TOWER AND TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES







MARLBOROUGH COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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TOWER AND TOWN

Marlborough Community Resilience

Resilience is not bouncing back to how things were. It is a community's ability to withstand a shock and then adapt, so the next one lands less hard. It starts with personal resilience: mental, emotional and practical flexibility.

Storm Henk flooding our town in 2024 was a shock, groundwater coming up from a full aquifer with sewage welling up through hatches. Two record-breaking summers have followed. Now the aquifer that feeds the River Kennet is well down and will need many months of rain to recover, as the dry riverbed in its upper reaches shows. Yet this landscape has supported continuous settlement for over 4,000 years precisely because people adapted.

Adaptation is Transition Marlborough's work. I helped set it up in 2011 and it has been adapting ever since: a community-led group finding local answers to climate change, ecological decline and rising living costs. TM is the umbrella for the Community Fridge and Garden, a permaculture group, and our emerging Social Fabrics and BioRegion projects.

I hope this edition shows community resilience at work and I thank my contributors. Dr Barney Rosedale looks squarely at an uncertain world. Our Mayor, Mark Luson, writes on the Stonebridge allotments community and the joys of "growing your own veg". Milly Carmichael reports on Source of Inspiration, where five artists turned unsold charity-shop textiles into a statement. Rachel Rosedale and Sophie Lowe trace fifteen years of our Town in an Orchard. Erika Peklanska and I share how Waters of Change gave the River Kennet a community voice, with Dr Pete Jeffs explaining BioRegions.

Finally, we are continuing our partnership with our awesome independent cinema. The Parade will be screening a special showing of the film about intensive versus rewilding farming, Derek vs Derek, at 17:00 on November 18th as part of our celebration of 15 years of Transition Marlborough.

I remain positive about the future. As Erika told me, "Communities have agency — they can shape their own future."

Richard Pitts - Editor

November Edition No 775
Compiler: Hugh de Saram
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Marlborough Churches Together

Marlborough in an Uncertain World

These are certainly uncertain times, especially for the older among us who have known some 65 years of relative peace (at least in our own lands), quite easy travel, and some serious elements of social progress.

Now we are faced by economic insecurities on five continents, four major wars (don't forget Sudan), and three convincing possibilities of extinction, not only of our animals and plants, but of us humans.

We should remember that things have ends, and that more than 99% of all the species that have ever lived on this planet have gone extinct, which might suggest that extinction is the norm. What is unusual is that all the threats that hang over our humanity, nuclear war, climate change, and the sinister novelty of A.I, are all caused by human activity. None of the millions of previous extinctions were the responsibility of the victim species, which mostly succumbed to ice ages, volcanic activity, or planet collisions with asteroids. Might we share a unique role as the only species that could preside over its own extinction?

The good news could be that humans working together could moderate or remove what humans have introduced: nuclear disarmament, major reduction of CO2 emissions, and full regulation of A.I could all reduce threats, though they would need to do so on a planetary level, and our historical record of human cooperation over the millennia does not encourage much optimism.

Since few of us have the means to conduct the above interventions ourselves, what can we do?

It seems to me that the more we can work together to influence our elected representatives (whose vision often seems limited to no more than the next election) to cooperate to take the hard measures needed, the more likely are we to survive.

And meanwhile Transition Marlborough can encourage us to link up with like-minded people at local, county and national level, to help preserve our great countryside and waterways, to grow more of our own food locally, encourage less polluting, more affordable, public transport, and to produce less waste. The new proposal of public funding of People's Power projects across the land may soon give villages, towns and cities the chance harness the resources around them, get paid, and take a small, but direct, role in tackling the approaching crisis.

Barney Rosedale

Our River, Our Story: Waters of Change in Marlborough

Over the past year, the people of Marlborough have discovered something powerful: when it comes to the River Kennet, nobody is powerless.

Members of our community, and by extension organisations with an interest in our river, have been working alongside Erika Peklanska, a PhD researcher at UWE Bristol. This summer, Transition Marlborough, ARK with River Action have shown two river-themed films at the Parade Cinema, which were wonderfully supported by the community.

Erika's project, *Waters of Change: Marlborough's Journey Toward Resilience*, began with a question: how can communities respond to floods and droughts, and what does resilience really mean? Reaching beyond research alone, our local champions explored it through conversations, creative activities and shared learning. Clearly people care deeply about their river. That was the starting point for everything else.

At regular meetings in Marlborough Town Hall, we reviewed different ways of understanding the Kennet. Scientific tools, including river models, helped us explore how the complex Kennet ecosystem works. Models were only part of the picture. They were complemented by people's stories of the past, present, and our hopes and concerns for the future. The models gave us patterns and processes; the stories gave them context, meaning and life.

In August, to celebrate, there was a community showcase, supported by UWE's Centre for Environment, Society and Resilience. It was led by our local champions with contributions from Marlborough Town Council, ARK, Wiltshire Council, the Environment Agency, Transition Marlborough, and local farmers, businesses and residents. Visitors explored local experiences of floods and droughts, discovered the science in accessible ways, reflected on their own relationship with the river, and imagined possible futures through storytelling. People did not simply receive information, they shared their own experiences and left inspired to take small actions for the river.

For me, this is above all a story of hope, and of what happens when science, creativity and community come together. With the waters of change as inspiration, Transition Marlborough will develop the Kennet BioRegion project (see pp:9f - On Bioregions: the history of an idea) an overarching framework for our river and chalk Downlands, helping us relate to the Kennet as a living system we belong to.

As Erika told me, the project "reminds us that communities have agency, that they can shape their own future." Positive change begins with people coming together. On the Kennet, that has already begun.

Erika Peklanska, Richard Pitts

Social Fabric and Sources of Inspiration

The iconic former Dible & Roy textile shop in the heart of Marlborough was recently brought back to life when five local artists transformed part of it into temporary exhibition and interactive installations exploring rivers, water and textile waste.

Access was generously gifted by the new owners, Benbow Investments Ltd, during the building's renovation.

The free event, Source of Inspiration, coincided with Sustainable Fashion Week and World Rivers Day, running 25–27 September and again on 2–3 October. It examined the materials and resources that flow through our lives: where they come from, how we care for them, where they go and what is left behind.

Becky Borthwick, Michelle Smith, Anya Hope Medlin, Sam Ulla Lindsay and Hannah Cantellow used photography and natural, recycled and repurposed materials to explore connections between the local landscape, rivers, textiles and the natural world. The building's own history echoed the theme with artefacts and old, found D&R fabrics creatively incorporated.

The weekend also gently launched a new Transition Marlborough project, Social Fabrics, in partnership with the town's Dogs' Trust charity shop. Together we want to rethink and creatively re-use more of the shop's unsold donations. Central to the installation was a month's worth of clothing and textiles judged unsuitable for sale often only needing a small repair, a wash, a de-bobble or pet hair removal. Without a 'third place' to keep such items in local circulation they are likely exported, ending as polluting rubbish if unsold in already flooded markets.

Those 1,550 items, weighing 450kg, hinted at what probably scales up each year across our nine charity shops to some 48 tonnes and over 160,000 items. That local-scale figure invited visitors to imagine keeping more of this resource circulating in Marlborough, creating more income for charities and feeding local enterprise and connection.

The exhibition also explored our relationship with water and the natural environment. Following a summer of intense heat and drought concern for Britain's rivers, including our own precious chalk-stream River Kennet, runs high. Yet there is still relentless social pressure to engage in throwaway culture. This event gently wove those threads together and invited us to shift how we think and what we do with precious resources.

If the concept of ‘Social Fabrics’ appeals to you and you have some ideas about how to keep these wonderful textile resources circulating for longer in our community, please contact Milly at Transition Marlborough on info@transitionmarlborough.org

Milly Carmichael



Credit Milly Carmichael . See Social Fabric and Sources of Inspiration p.4

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Credit Richard Pitts. See Marlborough: The Town in an Orchard p.10



My Allotment

My allotment can best be termed an organic manifestation of a bountiful dream - or a weed strangled nightmare, depending on time of year, or my mood when I pay it a visit.

Covering just five square meters in the idyllic setting of Stonebridge Lane, my allotment has become a haven to which I can retreat for good company, tranquility and restoration and even a good place to work out my frustrations with a shovel and fork.

In middle age, I feel like I have taken up an allotment at the appropriate time in my life - although I am heartened by the number of younger faces who are joining the community. I am always fascinated to learn from the more experienced keepers as I observe nuanced ways of planting my seeds and tubers. Novel ways to ward off the multitude of pests which seek to destroy my hard work are in evidence whenever I stroll around the site looking for inspiration.

And it has provided a beautiful site to visit with my wife and son. During the recent glorious weather, we have taken to spending the evening at Stonebridge enjoying the sunset and the evening chorus of the birds. With the gentle burbling of the River Kennet in the background, there is nowhere better to relax with a cup of tea, or the occasional fish and chips. The site plays host to a vast array of our local fauna; Sid the grass snake has a reserved dwelling, deer, pheasants, hedgehogs, newts, field mice to name just a few.

One of three allotment sites in Marlborough, Stonebridge has had a turbulent few years. Following the flood in January 2024, there was a risk that run off sewage may have contaminated the ground on the site. That resulted in a fallow year for many as the ground remained too wet to plant anything, and anything that did grow was unadvisable to eat.

However, a year of recovery led to a reinvigorated site and a renewed enthusiasm from the allotment holders in 2025. The community worked hard to tend their own sites but also ensure drainage ditches were cleared regularly, the pond was dug deeper and shared equipment was serviceable. With assistance from the Town Council, there has been a programme of work to tidy up compost heaps and create a picnic area for the sharing of excess produce.

Then in 2026, like the rest of the country, the record temperatures took their toll on seedlings and many other early crops. However, due to the low elevation of the site next to the river, we are blessed that those crops which did take flourished and created a great array of fruits and vegetables throughout the season.

It has been truly heartening to see the sense of community in Stonebridge as produce is shared between allotmenteers and also with Marlborough's fantastic

Community Fridge initiative. If you have not paid it a visit in the George Lane car park, I would encourage you to do so.

But for me, tending to my allotment has become a vital tool to relax the mind. There are no complex problems which cannot be resolved, or at least made more manageable, while gently tilling the soil in preparation for new seeds. No greater joy to be gained than that of lifting a forkful of potatoes from the ground after the tops have wilted. And on the bad days, no better remedy for frustration than ripping out the unwanted weeds prevent the glorious results we work so hard to cultivate.

My allotment has become my open air 'hurricane room'. For those of you who have one too - I applaud your dedication. For those who do not, I thoroughly commend it to you when the time is right. And for the simply curious, please consider paying a visit to any of Marlborough's allotment sites. They are all glorious in their own ways and it gives us great pleasure to share the experience.

Cllr Mark Luson



Credit Richard Pitts

On BioRegions: the History of an Idea

Bioregions and bioregioning grew out of the environmental movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s in California. A key figure was Peter Berg, a former San Francisco Digger who, after traveling across the country and witnessing environmental destruction firsthand, founded the Planet Drum Foundation in 1973.

Berg and his collaborators were searching for a way to "reinhabit" places – and to live as if the land and water actually mattered, rather than treating land as real estate that could be delimited by lines on maps. Their foundational text was titled "***Reinhabiting California***" and coauthored by Berg and the ecologist Raymond Dasmann (Berg & Dasmann, 1977). Their article is widely considered one of the founding moments of "bioregionalism". Dasmann's work on Indigenous peoples and their relationship to both land and ecosystems was a major influence on their thinking.

A bioregion is most simply a region defined by its biology, and very often, by the watershed of the river which flows through the land. The Bioregion is intimately linked to and reflects the lie of the land. In practice, bioregional thinking helps us relate to our river as a living system that we belong to. This naturally enhances our awareness of the way in which the river flows through the land.

In Britain, the term catchment is often employed. This term carries a slightly different meaning to watershed, in that it can refer to an area collecting water for a specific river, reservoir, or aquifer. This may or may not align with a watershed, defined by topography and the lie of the land.

Bioregionalism also implies a shift towards local self-sufficiency. A "***bioregional economy***" is thus one where production is oriented toward the community's needs within the region's ecological limits. This contrasts with the "global economy", which not only ignores ecological boundaries, but often leads to impoverishment of the land.

When we cross the bridge over our river, we might ask ourselves how well we know our watershed? Do we know where the water comes from? Do we know where it flows? As Berg and Dasmann put it, "it involves becoming fully alive in and with a place. It involves applying for membership of a biotic community and ceasing to be its exploiter." That awareness is the beginning of bioregional thinking.

Dr. Pete Jeffs

October 2026

Reference:

Berg, P. and Dasmann, R. (1977). "***Reinhabiting California.***" The Ecologist, 7(10), 399-401.

Marlborough -The Town in an Orchard

It was in 2010 that the idea of a town in an orchard was presented to the Town council, by Philippa Davenport.

She collected a like-minded group to realise the vision of a town among fruit trees. They were determined to do something about the decline in native orchards and to make Marlborough a better place to live. They gained support of the town council, local people, community groups and businesses, raising funds to buy Wiltshire varieties of fruit, mainly apple trees, and set about identifying sites for planting . In 2010 the first trees were planted in the Jubilee Gardens and today there are nearly 100 mature trees for people to enjoy. Other sites are Marlborough Common, Jubilee Field Manton, Farrar Drive, Wye House, Waitrose car Park, St Peter's Church….

How do we benefit from this orchard?

First, biodiversity. Orchards attract birds and we all know that garden birds are threatened and declining. By gradually expanding our orchard we hope to reverse this trend. People are now coming to understand that insects are not just a good thing to have but essential to life so that anything we can do to protect and enhance them is a good thing.

Trees are an important part of town planning to alleviate the impact of extreme heat. An expanding orchard throughout the town will help this. It is an easy low cost part of the solution and can make the town a pleasant place even on hotter days.

The community orchard is spread at sites throughout the town and is cared for by volunteers. Twice a year we get together to enjoy a morning of pruning and maintenance. Everyone is welcome, and training is given, so please do join the team for a fun get together. Contact Gerald (via info@transitionmarlborough.org).

With ever more complex food supply chains coming under pressure we are lucky to be able to pick our own organic fruit straight from the tree. To visit a small orchard in your lunch break, or after school, and pick an apple can enhance an autumn day. Last year we collected masses of apples and got them juiced, some were sold to recoup the costs and some given away at the Community fridge. Others were harvested for home use.

Last year we also developed four walks around Marlborough, connecting orchard sites. See over the page - or TM website

It is much more appealing to shop in a town where there are trees. We all know how important green spaces are for health and wellbeing. A town full of apple blossom in Spring is something to be proud of.

Transition Marlborough has now taken over responsibility for the orchard and works with the town council and all those interested to develop Marlborough as a Town in an Orchard

Rachel Rosedale and Sophie Lowe

St Mary's Churchyard



W3W: handed.taller.motored

The large tree in the bed is a Queen Cox; one of the largest of the community orchard trees. All the MCO trees are cared for by volunteers, in this location they have given the Julia's Late Golden apple tree two crutches to help support her, this poor lady has developed a bit of a lean.

Wye House Gardens



W3W: perused.melts.sardine

The 12 community trees can all be identified by a distinctive label with the apple variety and the tree's sponsor. Chorister Boy (sponsored by the Marlborough Brownies), Bedwyn Beauty (raised by Mr. Stone of Great Bedwyn in 1890) and Burn's Seedling (raised by Henry Burn, head gardener to the Marquis of Aylesbury, in 1839) are all Wiltshire varieties.

Plume of Feathers Gardens



W3W: fondest.jetted.nanny

You will find two Mary Barnett apple trees (sponsored by the quakers and Marlborough Interiors) Mrs. Mary Jane Barnett married Mr. Worthy Barnett in Steeple Ashton in 1920 and planted a pip on her wedding day – raising this dual-purpose apple as well as ten daughters and one son. There is also a conference pear planted in memory of Peter Piper.

Waitrose Car Park



W3W: earl.meanders.dupe

As you enter the car park look to the right and you will see espalier apple trees all along the wall. These are sponsored by Waitrose. The original trees were selected to represent the counties from which the local Waitrose managers came. One has since had to be replaced.

Priory Gardens



W3W: gross.minds.endearing

As you walk through Priory Gardens you will find the first MCO apple tree planted in 2010, a Red Falstaff. Here you will also find one of the last trees planted by Mayor Fogg, who helped get the orchard started in 2010 when he was previously mayor.

St Peter's Churchyard



W3W:talents.pacemaker.intrigued

At the far end of the churchyard, you will find a Bramley's Seedling, a Crab apple, a Berkshire apple called Charles Ross and Julia's Late Golden Apple, which has large pale golden fruits which remain on the tree after leaf-fall like 'Christmas baubles'.

Marlborough Community Orchard Tree Trail

Fruit Route Central

Start/Finish: Town Hall
What3words: chuck.rucksack.welcome
Distance: 2.6km
Terrain: Pavement, gravel path.
Dog Friendly: Yes, if you by-pass Priory Gardens
Wheelchair Friendly: Yes
Coffee stop: Cardinal coffee shop, St Peter's Church where you can also see the map of Marlborough 'Town in an Orchard'

The Marlborough Community Orchard was started with the aim of creating a town within an orchard and preserving traditional apple varieties. There are now over 100 mature trees spread in and around the town. The first apple tree was planted at Priory Gardens in 2010; and 10 rare Wiltshire varieties of apple trees can be spotted around Marlborough, including Corsley Pippin, Mary Barnett, Burn's Seedling and Roundway Magnum Bonum, with 23 other varieties found dotted around town. The trees have been sponsored by local groups or individuals and each has a label attached.
You can discover some of these trees by following the Tree Trails.

Version 1: September 2025



Start and finish at the Town Hall

Fruits from the trees are
free for everyone to enjoy

Tags can be found tied to all
Community Orchard trees

Start:
Walk along side the town hall on Kingsbury Street. At the corner turn right signed St Mary's Church into Patten Alley. Walk through and enter the Churchyard on your right. This is stop 1.

- Continue along Patten Alley, pass down the avenue of pollarded limes, cross the A4 and turn right.
- At the bottom of the hill, pass through the gates on your left and follow the path through the arch between the garages and into Wye Gardens. This is stop 2.
- Pass through Wye Gardens, turn right on Kelham Gardens road, go around the corner and turn right through the covered gateway into Plume of Feathers Garden. This is stop 3.
- Pass through the garden, bear right then left and follow the track to the A4. Turn right along the A4. Use the zebra crossing, follow the road to the left into Kennet Place. Refreshments are available at krumbz cafe.
- Continue along the river using the footpath through to Waitrose car park. This is stop 4.
- Continue through the car park along the river, turn left, cross the river and take the footpath on the right, follow the river. Turn right over the bridge into Figgins Lane and right again into Priory Gardens. This is stop 5.
- Walk through Priory Gardens exit through the covered walkway and turn left onto the High Street. Walk to the end of the High Street and cross into St Peter's Churchyard. Pass around the church and stop 6 is at the far end.
- Walk back along the High Street to finish at the Town Hall or turn left into Hyde Lane and then right onto Back Lane, walk to the end and turn right into Chandlers Yard which will bring you back to the Town Hall steps. **Finish!**

Footprints to Marlborough:

Matt Gow interviews Nigel Briers

1. Where were you born? And where did you grow up?

I was born in Leicester, but I grew up in a village in Leicestershire called Littlethorpe.

2. What was your early life like?

I went to Lutterworth Grammar School after I passed the 11+. My father was in the Royal Marines, but later he went into the building trade, and my mother worked as a dinner lady at the primary school I went to.

3. What kind of work or passion have you followed in life?

I became a professional cricketer at the age of 16 with Leicestershire, but I was still at school for two years, and then I went on to study PE and History as my degree.

4. Had you ever heard of Marlborough before moving here?

I first heard of Marlborough when I was doing my history degree, because I had to do a research project on Stonehenge and it meant I had to drive through the town to get there. I remember the very first time I drove into Marlborough past The Bear and the Town Hall and it felt very special - something just resonated with me.

5. What first brought you to Marlborough and when?

I first came to Marlborough in 1976, when I came for a practice interview at the College but I was already a professional cricketer at Leicestershire at that time. In 1995, when I had retired from my cricket career, I was appointed master in charge of cricket at the College, taught PE and was the development officer responsible for organising open days to showcase the College.

6. Why did you decide to stay and make it your home?

I loved working at the College and that shaped my life a great deal. I enjoyed being part of the school community and also the local community. I have lived just off the High Street for many years and I love walking into town everyday. It is a wonderful place to live. I know lots of people in the High Street which is a nice feeling. I also really enjoy the different restaurants in the town such as Pinos, Dan's and Bunces and I love dropping into the White Horse Bookshop regularly too.



What's On in November

The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale
3rd Tuesday, 2.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. Rupert Willoughby will speak about “Cool Marble! The Essential Guide To Greek Sculpture". The Ancient Greeks invented the human portrait and their sculpture formed the basis of European art. They produced statues of such beauty and realism that men are said to have fallen in love with them. Here is a chance to meet the Ancient Greeks in the raw. Contains nudity! Doors open at 2.00pm, refreshments available. Visitors welcome - £7 on the door, cash or card. For more details see taspv.org.uk

Marlborough Floral Club
5th Thursday 2.00pm Mildenhall Village Hall. ‘Tis The Season’ with Fleur White. All welcome. £6 entry. For more information contact Mickey Graham on 01672 514301.

Concert and Cake – A Musical Miscellany
8th Sunday 3.00pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Different instruments, including voice, in varying combinations. In aid of The Wansdyke Carriage Driving Group RDA (Riding for the Disabled). Tea and cake by donation. Tickets £10 from trishgange@icloud.com

Marlborough Gardening Association
11th Wednesday 6.45pm for 7.00pm Town Hall, Marlborough. ‘All Things Roses’ with Stewart Pocock. Visitors welcome. £3 entry or £15 for annual membership. Tea and coffee available before the talk.

Theology on Tap
11th Wednesday 7:30pm, The Green Dragon**.** Open discussion: Is war ever just?.

Mynt Image Craft Fair
14th Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm Town Hall, Marlborough.

Parade Cinema: Derek vs Derek
18th Wednesday 5.00pm The Parade will be screening a special showing of this film about intensive versus rewilding farming, Derek vs Derek, as part of the celebration of 15 years of Transition Marlborough.

Marlborough History Society
19th Thursday 7.00pm for 7.30pm St Peter’s Church, Marlborough. Alix Booth has been a Professor of Punch and Judy for nearly fifty years. She will detail the history of Punch which goes back into the medieval ages and clear up misconceptions. Guests welcome. Entry £5 (Students free).

Brooks Williams
21st Saturday 7.30pm for 8.00pm St Mary’s Church Hall. Brooks Williams is one of those select few “how on earth does he do it?” artists. He can sing, he can write and being listed as one of the ‘Top 100 Acoustic Guitarists’, he can certainly play the guitar. He slides effortlessly in and out of folk, blues and country. Tickets £20 from Sound Knowledge or from marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk (£1 handling charge)

What's On in November

Pocket Floyd
21st Saturday 6.45pm for 7.30pm Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge, SN8 4EL. An evening of Pink Floyd featuring Dark Side of the Moon. Tickets £22 at www.TICKTS.co.uk/pocket-floyd-marlborough Supporting SMS Foundation UK and Kennet Valley Village Hall.

Moonrakers
26th Thursday 7.30pm St Peter's Church, Marlborough. Four-piece Moonrakers perform sparkling and unique arrangements of traditional British folk songs and tunes as well as their own compositions with harp, cello, whistles, fretted instruments and soaring vocals. Tickets £15 on the door.

Christmas Lights Switch On
27th Friday 6.00pm High Street, Marlborough.

Santa's Grotto
27th Friday 3.00pm – 6.00pm St Peter's Church, Marlborough. Meet Father Christmas and his elves and soak up the festive magic. No need to book, just drop in. Free, but a suggested donation of £5 would go towards keeping St Peter's open and cared for.

Christmas Markets
27th Friday 1.00pm to 8.00pm St Peter's Church, Marlborough (Free entry – donations welcome)

28th Saturday Christmas Market 10.30am to 5.30pm Marlborough College.

29th Sunday Christmas Market 10.30am to 4.30pm Marlborough College. Parking available on both days £2.

School Dates
St John's, Marlborough St Mary's and Preshute Term 2 begins Monday 2nd.

Marlborough College term resumes Sunday 8th at 9.00pm. Exeat 12noon Friday 27th – 9.00pm Monday 30th.

Coming up in December

Marlborough Concert Orchestra's Winter Concert on Saturday, 5th December at 7.30. Venue St Mary's Church, Marlborough. Tickets £15, students £5, under 18's free from Sound Knowledge, online at mco.org.uk or on the door.

Wreath Making Workshop on Sunday 6th December at Julia's House Devizes Wharf shop. £35. See www.juliashouse.org/JHChristmas for all Christmas activities.

Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Carols at Marlborough College Chapel Friday 18th December 6.15pm for 7.00pm. Festive readings, a special performance by Chloe Jordan and Swindon Choral Society choir. Tickets £20 (96p booking fee). Full information and to book, see wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk events

Linda Illsely, What's On Editor

Gardening: The Joys of Owning a Pond

I had not thought of owning a pond in my garden, but when we moved house recently the previous owners had already made one in front of a summer house with wooden decking overlooking the water. I now realise the joys of seeing the wildlife which is attracted to this feature.

In the spring there is the excitement of seeing the frog spawn arrive. But unfortunately, I think the newts, who arrive a little later, are eating this, as we do not see many tadpoles emerging.

We put 20 goldfish into the pond when we arrived, but sadly a heron spotted them from above and managed to get quite a few. Some have survived nevertheless and I think they must lie comatose at the bottom of the pond in the winter months, as we only see them in the summer months when the water warms up.

Around the edge of the pond, I have planted irises and marsh marigolds and in the deeper water we have several water lilies which emerge in the summer.

We see lots of water boatmen skimming the surface of the water and electric blue damsel flies and huge green dragonflies helicoptering across the pond and laying their eggs on the iris leaves.

The birds enjoy the pond as well. We had a couple of mallard ducks last summer who decided they liked the quietness of our pond after the bustle of the canal. They came and went and became quite tame. We managed to feed them with special duck food. We do not know if they had ducklings in our garden, as we never saw them. We called them Donald and Daisy. The other garden birds enjoy having a bath in the shallow end of the pond.

I must say, on a warm summer's evening it is very pleasant to sit on a reclining chair, with a drink in hand, and survey the wildlife activity and appreciate the joys of owning a pond.

Stella Maxwell
Marlborough Gardening Association



Wisley RHS Garden pond.
Credit Hugh de Saram

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Marlboroughpodiatryclinic.com podiatrycare1@gmail.com

Dr Nicholas Parkinson

General Practitioner

Dr Parkinson is taking on a small number of private patients for face to face appointments at Elcot Lane, Marlborough.

To discuss your needs or find out more, please book in for a 5 minute call via his website:

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Nature Notes: Autumn's Golden Light

I'm not quite sure where the year has gone, but November is already here! It can be an overlooked month for wildlife, but there is still plenty going on.

The trees in Savernake Forest are changing colour, with beautiful shades of gold, copper and red. I particularly love those frosty mornings when the low sunlight filters through the leaves and catches the mist hanging between the trees. The forest can look quite magical. After such a hot, dry summer, I wonder how long the autumn colours will last this year.

Amongst the fallen leaves, there are still plenty of fungi to look out for. One of the easiest to recognise is the Fly Agaric, with its bright red cap and white spots, often found beneath birch trees. Another favourite is the Magpie Inkcap, with its striking dark cap covered in irregular white patches, giving it an almost black and white feathered appearance. It is often found growing amongst the fallen leaves.

Then there is the lovely Amethyst Deceiver, a small mushroom with a striking purple colour that fades as it gets older. Boletes are interesting too. Rather than having gills beneath their caps, they have a sponge-like layer of tiny pores which release their spores. Many fungi also have an important relationship with trees, helping their roots take up water and nutrients from the soil.

Down along the river, I keep an eye out for Kingfishers. The young birds are now looking for territories of their own, while the adults are busy defending their stretches of river. You will often hear their sharp, high-pitched peep before you see them, followed by that unmistakable flash of electric blue as they dart low over the water.

Another bird worth looking out for is the

Credit Helen Llewelyn



Savernake Forest



Credit Helen Llewelyn

Magpie Inkcap (*Coprinopsis picacea*)

Credit Helen Llewelyn



Water Rail (*Rallus Aquaticus*)

Water Rail. These secretive birds usually keep themselves well hidden amongst the vegetation, but during winter they sometimes become a little bolder. You are more likely to hear one first, with its extraordinary squealing call that sounds rather like a piglet! They are one of my favourite birds to spot, with a long red bill, slate-grey chest and boldly barred flanks.

November might be quieter than summer, but there is still so much to see if you take the time to look.

Helen Llewelyn

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Family News

Thank You, Peter Noble – Tower and Town Compiler

For over twenty years Peter has been one of *Tower and Town*'s volunteer 'compilers'. That is, he has been one of the arrangers of the prospective material into a format that goes to the printer for publication once a month. He has done this with great skill and willingness several times each year and but now feels it is time to retire.

He is a man of many parts, practical and hands-on in many ways, and full of local and world-wide knowledge and experience, too. *Tower and Town* thanks him for his massive contribution, friendly and cheerful, but unheralded until now.

If you too are computer-savvy and would like to join the Tower and Town compiling team please get in touch with Sarah Bumphrey, our Chairman: sarah.bumphrey@gmail.com

John Osborne



FROM THE REGISTERS

Departed - We pray for the families of:

02/10/26 Stella Mary Harrison (96), George Lane, Marlborough
St Mary's

10/09/26 Gordon Terry Pepper (92), Mildenhall, Marlborough
St John the Baptist,

15/09/26 Colin George Horwood(93), Purcells Court, Marlborough
St George's

07/10/26 Mary Fishlock (84),Aldbourne Nursing Home
St John the Baptist,

08/10/26 Henry 'Martin' Ashby (82), Barrow Close;, Marlborough
St Mary's

Clergy Letter

A fish does not know it is wet. It simply swims in the water all around it. In much the same way, we swim in a culture of consumption. Buying, upgrading, storing and discarding can feel so normal that we barely notice the effect on our souls—or on the non-human world with which we share God's creation.

It's possible to possess so much that our homes can no longer contain it. We open a wardrobe door and clothing bursts out. Our car is on the forecourt because the garage has become a storage barn. Could it be that these blessings, when grasped too tightly, begin to crowd out our walk of faith in Jesus?

Jesus tells a parable about a successful farmer whose harvest is so abundant that he plans bigger barns for all his goods (Luke 12:16–21). His mistake is neither the harvest nor careful planning. It is that his security, imagination and hope have become trapped in what he owns. Jesus' warning is helpfully direct: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).

Autumn is a season of harvest, a time to celebrate God's generous provision. We should be grateful—but also alert. The more we have, the more responsibility we carry, and the more vulnerable we may become to losing our focus on Jesus. Sustainable living is therefore more than an environmental technique. It is a spiritual discipline: learning to receive with gratitude, use with care and share with generosity.

So where is my treasure? One helpful response is simplicity. Clear out what is neither useful nor beautiful. Buy less, choose well, repair where possible and pass good things on. Possibly begin with one drawer, one cupboard or one room. Each small act frees time, money and attention for what matters most, while reducing pressure on the earth's resources and on the creatures and habitats affected by our choices.

There is freedom in an uncluttered faith. When Jesus, rather than possessions, is our treasure, we can relax our grip, resist the fear of missing out and trust the God who provides. We can own less, waste less and give more.

With great blessing comes responsibility—and danger. A fish does not know it is wet; perhaps we do not realise how deeply we are swimming in abundance. May we take Jesus seriously, worship the Giver rather than the gifts, and live more lightly within God's world.

Andrew Bird

A Good Read

The dark nights are here, there's a chill in the air, the mists are rising and it's time to close the doors against the Things that wander abroad at this time of year.

If you fancy a tale of understated horror and impersonal, creeping, nameless menace – well, ladies and gents, I have just the thing. ***The Hill in the Dark Grove*** by Liam Higginson is a really impressive debut novel. The accidental uncovering of a megalithic tomb, a quietly baleful presence on a Welsh hillside, marks the onset of a slowly unfolding story of obsession, possession and – madness? Bewitchment? While the book is probably best categorised as 'folk horror' that doesn't fully do it justice. Weaving through the narrative are a love story and themes of national identity, folklore and myth, the way landscape preserves history, and the transience of things once considered of surpassing significance. And while, as you know, I snort and roll my eyes at 'beautiful writing' – this really is beautiful writing, with wonderfully accurate and evocative descriptions of the Welsh mountain landscape. Do read this book. Just maybe not when you're alone in the house after dark, hmm?

More on the theme of creeping, unnameable malice, and Things which wouldn't dream of being so crass as to actually go bump in night. After ***Thin Air and Dark Matter*** Michelle Paver's ***Rainforest*** is another supernatural, psychological, downright creepy story. A jungle expedition, a man trying to escape his past and – as with The Hill in the Dark Grove – ancient knowledge and indigenous shamanic custom defying modern, western, colonial sensibility. It's weird and unsettling, as is ***House of Splinters*** by Laura Purcell, an eerie Gothic tale which returns to the setting of Purcell's ***The Silent Companions*** (which gave me proper chills. Honestly, I don't like being frightened, I don't know why I'm doing this to myself.)

Now then – have you read Kate Atkinson's latest, ***Our Noble Selves***? And if not, why not? she demanded, bossily. Set in the offices of the Festival of Britain it's funny, moving and detailed, a hugely entertaining and vivid recreation of the earnest, energetic eccentricity of the project. With an espionage-y sub-plot, and a cast of characters comic, touching, and in one case wonderfully grotesque, the novel is ideal if you don't want your flesh to creep this month.

Finally for children, Tom Read Wilson's rhyming picture book ***Prickle Paper's Letter Magic*** about a litter-picking, literate, problem-solving hedgehog, with lovely generous illustrations by Rebecca Bagley, is a delight.

Debby Guest



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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)

(1st Sunday of the month is All-age worship with Children's tea at 4.30)

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)

10.00 am Morning service

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.





Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

Remembrance Sunday, 8th November
The Marlborough Anglican Team will be marking Remembrance Sunday across all three churches, with different services:
9am at St John the Baptist, Morning Worship
10:30am St George's Preshute, Holy Communion
11:30am St Mary's Marlborough, Civic Service (following the Town Parade)

New – 'Awake to God' Services, 10.30am St Mary's
Join us at St Mary's for a new series of creative services where we will look at more contemplative types of worship. This month's service is on 22nd November. All are welcome.

Children/Family Activities

The Ark Parent/ Carer and Toddler Group
Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless Street. Please contact Caroline Philps for more information cphilps2@gmail.com

Energize Saturday Sing – Saturday 12th November
Families are warmly invited to **Energize Saturday Sing** at St Mary's Church on **Saturday 12th November, 2.00pm–4.00pm**.
Saturday Sing is a fun, relaxed afternoon for primary-aged children and their grown-ups, with lively songs, interactive Bible stories, games, crafts and refreshments. Parents and carers stay throughout the session, with tea, coffee and cake available. No charge to attend, although donations towards refreshments are appreciated.
For more information, or to let us know you're coming, please email: penny.families@gmail.com
Whether you've been before or it's your first visit, we'd love to welcome you.

All Age Worship
All age worship for November is on Sunday 1st at 5pm, where we will be praying for those in authority over us, so that we can live peaceful lives – 1 Timothy tells us this pleases God! All are welcome.

Midweek Activities

Welcome Wednesdays
A reflection, coffee and doughnuts every Wednesday, 10.30 am in St Mary's.

St Mary's Women's Group
Thursdays 10 am to 11 am. Join for coffee, chat, Lectio and prayer. All welcome - for more details and dates, email seddonlouise@gmail.com

Men's Fellowship Group
Join a friendly and relaxed gathering for Bible study, prayer, refreshments, and genuine conversation. This group is especially for gentlemen who would enjoy connecting more deeply with others.
Runs on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, at 12noon-1pm at Church Cottage, Silverless Street. Contact Tim Gauntlett at tim.gauntlett27@gmail.com.

News from the Churches

Social Events

St George's Church, Preshute Lane, SN8 4HQ

Friday 20 November: 10.30am - 12 noon
Coffee morning, third Friday of each month at St George's church - please do drop in on Friday 20 November for a free cup of coffee/tea and cake, and plenty of good conversation. A warm welcome awaits.

Men's Supper Club
St Mary's Men's Supper club on Friday 6th November, 7.30pm at the Castle & Ball. Please contact David Chandler if you would like to join.

Emmanuel Church, New Rod Marlborough, SN8 1AH:

[various]@emmanuelmaralborough.org

Sunday morning at 10 am service. Includes a group for children from age 3 to school Year 4, followed by refreshments.

Sunday afternoon at 4 pm service. Includes crèche and Sunday School groups, followed by refreshments (for adults) and a sandwich tea for the children.

Through the week: home groups in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George. Community groups. For more information, see website.

Weekly/one-off Events:

Women's Bible Study, every other Friday in term time (9 October), 10 am-11.30 am. Discovering God's truth in the Bible (onsite crèche available). Email women@...

Emmanuel Church Homegroups, Thursdays in term time, Pewsey 7.30 pm, Marlborough 7.45 pm, Ogbourne St George 7.45 pm. Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Email office@...

Little Friends Toddler Group, Thursdays in term time, 10-11.30 am, Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Free play, singing and story time, refreshments. Email littlefriends@...

Explorers, Fridays during term time, 6-7.15 pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Kids' club for school years 3-6. Fun, games, tuck (50p) and a short Bible talk. Email explorers@...

Friday Nights, Fridays in term time, 7.30-9 pm. Youth club for school years 7-11 at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Friends, fun & faith. Email fridaynights@...

Sparklers, Monthly on Monday, (12th October), 3.45-4.45 pm (Doors open at 3.30 pm) at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Kids' club for years Reception to Year 2. Games, Snacks and Bible Stories. Email: sparklers@...

Rooted, a discipleship group for Y7-9 and Y10-13: Selected Fridays; email for dates, 6-7.15 pm at the Priest's home for Bible study, training and discussion. Fortnightly with food, before Friday Nights youth group. For more details and the location address, please email ruth@...

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Contributions and comments from readers are welcome.

Please send articles and letters to the monthly editor or the chairman, other notices or announcements to the compiler.
All items for the December issue by Tuesday 10th November please.

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