
TOWER_{AND}TOWN



Ancient

August 2024

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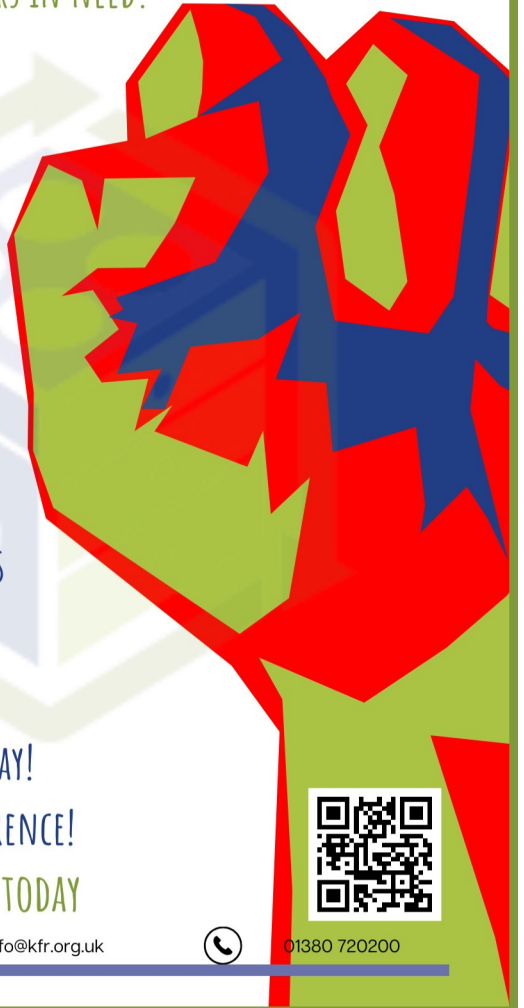
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TOWER^{AND}TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

NUMBER 750 AUGUST 2024



EDITORIAL

One of the many remarkable aspects of Marlborough is its very long history going back to prehistoric times. The most obvious feature, the mound, dates back to about 2,400BC but evidence suggests that humans have lived in Marlborough for over 10,000 years. So I thought that it might be interesting to investigate some aspects of “Ancient” Marlborough and beyond.

The cover invites us into the ancient landscape, sultry with August heat (we can hope!). Local artist, Simone Dawood, generously allowed me to use this detail from one of her paintings (along with the *Hackpen White Horse* - p5) and has described how the ancient landscape around us inspires her. I am very grateful to archaeologist Kim Wakeham who takes us on a walk through prehistoric Treacle Bolly and to Wiltshire Museum Director, Dr David Dawson, who reveals new information about the outstanding Marlborough Bucket. In broadening the “Ancient” theme, I am obliged to my sons who kindly agreed to share their expertise on aspects of baking and wildlife.

Readers’ suggestions for articles for the magazine are always welcome. I was delighted to receive *A Continuous Thread* about Enid Peck’s upholstery classes from Elaine Quinn; she was inspired to write it by having read an article in a previous issue about *Textiles and Stitch around Marlborough*. I very much enjoyed researching the article on *The Hancocks of Marlborough Cottage* at the prompting of Bob and Margaret Toogood. Many thanks also to Peter Noble for his excellent article *Marie Louise Revisited*.

If you have an article or an idea for one, please send it to me at chairman@towerandtown.org.uk In the meantime I wish you happy reading and some August sunshine!

Sarah Bumphrey, Editor

Front cover: *Hackpen Harvest 3* (trimmed) by Simone Dawood

Treacle Bolly, located to the south west of Marlborough, has an interesting story to tell. The steep strip of downland, also known as Granham Hill, has escaped the plough thus preserving many archaeological features. This, the first of two articles, focuses on Prehistoric Treacle Bolly and locations for specific sites are given using What3Words (e.g random.three.words)

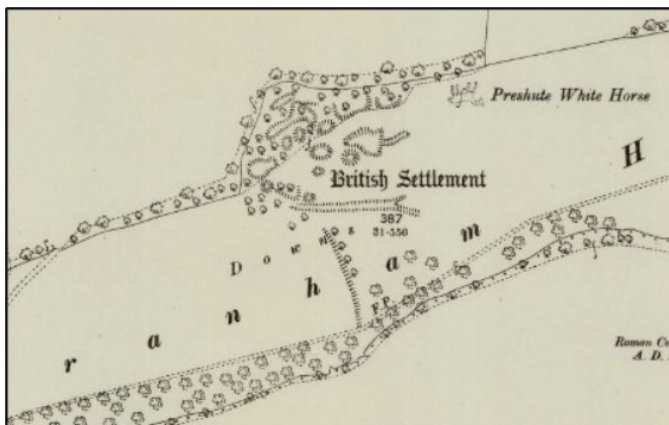
The earliest evidence for people living in Treacle Bolly is through a Mesolithic (9,600 – 4,000 BC) flint scatter (left behind from people making flint tools) found in the field just at the top of Granham Hill (loved.hydratation.suave). The landscape would have been more wooded in the Mesolithic and large animals such as wolves, bears and aurochs would have been hunted.

Skip forward in time to the Neolithic (3,400 – 2,400 BC) and the landscape would have been different. The woodland would have been much reduced and people were beginning to build large monuments. Located just to the right of the footpath to Granham Farm (surfed.layers.fidelity), an earthen long barrow was constructed (although this is disputed). The feature is substantial, measuring 76 metres long, 13 metres wide and between 2.3 and 3.1 meters high. Although modern ploughing, a holloway and the construction of the Wansdyke have damaged the mound, it is easily discernible under the trees.

Towards the end of the Neolithic, the nearby Marlborough Mound was constructed (approximately 2,400 BC). Although smaller than Silbury Hill, the Marlborough Mound is similar in that their purpose is unknown. It is tempting to speculate it may have had a relationship with the long barrow.

Another feature which is common in prehistoric landscapes is standing stones, and a lone sarsen stone can be found in Treacle Bolly (circus.conjured.campers). Bearing an inscription to George Charles Bell, who was a Master at Marlborough College, the location of the inscription on a stone halfway up a hill and away from the main path, suggests that the inscription was added later to an already extant stone.

Adjacent to the long barrow and recorded on the 1900 OS Map as a British Settlement, various earthworks, which may indicate a settlement dating from the Iron Age, can be located with ease (credit.deleting.invested). However, a brief examination of the landscape indicates that the earthworks may be from different time periods and possibly not be all settlement traces. This may explain why on the later map published in 1923, the earthworks, roads and quarries are shown but the label has been omitted. These earthworks will be explored further in the next article 'Historic Treacle Bolly'.



<https://maps.nls.uk/os/25inch-england-and-wales/>

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But tantalisingly, it may be that this settlement gave rise to the unusual name of Treacle Bolly. Although extreme caution must be exercised when interpreting place names, Treacle Bolly may mean Bolly's settlement on the hill, or in a narrow valley or by a wood or spring.

Before the Roman Invasion, the language spoken in Britain was Brittonic and would have been similar to modern day Welsh and Cornish. If the place name is broken down into Tre and Cle, then further clues can be found. Tre means settlement and is usually found as a prefix to place names. Cle which could be: 1) Cle – cliff, an escarpment, a hill-slope or a river-bank 2) Cul – a narrow valley or 3) Col – meaning spring or wood. It is a challenge as all of the possible place names fit the landscape!

Brittonic place names in Wiltshire are more common than you might think: Pen = hill, Dun = the Downs, also meaning hill, Cwm = coombe and Afon = river. It is very exciting to think that Treacle Bolly might be a 2,000 year old survival of a place name.

This is just a brief, tip-of-the-iceberg analysis of the prehistory of Treacle Bolly and indeed of Marlborough. The next article will focus on historic Treacle Bolly.

Sources:

1 https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=220612&resourceID=19191

2 <https://www.marlboroughmoundtrust.org/>

3 *The use of Gothic Script on an OS map tends to be used to denote Prehistoric activity before AD43*

4 <https://salisburymuseum.wordpress.com/tag/place-names/>

Based in rural North Wiltshire in the small hamlet of Bushton, I paint the surrounding landscape from my studio overlooking farmland a stone's throw from the Ridgeway and the ancient North Wessex Chalk Downs. Like many artists I have met, I was not encouraged to paint at school; the art room was a rather intimidating space dominated by a strict teacher who definitely had his favourites. However, I continued to draw and paint in my own time. The technique wasn't particularly good but I really enjoyed doing it and that is, after all, what's important.

I was brought up in West London and started my career with Channel 4 in 1981. I became Picture Editor there in the late '80s which helped develop my compositional skills and a sense of colour and place. I studied at Heatherley School of Fine Art and the London Drawing School.

A frequent visitor to the area for the last 26 years I moved full time to Wiltshire over 10 years ago. My work reflects a close familiarity with the landscape and the shifting light, informed by many miles of walking and revisiting favourite sites: hill forts, sarsen stones and the ubiquitous white horse figures. I volunteered with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery cataloguing axe heads and flints and that further sparked my interest in looking at the landscape in a rather different way - what lies beneath, the people who lived around the Ridgeway and connecting the urban with the wilds of the downs just on our doorstep.

The materials and process of making are integral to my practice. I sketch first *en plein air*. The sketches are then worked up to larger scale charcoal drawings in the studio. Using an intense colour palette I build layers of highly saturated oil paint on primed linen. My compositions are often partially abstracted and playful. Superficially the simple graphic shapes mask a complex process of composition, balance and response to my subject.

Colours give the impression of vibrating across the picture plane. The soft contours and folds of the hillsides ripple and echo to form pleasing but sometimes unlikely patterns, clumps of trees sit against vast skies and there is a sense of those who used this land in past times; farmers, travellers, shamans, druids, seekers and the traces they left behind.

I recently had a successful solo show Distant Echoes in Malmsbury. I sell and exhibit locally through galleries and Open Studios as well as undertaking commissions for private clients.



Hackpen White Horse (March 2022)
Simone Dawood

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Images of The Marlborough Bucket



Left: The Marlborough Bucket displayed in Devizes Museum



Above: Artist's impression of the Marlborough Bucket

Below: Face with the whites of the eyes highlighted by silver-coloured tin



The Marlborough Bucket: A Masterpiece of Celtic Art

Dr David Dawson, Director, Wiltshire Museum

The Marlborough bucket is no ordinary bucket! It was created to be the centrepiece of tribal gatherings and held over 100 litres of wine or beer. It bears the images of women, men and horses, flamboyant symbols of tribes that made alliances to fight Julius Caesar as he conquered Celtic Europe.

Found in 1807 by workmen digging for gravel at St Margaret's Mead, on the west side of Marlborough, all that is left today are sheets of decorated bronze and corroded iron fittings. When discovered, it was still complete, with wooden staves and base, bound with iron bands, just like a modern barrel. It was decorated with three bronze strips of hammered repoussé decoration. Inside was cremated human bone, perhaps the remains of the last owner who had chosen to be buried with their most prized possession. Without the benefit of modern conservation techniques, the wood of the bucket disintegrated soon after its discovery, leaving only the metal fittings.

The Bucket has been extensively studied by Dr Reb Ellis-Haken. Careful analysis of the decoration highlighted differences in the ways in which the horses have been groomed, their tails docked and manes dressed. These details are mirrored by coins and other artefacts, and suggest that the horses might be symbols of the Parisi and Senones tribes of Northern France. The Bucket was probably made in Northern France to cement tribal alliances made at the time of Caesar's Gallic Wars between 58 and 50BC, at a time when he also invaded Britain. Perhaps the bucket was brought to Britain by a defeated Gaulish leader, offered asylum by allies in Britain.

But the most remarkable detail in the decoration are the human figures. Uniquely, women and men are both shown on the bucket, with distinctive hairstyles that may show their status in society. One face in particular stands out - the whites of the eyes are still highlighted by silver-coloured tin, and pupils that once shone with brilliant blue glass.

The figurative decoration of the Marlborough Bucket is second only in Europe to the Danish Gundestrup Cauldron. Remarkably, until the new study by Dr Ellis-Haken, the Marlborough Bucket had been largely ignored by archaeologists. Today it is one of the treasures to be seen at the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes. Find out more by catching up on an online talk from the Museum website.

Images provided by Dr David Dawson

The Hancocks of Marlborough Cottage

Sarah Bumphrey



Many of you will know about this blue plaque (*left*) high on the wall in the colonnade between Curate and Andrews Quality Meats. To my shame I have to admit that I hadn't noticed it until September last year. By coincidence I had just been given, by Margaret and Bob Toogood, a family history compiled for Bob's sister which included the Hancock brothers. They were interested to see the very remote connection Bob has with the Hancocks and their attention was drawn by the mention of Marlborough. I am writing this article at their request.

In St Peter's church in May 1778, Betty Colman married Marlborough cabinet maker, James Hancock. They must have been dynamic, forward-thinking parents who encouraged curiosity and enterprise among their children. Not only did their daughter, Elizabeth, follow a cabinet-making apprenticeship but three of their sons Thomas, Walter and Charles made a name for themselves beyond the town. Moving to London, Thomas developed rubber manufacturing in Britain, Walter built steam powered road vehicles and Charles was both a renowned painter and patented gutta-percha coating of electrical cables used for telegraph cables across the Atlantic. The full story is to be found in 'The Hancocks of Marlborough' (2010, Oxford University Press), the definitive account of the Hancock brothers by John Loadman and Francis James (three times great nephew of Thomas).

A busy and productive life in London did not mean that Thomas Hancock forgot his home town or his family. In his will of 1857 his address is given as Marlborough Cottage, Stoke Newington. The house was probably built in late 1836 which corresponds with Thomas (who never married) taking responsibility for the upbringing of his brother's children after John died in 1835. The census of 1851 shows that four nieces and two nephews, a general servant and gardener were living there. As you can see "Cottage" was a misnomer. It was a large house with a circular carriageway entering the grounds through a central pair of pillars, a formal garden and



two meadows - a plot of about 3.5 acres.

Writing of his visits to the 'cottage' as a schoolboy in the late 19th century the great great nephew of Thomas, the Revd. J.L.B James, describes Thomas' laboratory: *"To the left of the front door were the 'iron-door room' and the drawing room. The former gained its name from the corrugated metal door painted in oak graining. This room was of some interest, it was the laboratory of Thomas Hancock, the friend of Faraday and the partner of Charles Macintosh: it was in this room that he discovered the process of vulcanizing india-rubber. It remained exactly as it had been at the time of his death in 1865. From this room a private staircase ascended to his bedroom, and as the idea for the crucial experiment occurred to him whilst he was in bed, he came down at once, made the experiment and thus came about one of the great discoveries of the world".*

In May 1936 the Times celebrated the centenary of Walter Hancock's steam carriage service from Paddington to Bank. In a letter soon afterwards the Revd. James pointed out that this was inaccurate as the first one took place in April 1832. He also included a description of Walter's last machine. *"In 1837 Hancock designed his last recorded road carriage, a steam phaeton for his own use. The normal speed of this vehicle was 12mph though it was capable of 20mph running smoothly and emitting neither noise, steam, fire nor smoke. Perhaps it may be of interest to add that I have often heard a description of a ride in it from my great aunt, the late Miss Harriet Hancock, the designer's niece who died at Marlborough Cottage...in 1909, a house still standing, occupied by the family for nearly 100 years, and in which...Thomas Hancock, made the memorable experiment by which he discovered the process of vulcanising india-rubber."*

After Thomas' death, three of his nieces remained in residence until their deaths: Frances in 1895, Maria in 1902 and Harriet in 1909. The house then remained empty until its demolition in 1945, after a V2 rocket had landed nearby, shaking the old building and taking one life. After its demolition a block of flats, Banstead Court, was built on the site. On October 8th 2003 the Plastics Historical Society placed a plaque there to celebrate the life and work of Thomas Hancock. It was unveiled by one of the four great great great nephews and nieces of Thomas who attended the ceremony. In turn, in around 2015, Banstead Court itself was demolished and replaced by an extensive block of flats - Willowbrook House. The plaque was removed during demolition, restored, and replaced above the entrance by the PHS in 2022.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to John Loadman for kindly allowing me to use information from the excellent website bouncing-balls.com about the history of the rubber industry.

I would also like to thank Margaret and Bill Bolton for kindly allowing me to quote from their research on the Hancock family.

When I started baking bread, I decided I wanted to make the most delicious loaf I could. My first few attempts at baking sourdough at home were mixed. One loaf would be flat as a pancake, the next hollow. I would then make some progress in that the final product would resemble a loaf of bread. However, I could then spend two days making a loaf and realise once I was eating it, that I had forgotten to put any salt in it. Gradually, over time I became more confident but played it safe and used only hard white Canadian wheat from the supermarket, which ensured consistency.

After playing around at home for a while, I decided to leave my office job and get a job in a bakery. I became obsessed. I would bake all day at work then come home and bake some more. I started reading about all the finer points of bread and baking, including the many varieties of wheat. I became most interested in what are referred to as ancient grains and the flours they produce. Ancient grains are varieties of grain that have remained largely unchanged since Neolithic domestication 10,000 years ago. These prehistoric grains include spelt, emmer and einkorn. Spelt was widely used in the Roman Empire and being the son of a Classics and Latin teacher, I felt it was my duty to start there.

I bought my first bag of spelt flour from a health food shop and couldn't wait to get home and make a loaf. Unfortunately, I felt like I was back at the beginning of my baking journey; the loaf was flat and had a weird crust. I hacked off a slice and tried it. Despite appearances, it was delicious; it tasted nutty and wholesome. The modern Canadian hard wheat I had been using has been bred to have a strong gluten structure, and therefore is easier to work with, though at the cost of flavour. As spelt has a more delicate gluten structure, it requires a softer touch.

Once I had sampled the delicious, overtly 'bready' flavour of spelt, I couldn't go back. I persevered with spelt sourdough; I tested and adapted my recipe and methods. I worked the dough less, treated it with a gentle respect and finally landed on a recipe that I love and works every time. This has given me great satisfaction, along with the idea that this grain used for the purposes of making bread has been enjoyed by countless people for thousands of years.

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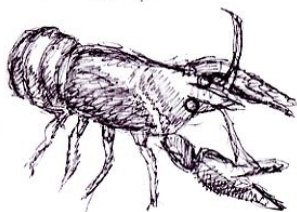
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The area around Marlborough is dotted with evidence of ancient human activity from Avebury World Heritage Site to the Ridgeway. It is a landscape that we have shaped and managed for thousands of years.

Despite all this interference, remnants of ancient habitat cling on. Perhaps most notable are the expanses of ancient woodland such as Savernake Forest with the 1,000 year old Big Belly Oak. Ancient trees such as this provide habitat for innumerable species of lichen, fungi, invertebrates, as well as rare mammals such as the Bechstein's bat and birds like the lesser spotted woodpecker. There are also scattered patches of chalk grassland, thought to be some of our most ancient grasslands. Sitting on soils free from agricultural 'improvement', these are home to orchids, butterflies and the unmistakable song and flight of the skylark.



picked their way through chalk streams catching fish and collecting white clawed crayfish (*above*). They would have stalked large hoofed mammals, like the now long extinct mighty auroch (a species of wild cattle - *right*), from the edge of grassland clearings, competing with (and defending themselves from!) large predators such as wolves and bears.



Whilst the landscape is now very different, in locations where ancient habitat clings on, it is possible to gain an appreciation of, and connection to, those pre-agricultural humans and environments. The flora and fauna is of course significantly depleted. The insects do not buzz in the grassland with the volume they once did and the birds do not call from the woodlands with as many different voices. Large mammals have been replaced by domestic varieties and badgers are now Britain's largest land predators. However, if we can encourage the connection of people with these ancient habitats then there is hope for their protection and wider restoration for future generations.

Drawings by James Bumphrey

A Continuous Thread

Elaine Quinn

Enid Peck (nee Baker) was born in West Lavington and moved to Marlborough in 1963 when she married Lionel. Like so many women of her time, Enid made her own wedding dress as her grandmother had taught her to sew. As well as bringing up three wonderful sons, Richard, John and Matthew, she and Lionel ran Pecks School of Motoring. Enid has lived in Elcot Lane for 60 years.

During the 1970s, being the wonderful homemaker she was, Enid decided to recover the sofa! She enrolled for the Soft Furnishings and Upholstery Class 1 in Silverless Street, one of numerous adult education courses available within WCC. She enjoyed the class very much and attended for many years. During the mid '80s her teacher, Shirley Wright, suggested that Enid take the City and Guilds exams in order that she may then go on to take the class. Thankfully Enid did.

From 1992 until 2004, Enid used a mobile classroom at St John's School, Stedman, where she took weekly day and evening classes and often all-day Saturday classes too – to the delight of many. In 2004 Enid broke away from what was then the Swindon College Adult Education programme and branched out on her own to Minal Village Hall where many of her upholstery and stitching groupies followed her. Over the years Enid has supported many ladies and men from Marlborough and the surrounding villages with innumerable projects.

Upholstery and soft furnishings include items of all shapes and sizes: from chairs to chaise lounges; footstools to headboards and of course curtains, cushions and blinds - from Austria to Rome! Whatever the project, Enid's expert knowledge and traditional upholstery skills have helped to transform, remake and reshape.

In 2014 Enid started sewing the thread for her replacement and suggested to Claire Rumbold that she take over the class. Claire studied Art Illustration at Falmouth School of Art and since 1992 attended Enid's classes learning traditional upholstery and sewing skills. Succession planning at its best!



One doesn't have to be a sewer to attend the class. It's about having a go and having fun! Enid and now Claire *(photo by Helen Llewellyn)* guide and support to make and create, recycle and restore to make lovely things for your home to make your home lovely! Claire holds two classes a week at Mildenhall Village Hall on Tuesday and Thursday

mornings 9.30 -12.30pm. If you would like to have a go, meet new friends in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, email: clairerumbold@btinternet.com

P.S. Enid still attends the class. How fortunate we are to have such knowledge and skills being shared and passed down. A continuous thread indeed!

2nd, 9th and 16th (Fridays)

Fairytale Theatre presents playful performances of The Ugly Duckling, The Three Little Pigs and Goldilocks and the Three Bears. National Trust, Avebury.

14th (Wednesday)

Marlborough Gardening Association - Creating a Downland Garden with Robert Harvey. 6.45pm for 7.30pm at The Youth and Community Centre.

The display table will be Perennials and Wildflowers

9th (Friday) 10.00am – 11th (Sunday) 4.00pm

Wiltshire Artists Summer Show – St Peter's Church, High Street Marlborough

Artists from the Wiltshire Artists' Group will be hosting their summer exhibition.

22nd (Thursday) – 26 (Monday) & 29th (Thursday) – 2nd September (Monday)

Giffords Circus Avalon Tour, Marlborough Common. Tickets Adults £20 - £40, Children £10 - £30. For timings and bookings GIFFORDSCIRCUS.COM or Phone 01453 800 200

25th (Sunday) and 26th (Monday)

Crofton Beam Engine's Steam Weekend – Learn about the history of the station and restoration. Discover the engineering challenges and the people who overcame them to build the canal and make sure it had a plentiful supply of water. Station open 10.30am to 16.30pm (last entry 15.30). Adults (over 16) £12, children (under 16) free. Pre-booking is recommended to secure your entry time. Any remaining tickets will be sold on the gate on the day. Bring your own picnic or visit the Pop-up Refreshment kiosk. For all information visit <https://www.croftonbeamengines.org/>

Coming Up:

7th September 8.30pm – 10.00pm, Chuckle at the Church 2 – Comedy Night St Peter's Church, High Street, Marlborough

10th September 6.30pm and 15 September 2.00pm The Royal Opera:

The Marriage of Figaro at The Parade Cinema. Early booking recommended. Book online or phone 01672 646232 (between 10.00am and 7.00pm)

19th September – Marlborough History Society talk. St Peter's Church, 7.30pm. **The RNLI 200 Years 1824 to 2024** by Mary and Ben Bentley. Guests very welcome. Entry £5.

19th September: The White Horse Bookshop Autumn Workshop Programme begins with Very First Steps in Watercolour with Maggie Bunning Price £70. For full programme visit <https://www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk/art-workshops> To avoid disappointment, it is advisable to book early.

26th to 29th September – Marlborough LitFest celebrates its 15th year.

Sir Simon Russell-Beale, Celia Imrie, Zeinab Badawi, Robert Hardman, Sarah Perry, Robert Peston and Martin Sixsmith announced for this year's line up. For more information and festival programme updates see www.marlboroughlitfest.org

Box office opened 11th July. Book early.

Dates for your Diary:

October 2024 to June 2025 – Marlborough College Concert Series (MCCS)

13th October, 7.30pm Miles Karadagic – Classical Guitar

12th January 2025, 7.30pm Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

2nd February 2025, 7.30pm Red Priest, Baroque Instrument Group

2nd March 2025, 3.30pm Southbank Sinfonia Smith Square

22nd June 2025, time TBA Wayne Marshall OBE – Piano

All concerts at the Memorial Hall

More information and booking details to follow.

Parade Cinema Ballet and Opera Season

15th October 7.15pm and 20th October 2.00pm The Royal Ballet:

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

10th December 7.15pm and 15th December 2.00pm The Royal Ballet:

Cinderella

22nd December 2.30pm and 30th December 7.00pm The Royal Ballet: The

Nutcracker

School Dates - please see school websites for any updated information.

St John's School and Marlborough St Mary's Primary: Autumn term begins Wednesday 4th September.

Marlborough College: Michaelmas Term begins Tuesday, 3rd September (Shell, new Lower Sixth, Prefects and Heads of House). Wednesday 4th September (All other pupils between 6.00pm and 9.00pm)

Every now and again I contemplate throwing in bookselling and running away to sea. But just when I think “Hang Spring Cleaning” (or stocktaking), or that I should consider Walking Out One Midsummer Morning, or deliberately stepping into the street and methodically knocking people's hats off, I realise my work is not done, because someone says all innocent-like “I've never read Kate Atkinson”. And I take a deep breath and return to my vocation of spreading the word.

Kate Atkinson has 24 national and international awards to her name, and has asked her publishers not to submit her for any more prizes (I presume her mantelpiece is full and she doesn't want to do any more dusting.) She writes (for the uninitiated) ‘literary’ but immensely readable novels, and a ‘literary’ but immensely entertaining crime series, featuring the utterly lovely Jackson Brodie. Described as crime novels for those who don't read crime, the JB books are adroitly constructed and plotted, occasionally slightly bizarre, undeniably grim in subject matter but jauntily entertaining. **At the Sign of the Rook** is on the face of it an homage to Agatha Christie and the country house mystery, with the archetypal characters – chatelaine of crumbling mansion, ex-soldier, vicar, suspects and sleuth trapped by a blizzard, with the theft of an Old Master to investigate, and murder afoot. But Atkinson of course subverts the tropes and expectations, and gives us a digressive, slightly disorientating narrative, in which as ever with Jackson Brodie the moral rather than the strictly legal is the outcome he works toward. He's in a good place, our Jackson which is nice, and has a new Great Love – sorry ladies, it's a Land Rover Defender, we can't hope to compete.....

Dark Frontier by Matthew Harffy has it all as far as I'm concerned, troubled hero with a past in the Afghan wars and C19th Whitechapel (hints of you-know-who, slight yawn) now hoping to start anew in Oregon. I'm less than a third of the way in, and the body count is rising, shoot-outs in the saloon and ornery villains tracking our hero through the mountains.

Finally I'm excitedly hopping from foot to foot like a small child who should have gone before she left home. Lissa Evan's new novel **Small Bomb at Dimperley** is a joy, and she's coming to the shop to talk about it on 5th September (publication day). Take this opportunity to tone up your sitting- still- and- being-entertained -and- enlightened muscles before the marathon of LitFest. **Tickets (£5) from the White Horse Bookshop.**



*Autumn morning, West Overton
credit Bridget Codrington*

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Nature Notes: Nature's Consolation

Robin Nelson

Nature's consolation:

The natural world seems more important to me than ever during these troubled times in our world. I rely on it to reassure, to offer hope and a sense of continuity when life seems so full of uncertainties. It has not been a good year for the birds, butterflies and wild flowers: too often rain, steely-grey skies, intermittent sunshine and unwelcome winds have got in the way. So whenever the weather has been clement and kind, time in the countryside has been precious and time now presses on towards autumn.

After the Avebury solstice I felt the need for some peace and quiet and took the local walk up Windmill Hill on a glorious warm summer evening. A Whitethroat was delivering his scratchy song, a Skylark got up from the track and mounted the sky, and a Hare stood motionless at the edge of a field of barley wavering and glistening in the fading sunlight to my left. I smiled and gave my dog a friendly pat; it seemed as if the natural world was welcoming me and telling me that all was just as it always had been.

All isn't as it used to be sadly, but what it still offers is precious and I store up the special moments in my memory like picture postcards, to see me through the dark hours and boring spells.

If the weather has been unreliable it hasn't inhibited the wild flowers, even if they have often been obscured by the tall grasses this year. It's been possible to see up to six species of orchids at Morgan's Hill Nature Reserve where I recently encountered two that were new to me: the Frog Orchid (flowers like a frog's head) and the "mixtum" hybrid Common Spotted crossed with Frog. Add to this a few clusters of Marsh Helleborine nestling along a sloping bank. I returned refreshed and elated.

Good butterfly days have been few and far between so the afternoon I recorded Marsh Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy, Dingy and Grizzled Skipper and three other species on a short visit to a sun-drenched sloping meadow in June was a special one.

Memorable sounds include the intermittent "bleating" of a quail in a field of barley, a Grasshopper Warbler "reeling" from a patch of brambles and a female cuckoo uttering her hysterical bubbling call.

A strawberry moon coincided with Solstice night this year, and what a magical sight it was. We should never underestimate nature's power to amaze us and lift our spirits!

See opposite: *Wilton Windmill*; credit David White

Quakers are perhaps best known for our peace testimony. It comes from our belief that there is that of God in everyone, love is at the centre of existence, and all human life is of equal worth. Yet we live in a world in which most of the news we get is of wars, destruction, and suffering caused by human actions. Aggression seems deeply rooted and an almost instinctive response to any perceived threat. Our peace testimony bids us to renounce violence and work actively for peace.

The 17th century founders of Quakerism were spiritually inspired and nurtured by what they learnt from the bible and what they experienced in their lives as the light or spirit of love and truth. Christian teaching and experience were the guiding light of their lives in which peace in oneself and in the community was to be achieved without violence and with the grace of God.

For me as a Quaker today, the peace testimony means living a life in which I truly believe there is a non-violent solution to any confrontation, and putting that belief into practice. We are all capable of thoughtlessness, unkindness, greed and even violence at times, and we need to be wary of the hurt we can cause others and the damage to the world we live in if we do not keep such human tendencies in check. In my experience, a sense of peace in myself is the best way to prevent negative tendencies surfacing and taking over my thoughts and actions.

Quaker meetings for worship are my mainstay for a sense of connection to the light and personal peace. That sense of deep connection to the spirit is strengthened by my worshipping community. Inspiration and connection with the divine are also found in the teachings of other prophets and spiritual leaders, and everyday contacts with family, friends and nature – when I am open to them.

All Quakers are well supported in our concerns and efforts for peace by Quaker organisations at all levels, from Local Meetings, national representation and up to United Nations via the Quaker United Nations Office. Each one of us can contribute to peace work according to our individual skills and abilities. Many are activists (demonstrating at arms fairs and climate crisis events) some publish books and leaflets, some teach non-violent reconciliation in schools and workshops. Many offer prayerful support, which is much appreciated by those busy with activism. The main Quaker organisation which coordinates peace work for Quakers in Britain is Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW).

When war rages on in several parts of the world, and we feel helpless and hopeless, even doubting the good of our prayers, we hold on to our faith and the peace testimony. Like the five wise virgins in Matthew 25: 1-4, we keep working at and being prepared for peaceful resolutions until the time comes for an opening for the way forward.

Flower beds

Some plants such as yellow rattle and many popular bulbs including daffodils and tulips need vernalisation and autumn sowing. Bi-annuals such as foxgloves are sown now to bloom next year, as are hardy annuals such as sweet peas for an early spring start, although they may need winter protection. With luck you'll find self-seeders in your borders too, useful for increasing stock or gifting.

Veggies

While the soil is warm you could sow leafy greens for winter use in a protected space e.g. a cold frame. Choose those bred to withstand cold such as oriental greens, spinach and winter lettuce. Ensure airflow to prevent young plants damping off, harvest a few leaves at a time and they'll continue growing on sunny days. Spring cabbages and broad beans can be sown for eating in the "hungry gap" when veg stores are depleted but new harvests not yet begun. If you have spare ground a green manure will prevent nutrients leaching away until killed by frosts, and then rot down adding goodness to your soil.

Seed saving

Most seeds can be saved although F1s are unreliable. There is a regular seed swap at the garden club and it's a good way to try new plants for free. Choose a dry day, harvest ripe seed and store in a dry place. I save heritage peas and beans every year with good results.

Looking good

While Rudbeckia and grasses are now coming into their own other plants are dying back, giving the garden a different look. Hedge cutting generally starts from 1st September and the contrast between a clipped hedge and billowing vegetation can be very pleasing. If you have a meadow, cut grass once wildflowers have set seed.

Composting

And finally, fill your compost bins as the warm weather will kickstart it to give an earlier supply next year. Making leaf mould too is so easy. Simply stuff damp leaves into an old bag with air holes and leave it out of the way to transform.



In the February 2023 edition of *Tower and Town* I suggested that the lovely Marie Louise Ride in Savernake Forest could be named after the Duchess of Parma, Napoleon's wife, on her visit to Bath Spa. Further research however revealed a rather major error: there is no evidence and no reasonable likelihood of the Duchess ever visiting Bath... it was another important Marie Louise who did, and initialled her visit 'ML' which suggests she preferred to omit her middle name of Theresa.

This was the beautiful and very wealthy Marie Louise of Savoy, Princess of Lamballe, confidante of, and head of the household for, Queen Marie Antoinette of France. She married the Prince of Lamballe at the age of 17 in 1766 but he died of syphilis within the year, aged just 20. One suspects therefore that the marriage was not consummated as it is implied that Marie Louise remained disease free. In 1787 however she was advised to 'take the waters' at Bath Spa, which she did. I do hold to my original hypothesis that London to Bath, being a two day journey, she would need to rest halfway, and a fine house in a large estate would have been more to her taste than a coaching inn. Savernake Estate with Tottenham House is half way to Bath.

In 1765, the Earl of Ailesbury who resided at Tottenham House, engaged Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to design and develop Tottenham Park, close to the house and this inspired the Earl to develop the area we now know as the forest. It had been rough impoverished scrubland with several aging and quite worthless oak copses so he planted thousands of trees, linking the old copses and preserving the ancient oaks. It was he who created the Grand Avenue, Eight Walks and the Rides we now like to stroll.

In 1787, his grand design would be showing its promise with new trees up to twenty years old. I feel sure he would not only have welcomed the Princess but escorted her on his new rides. Perhaps he honoured her there and then by naming the Marie Louise Ride, but just maybe it was later, when he heard that in 1793 the Princess was butchered to death by the Paris mob, and her head paraded around the streets on a pike. Maybe the naming of the ride was in her memory.

Note: Lamballe is a small commune in Brittany, a backwater now but very important in the 18th century with a castle and a monastery. Its name is believed to come from the Breton 'Llan' meaning church as in Welsh, and 'Paul' a shortening of St Paul, thus Llanpaul, and a short step to Lamballe.

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Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Services Times

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

10.30am Meeting for worship

St George's Preshute (Anglican)

8.00am Holy Communion (1st & 3rd Sundays)

10.30am Worship

St Mary's with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship (behind the Town Hall)

8.00am Holy Communion (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays)

10.30am Worship

5.00pm Informal Worship (with Energize Children's Church)

St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)

9.00 am Worship

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

11.00 am Mass

Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)

10.00am Worship (every 3rd Sunday)

4.00pm Worship (every Sunday)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the college chapel

For more information and updates please check the individual church websites.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms - we welcome:

16 June Arthur William & Saskia Grace Leggae

St John the Baptist, Minal

Weddings - we congratulate:

22 June Alicia Gibson and James Scott at St John the Baptist, Minal

06 July Victoria Kay and James Malvern at St George's, Preshute

Departed - we pray for the family of:

25 June Ann (Valerie) Booton (88), Merlin Court, Marlborough

St Mary's, Marlborough

28 June Barbara Whiting (84), School Lane, Manton

North Wiltshire Crematorium

News from the Churches

Children/Family Activities

Informal All-age Worship – Sunday 4th August at St Mary’s Church.

Children’s tea at 4.30 pm followed by a service from 5 – 6pm.

The Ark Parent/ Carer and Toddler Group is taking a break during August for the Summer Holidays, but will start back on the 9th September. Please contact Caroline Philps for more information (cphilps2@gmail.com)

Little Friends Toddler Group, Thursdays during term time, 10 to 11.30 am at the Marlborough Community and Youth Centre. Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers. For more details, email littlefriends@emmanuelmarlborough.org.

Explorers, Fridays during term time, 6-7.15 pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Our kids’ club for school years 3-6. Fun, games, tuck and a short Bible talk (bring 50p for tuck). For more details, email explorers@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Friday Nights, Fridays during term time, 7.30-9 pm. Our youth club for school years 7-11 at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Friends, fun & faith – everyone is welcome! For more details, email fridaynights@emmanuelmarlborough.org

St George’s Messy Church - Saturday 10 August, 2pm - St George’s, Preshute

Children and their families are warmly welcome to a summer Messy Church on Saturday 10 August at 2pm at St George’s, Preshute. An opportunity for families to come and enjoy informal worship, activities and refreshments together. All welcome! For further information, please contact Amanda Brown: 07900 198386 or amandabrown46@hotmail.co.uk

Emmanuel Holiday Bible Club 2024

Join us at the Clue Crew Detective Agency for games, crafts, quizzes, snacks, fun and Bible stories as we uncover the mystery of Jesus rising from the dead!

28th-30th August, 9:00-12:30, Emmanuel Marlborough, New Road, SN8 1AH

Open to all finishing school years Reception to year 6.

£10 per family for the whole week.

[Go to emmanuelmarlborough.org/home/events/clue-crew/](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org/home/events/clue-crew/) to sign up!

Or email office@emmanuelmarlborough.org for more information.

Midweek Activities

B.L.T (Bible Lunch Time), Monday, 12 August, 12.30 pm – Pop in briefly if you're busy – Stay & chat if you can. Light lunch + short Bible talk, meeting in the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. For more details, email

reuben@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Welcome Wednesdays, every Wednesday, 10.30 am in St Mary's.

Hope Explored, A 3-session short introduction to Christianity, from Luke's Gospel. All are welcome to come and ask any questions or just listen! For more details,

Welcome Wednesdays

*Wednesdays at 10:30am
St Mary's Church, Marlborough*

Please join us for a Thought for the day followed by coffee and doughnuts

MARLBOROUGH ANGLICAN TEAM

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ENERGIZE

St Mary's is delighted to invite you to Energize Children's Church alongside the 5pm Informal Worship service.

Bible teaching
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Music, & prayer in
friendly groups
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welcome

Children stay with
us for the start of
our family-friendly
service, then go out
to their groups.

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even if just visiting

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other notices or announcements to the compiler.

All items for the September issue by Tuesday 13th August please.

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