgent debate on climate change? Does anyone care at the Council that the potholes in the roads are going to be even worse after this round of freeze thaw? Why does it take a bout of heavy snowfall to make people more community minded? And then the snow melts and those perspectives disappear along with it and we all return to the familiar.

## Book Review: Debby Guest

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You heard it here first. **Star in the North**, by D B John, is going to be *the* big thriller this summer. It's set in North Korea and the author is one of the few Western journalists to have visited that country with its terrifyingly unpredictable, repressive and paranoid regime. A CIA agent searches for her kidnapped sister, while dealing with the North Korean government's rising stars on a diplomatic mission. Meanwhile, back in the DPRK, Mrs Moon (a brilliant character) is struggling to survive by illegal market trading, bribery and sheer bloody-minded determination. The interweaving narrative strands are compelling, the characters are believable and sympathetic, and there are plenty of false leads, red herrings and mcguffins. Life under the secretive, suspicious, corrupt and desperate administration of the Kim dynasty is brilliantly and chillingly evoked, and there's a (literally) explosive ending.

# Clergy Letter: Janneke Blokland

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## **We and those around us: some thoughts about living in community**

*'The nation doesn't simply need what we have. It needs what we are.'* Edith Stein (1891–1942)

For any community to thrive, whether it's a town, a school, a business or even a nation, its members need to be able to live together and form meaningful relationships. It also requires an economy of giving and receiving, in which people take on particular roles and show a willingness to contribute to the flourishing of all. This, in turn, will only happen if relationships are defined by trust, loyalty, and mutual fulfilment.

To establish relationships of this nature, we need a sense of self-awareness, and I would like to suggest that, maybe paradoxically, we will obtain the truest perspective of ourselves if we are rooted in a flourishing community. For most of us, our first community in which we discover who we are consists of our family, and in later life school, university, workplace and neighbourhood provide a framework in which we find our own particular place.

One of the problems we face in our current society, I believe, is the erosion of communities built on trust and mutual flourishing, as they are replaced by apparent online communities (such as Facebook) or groups where relationships are based on an unhealthy interdependence and a quest for power, such as fundamentalist groups and gangs. So, rebuilding a thriving community will go hand-in-hand with reclaiming our true identity. Here, for me, the Christian faith offers not only a helpful, but I would say necessary starting point: that is that 'who we are' is not something we need to invent, but we need to discover it. The difference here is that our identity is God-given, it is not something we have to invent or 'make' ourselves. To some non-believers this may sound like a great and unnecessary restriction on our freedom, should we not be able to determine our own identity and destiny? However, on the contrary, I would argue that it offers us a great relief, because in a sense, already we have been given what we are trying to establish.

I believe that a stronger sense of our being as a gift, to be discovered in the encounter with others, will release us to see how we can use who we are for the common good, instead of becoming caught up in anxiety over who we need to make ourselves, in isolation from or competition with others. In turn, that realisation will enable us to not only live a truer and freer life, but also to imagine and build a society in which all can flourish and thrive.

## Support to live well with dementia in Marlborough

Alzheimer's Support is a Wiltshire charity that wins national awards for its empathetic and imaginative approach. We help people to live well with all types of dementia and offer advice, information and practical support to family carers.

*Our services include:*

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- Memory advice drop-in on Thursday mornings at Marlborough Library
- Monthly Memory Café at East Grafton
- Monthly carers' group in Marlborough
- Award-winning day care in Devizes



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# Family News: Audrey Peck

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**Molly Tarring**, eldest daughter of Ben and Clare who live in St. Martins. is in the third year of a four year law degree with a difference. She is studying French Civil Law with European Studies and is spending a year in Aix-en-Provence. She went to St. Marys, St. Peters, St. Johns and then to the College for A levels.

*Novelist Vanessa Lafaye, 54, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009, when she was Neurosciences Editor at Oxford University Press. In 2014, the cancer returned, and secondary tumours spread to her brain, liver and lung. In her blog, Vanessa, who lives in Marlborough with husband James and their pet cats, chronicles her determination to live life to the full while dying'. That is how the Daily Mail described Vanessa but locally we knew her as the inspiring leader of Marlborough Community Choir. She said that if you can talk you can sing and on Wednesday evenings in St Peters Church we laughed and sang. She never criticised, just smiled and encouraged. She conducted the choir at the Civic Dinner in the Town Hall in February but died a few days later. The choir supported her family and friends at an evening to celebrate her life as they had at the launch of her two successful novels. The choir, in a different format, will start again led by her friend, Vicky. We are very sad for James, her mother Patricia, step-father Edward, and brother Larry, and her old friends in Florida where she grew up.*

**Douglas Peck** died in March after a long illness. He grew up in Fyfield. After Lockeridge School he started an apprenticeship with Herd and Leaders Garage in the High St, now W. H. Smiths. Apart from enjoying country and western music his work and hobbies were all based on engines. He watched speedway at Blunsdon, scrambling and, on TV, he followed TT from the Isle of Man and he was a member of Marlborough Motor Cycle Club. As a young man the other young men gathered in his parents' garage to learn how to repair their motor cycles. His national service was in the Royal Artillery in Bulford. He and Elsie were married in Ogbourne St. George Church in 1953. Their sons, Graham and Nigel, were born after they moved in to their home for about 60 years in Elcot Lane. We send our sympathy to all the family.

**Tony Killick** died on 28<sup>th</sup> March, aged 81, at Great Western Hospital. Born in Enfield, London, his family moved to Brighton where he attended Varndean Grammar School, then did his National Service in the Royal Signals. He met Margaret in 1962 at Cheltenham Young Conservatives and in 1966, a year after their marriage, they moved to Marlborough. Margaret was a teacher at St. Peters and Tony followed a career in sales. He enjoyed an active retirement. A regular worshipper at St Mary's, he also joined the U3A's walking, theatre, wine and current affairs groups, Pewsey Bowls Club, the Local History Society and, for many years,

sang with the Marlborough Choral Society and the Marlborough College Choral Society. Tony always enjoyed his weekly cycle rides and walks with neighbours, and, in recent times, keep fit classes at Marlborough Leisure Centre. The funeral took place on 19<sup>th</sup> April at St Mary's with burial at Marlborough Cemetery. He is much missed by his wife Margaret, daughters Julia and Angela and grandchildren Alice and Kate.

**Leslie Sanderson** and his late wife, Mary, were keen travellers, they met in Switzerland, but chose Marlborough in 1983 for their retirement. They had lived in Wembley, He trained to be an accountant but changed careers and became an experimental and prototype engineer for Hoover. This skill was used in tool making for aircraft during the war. He had been a Labour Councillor for Hounslow, a member of CND and the leader of a club for walking holidays. Since retiring he joined the Civic Society and the Ramblers and enjoyed stewarding at the Jazz Festival. Sincere sympathy to his sons, Malcolm and Andrew.

**Jill Pearce** and Michael moved to Hazel Close in 1998. Michael previously worked for Ilford Photos. and Jill had her own Language School in London. They immediately joined U3A. Jill, who was an Oxford Graduate, took two French Groups and a German Group and latterly a Group about Shakespeare. After Michael died Jill moved to Town Mill but later last year, owing to ill health, she moved to Cardiff to be near her son, Richard. Robert, her other son lives in America. She died last month and will be missed by all her friends..

**Pat Robinson** died in January. She was pleased to come back to Wiltshire with her late husband, John in 2003 .He had managed the estates at Great Chalfield Manor, Bowood and Druids Lodge. She was a keen needlewoman, joining the Embroiderers Guild and the Quilting Group and volunteering at the Merchants House. She enjoyed living near her daughter, Helen, who lives and works at Greatwood Stables, Clench Common. Sincere sympathy to Helen and her brothers, Bruce, Daniel and Matthew.

**John Stedman**, eldest son of the Head of Marlborough Grammar School and St. Johns, Alfred Stedman, died in Savernake Hospital in March. He was 89 and had lived in Ramsbury for 20 years. Of the Stedman children, John, Eleanor, Michael, Pamela and Alison only Pam and her younger sister remain. Pam recently wrote her memories of being a child in Marlborough schools in T & T. John went to Marlborough schools but was at the College for his 6<sup>th</sup> form studies. He lived and worked mainly in India and Africa. His late wife was Indian and John spoke fluent Gujarati. He had three children and three grandchildren. Our sympathy to them all.

# NEWS from the Churches

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## Women's Fellowship at 2.45pm in Christchurch

- 1<sup>st</sup> May Members' Meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> May Revd Heather Cooper  
15<sup>th</sup> May Kate Trowbridge  
22<sup>nd</sup> May Tea and Chat  
29<sup>th</sup> May No Meeting



## Philosophy in the Pub

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May - 'What about the Common Good?' In a society as diverse as ours, we can wonder if the Common Good still exists, or even if it has never existed in the first place?

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May - 'Another take on science and faith'. The Dean of Westminster Abbey said: We believe it to be vital that science and religion work together to seek to answer the great questions of the mystery of life and of the universe.

Both sessions starting at 7.30pm in The Lamb, The Parade, Marlborough. Contact Janneke for more information: jblokland@gmail.com tel: 515970.

## Ascension Day Service



All welcome to join us at St Mary's Church, Marlborough at 7.30pm on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May for a Marlborough Deanery Ascension Day Service with visiting speaker: Robert Titley, Canon Treasurer, Salisbury Cathedral.

## Christian Aid Week 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018

The Marlborough High Street collection for Christian Aid Week takes place on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The Marlborough Christian Aid Committee needs younger members to keep the local branch running. They are keen to welcome new volunteer members. Please contact the chairman, Bryan Castle, for more information: 513955.

## Christian Aid Sunday - 13<sup>th</sup> May



Marlborough Churches Together invites you to join the Ecumenical Christian Aid Service at 10.00am on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May at St Mary's Church, Marlborough. We will be joined by visiting speaker: Katrine Musgrave, Christian Aid's Representative here in Wiltshire. Katrine is looking forward to this opportunity to worship with us, reflecting on our discipleship journey and the choices we make as ambassadors of God's Kingdom.



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The retiring collection, for Christian Aid, donated at Deirdre Rix's recent funeral, came to £919.85. The Marlborough Christian Aid Committee has thanked Deirdre's family for nominating this charity to honour her memory. The motto of Christian Aid is "*We believe in Life before Death*". What an appropriate way to remember the fullness of Deirdre's life.

### **Sunday Lunch Club**

Next date: Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May at Christchurch, Wesley Hall at 12.15. To book a place, please ring the office before 10.00am on the Friday before: 513701. Cost is £7.50.



**Marlborough Churches Together Fraternal** meets at 12.45pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May, open to all or please contact the clergy if you would like anything raised. <http://marlboroughchurchestogether.uk/mct>

**Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group (MAPAG)** meets at the Friends Meeting House, The Parade, Marlborough at 7.30pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May. All welcome to attend the meeting.

### **Study Group**

Mustard Seed will be hosting a series of Study Groups led by The Revd Dr Janneke Blokland. They will be based on SPCK's series of concise, authoritative guides to intelligent Christianity. Participants are strongly recommended to read the three booklets (40 pages) before the group discussion. Books are available from Mustard Seed. Meetings will be in Mustard Seed 7.30-9pm on the following dates:

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May - Why believe in Jesus' Resurrection? by James Dunn, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June - Why go to Church? by John Pritchard and Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July - What is Christianity? by Rowan Williams.

### **Pentecost #Pledge2Pray**

Salisbury Churches Together invites you to join the **Salisbury Thy Kingdom Come Beacon Event** on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in Salisbury Cathedral. This will be an evening of worship and prayer, joining with Christians around the world to pray as one for people to know Jesus Christ. Featuring Brian Heasley, International Prayer Director 24-7 Prayer and worship from the Regional New Wine Worship Team. FREE TICKETS available from: [BT.LY/TKCSALISBURY](https://www.btl.ly/tkcsalisbury)

### **The Filling Station**

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm at the Marlborough Community and Youth



Centre with visiting speaker: Matt Goddard. Matt is a Transformative coach working with powerful, inspiring men and mission-focused women to handle love, life and relationships, whilst creating successful businesses. All welcome.

### **St Mary's Messy Church**

We held our first St Mary's Messy church on Easter Saturday this year. We were thrilled to welcome 60 children and over 40 parents and helpers and it seems like everyone had a good time! Much prayer went in to all the preparations and lots of practical work -from collecting moss and flowers for the Easter gardens to baking Easter biscuits and making sandwiches and sausage rolls.

We ended the morning with a big picnic on the church hall floor. Thank you so much to everyone who helped or encouraged us on. We hope to hold more messy church events soon!

### **Holy Week with Marlborough Churches Together**

During Holy Week, the most important time during the Christian year, churches in Marlborough have been worshipping and witnessing together.

On ***Palm Sunday***, we started our Holy Week celebrations with a service of music and poetry led by the choir Dodecantus. On ***Good Friday***, our annual Walk of Witness was well-attended, and the rain held off as members of all our churches processed from the Town Hall Steps to St Peter's Church.

***Easter Day*** itself started as usual on Martinsell Hill, where the churches in Marlborough and Pewsey came together for Communion at sunrise. The cold weather meant fewer numbers, but those who were there were able to see the sun rise over the hills, a powerful and moving reminder of the light coming into the world. Our celebrations on Easter Day ended with an impressive effort to get kites flying on a windless afternoon, which together with a few rounds of football and some playful dogs offered a relaxing time and a bit of fresh air.

### **Christina Nobles Foundation**

Pepita Hurd would like to thank the kind people who have donated some pretty amazing cameras and some exquisitely knitted hats and scarves to the orphan children in Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

**St Non's Retreat** on the lovely Pembrokeshire coast near St David's, September 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>. We are lead by Revd Dr Colin Heber-Percy, looking at *Revelations of Divine Love*, how God is revealed in our lives. Details and booking with Barney (barney.rsd@gmail.com).

## FROM THE REGISTERS

**Baptism:** 15 April – Jayden Lewis Shale Olgun and Myla Charlotte Vera Spreadbury at St Mary's.

**Wedding:** 23 March – Thomas Speake and Manon de Jong at St George's.

### Departed:

20 March – Ernest John Warren (71) of 2 Orchard Close, Marlborough. *St Mary's and Marlborough Cemetery.*

21 March – Sylvia May Richings (76) late of Cheltenham, formally of Purlyn Acre, Marlborough. *St George's and Marlborough Cemetery.*

23 March – Joyce Sellars (96) of Merlin Court, Marlborough. *Kingsdown Crematorium.*

26 March – Hazel Joan Stobbs (78) of 21 The Priory, Marlborough. *Kingsdown Crematorium.*

28 March – Anthony 'Tony' Terence Frederick Killick (81) of 22 Ducks Meadow, Marlborough. *St Mary's and Marlborough Cemetery.*

2 April – Molly Eileen Rose Bint (92) of Savernake View Care Home, Marlborough. *West Berkshire Crematorium, Thatcham.*

5 April – Bridget Joan Barnett (63) of Folly Hill View, Minal. *St John the Baptist and Minal Cemetery.*

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<i>News from the Churches</i>	Alison Selby	church.news@towerandtown.org.uk Crossmead, Kingsbury St, SN8 1HU	511128
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