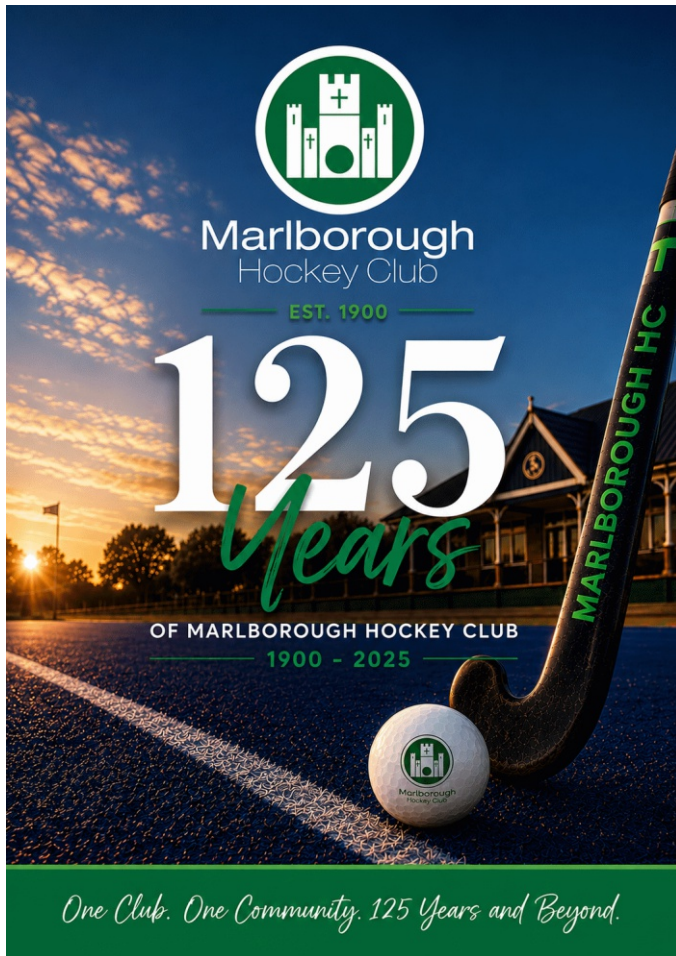


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# TOWER<sup>AND</sup>TOWN

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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



**MARLBOROUGH HOCKEY CLUB**

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**NO. 774 | OCTOBER 2026**

Single Issue: £1

Annual Subscription | 11 Issues: £7

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# TOWER AND TOWN

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## Marlborough Hockey Club

As Marlborough Hockey Club gears up for a new season, it can already reflect on a period rich in achievement. Last season the club marked its 125th anniversary with a celebratory dinner at the Town Hall, bringing together old friends and new.

The celebrations have continued into this summer. Club members Chris Jones and Gareth Playfair made their international debuts for the England Over 50s team at the Masters Hockey World Cup in Rotterdam — and returned home as World Champions. England edged out Australia 3–2 in the final's closing moments, securing a memorable gold medal.

The club's international pedigree doesn't end there. Sophie Fynn, 1st team women's player, is also a current England Masters representative. Already a European gold medallist in the Over 40s category, she sadly missed this year's World Cup through injury. With numerous juniors in county squads and several players involved at regional level, the club continues its long tradition of contributing to county, regional and national representative hockey.

Closer to home, Marlborough Hockey Club prides itself on being a successful, family friendly club with something to offer all ages and abilities. Based at the top class pitches at Marlborough College, the club fields two men's and two women's teams and runs one of the largest junior sections in Wiltshire, with more than 250 young players. A thriving outreach programme supports hockey in local primary and secondary schools. None of this would be possible without the club's fantastic volunteers who organise training, manage teams, umpire and coach.

Formed in 1900, the club celebrates its long standing connections with the College, the town, and Marlborough's farming and business communities. While clubs elsewhere continue to expand, Marlborough Hockey Club has found its niche — living up to its motto, "A club for life", and looking confidently towards the next 125 years.

I hope this edition gives a flavour of the club. If you are passing the College hockey pitches on a winter weekend morning, please do stop and support us.

**Caroline Baynes - Editor**

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**October Edition No 774**

Compiler: Hugh de Saram

Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster-Kemp

Marlborough Churches  
**Together**



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# President's Piece

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I began looking into the history of Marlborough Hockey Club while preparing a short speech for the club's 125th anniversary dinner at the Town Hall, hoping to link its origins with its role in the community from 1900 to the present day.

I imagined a quick race through the decades, finishing with the current season and its awards. Instead, I found myself drawn into a far more fascinating story than I had anticipated — and I certainly failed to keep to my allotted ten minutes.

My starting point was the club's Minute Book, miraculously discovered in an old dusty box. Beginning in 1924 (and sadly ending in 1971), it records officials, matches won and lost, complaints about teas, weather and pitches (nothing changes), and nearly fifty years of club life. I certainly hadn't expected to find women playing a full role in the club by 1924; we had assumed the women's club founded in the 1980s was Marlborough's first, but that was not the case.

The Minute Book led me to newspaper archives to fill in the earlier years. The Marlborough Times of February 1900 reported that a group of men met at the Castle and Ball Hotel and decided to form a hockey club. The Mayor, Mr Morrison, became the first President, with Vincent Head Junior appointed Treasurer and Secretary. The club then appeared regularly in newspaper reports, playing mixed, men's and ladies' matches and

organising well attended dances and social events, often — and appropriately — at the Town Hall.

From the outset, many of the male players were magistrates, councillors and shopkeepers in the town. A large number were Masters or employees of the College. Mr Crosby and Mr Luff of Crosby & Luff - later Crosby & Lawrence - managed to be all three: founder members of the hockey club, and racquets and cricket coaches at the College. Mr Crosby went on to serve twice as Mayor of Marlborough.

It has been fascinating to compare the handwritten AGM reports with the newspaper accounts of the same meetings. In 1926, for example, Miss Flux is reported by the Marlborough Times to have asked whether it was fair that the ladies paid subscriptions while the men did not — a question that does not appear in the club's own record of the meeting!

The redoubtable Miss Flux appears frequently in newspaper reports of the time, as do many of the women players, active in town life, raising money for the war effort, organising concerts and whist drives, and running charities — always with tickets available at Flux & Co on the High Street.

Ironically, as technology has advanced, our records have become harder to trace. Minutes from the 2000s are difficult to locate; many were typed on work computers and never backed up, leaving a gap in the club's history. Match reports

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today often appear only on social media, where they may not be recoverable. The club stopped producing fixture cards in the 2010s, and although results are online, we have lost records of friendly fixtures and club details.

However, it is not all gloom. The club website now provides a focal point for official documents, and we are in touch with the Hockey Museum in Woking. We have begun collecting photographs and

memorabilia from members, along with their stories, for which I am very grateful — and always eager for more. If you can help, or contribute stories or photographs, please get in touch.

In the club's 126th year, gathering these stories highlights how closely its past is woven into the life of the town and those who have played their part in it.

**Caroline Baynes, President**

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## Hockey Hangout

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The premises at 47–48 High Street, Marlborough have been linked with members of Marlborough Hockey Club for almost 125 years — a remarkable thread of sporting and family history woven through one shopfront.

The building was originally home to Vincent Head, Gentlemen's Outfitters. With a Vincent Head appearing in almost every generation, it is difficult to pin down exactly which Vincent was which, but Vincent Head Senior and Vincent Head Junior were present at the club's formation in 1900. Vincent Junior became the first Secretary and Treasurer, and together with his brother William Head, a talented footballer, they played regularly well into the early 1910s. Later generations of the family turned more towards cricket than hockey, but the connection between the Heads and Marlborough sport remained strong.

The fifth generation Vincent Head closed the business in 2003, and in 2010 The Food Gallery, owned and run by Bob and

Nikki Holman, moved into the premises. Their arrival marked the beginning of another chapter of hockey history.

Bob joined Marlborough Hockey Club in the 1970s. In the 1990s he was joined by his children — Rich, Andy and Kat — and in due course Rich and Kat became part of the family business. Bob is well known in the town for his pavement sign puns, but perhaps less well recognised for his sporting ability. He remains a gifted tennis player, having reached Junior Wimbledon, and a strong golfer, currently playing off a handicap of five at the age of seventy. In his youth he was a talented cricket and hockey player, narrowly missing out on selection for the 1988 GB squad for Seoul at the final training session at Crystal Palace Sports Centre. Today he is best known for his atmospheric photographs of Marlborough; photography, and the teaching of it, is his passion, and he has often combined it with sport, capturing many memorable images of the hockey club.

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The Holman sporting tradition continues. Rich has become a lifelong supporter of the club and still plays in the Men's 1s, which he joined in his early teens. He has served as chair, captain, coach and umpire. His sons Eddie and George now play junior hockey, with George, aged eight, starring in the club's U10 team. Kat played county hockey, and Andy remains involved in sport, albeit football, at Devizes.

Under the Holmans, The Food Gallery became early adopters of local suppliers. Prime among these were Berkeley Farm Dairy (run by the Gosling hockey dynasty) and Lacock Dairies (the Doel hockey dynasty). The café grew to be more than a place to eat: it supported parents and players with refreshments in all weathers at the College pitches and provided employment to countless young hockey players — though not without staffing challenges when Saturday morning matches coincided with shifts. In many ways it became an extension of

Marlborough Hockey Club itself: warm, busy and full of familiar faces.

In October 2025 the Holmans left The Food Gallery after 21 years of trading on Marlborough High Street. The business remains in good hands with new owner Ben Massey. Rich has since joined another hockey playing family dynasty at The Ridgeway Barns Wedding and Event Centre, owned by the Ford family — Dennis, Alex and Becky — and works alongside club stalwart Louisa Gosling, who has been part of the business since its inception. Their story may well merit a future edition of Tower & Town.

In its 126th year, the club's long relationship with 47–48 High Street reminds us that Marlborough's sporting life is shaped as much by its people and places as by its matches.

**Bob Holman**

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## Q&A with the Stars

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**Chris Jones, Sophie Fynn  
Gareth Playfair**

Chris and Gareth have just returned from Rotterdam where they represented England in the O/50s World Cup, winning the gold medal, beating rivals Australia in the final 3-2.

Sophie had to withdraw from the England O/45s squad at the same tournament after slipping a disc but already has a European gold medal and has represented England a number of times.

### **1. What is your first memory of playing hockey?**

**Chris**

One of my PE teachers at school in Watford was a keen hockey player and asked me if I would be interested in playing at our local club, West Herts. I started playing there at 13 and I was hooked and have played every year since!

**Sophie F**

I grew up in the Malverns and couldn't wait to start playing after watching my



Credit Bob Holman

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sister play; I joined our local club as soon as I could!

### **Gareth**

I started playing at school when I was 11, on gravel in Belfast where I grew up.



Chris Jones and Gareth Playfair  
Credit Emily Playfair

## **2. What do you love about hockey?**

### **Chris**

It's fast and technical, I found it much faster than football.

### **Sophie**

It requires coordination, bravery, skill, speed, accuracy and the ability to read the game all whilst only being able to touch the ball with a thin stick of carbon fibre – what's not to love!

### **Gareth**

Physicality, speed and being part of a team, plus as I get older the battle of wits and more technical aspects.

## **3. What prompted you to try Masters Hockey?**

### **Chris**

After playing against much younger players in league hockey, I wanted to test myself against players of a similar age. I tried for our regional team, West, and I have now

played for the West for the past 10 years in the O40's, O45's and now O50's age group.

### **Sophie**

One of my Marlborough Teammates suggested I try out for the West regional



Sophie Fynn. Credit Malcolm Ainge

team and it went from there.

### **Gareth**

It was also one of my Marlborough teammates who suggested I try out for the West. I then progressed through to the O45s England squad as a non-playing reserve at the European Championships in 2024 and onwards into playing.

## **4. What's been the best thing about representing England?**

### **Chris**

It's been an amazing experience, putting on the England shirt for our first game in the world cup was special, only beaten by walking out with the rest of the team in the final and singing the national anthem.

### **Sophie**

Three terrifying trials and I will admit to shedding a tear when I received an email saying I had been selected to represent England. I never would have imagined at

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my age that I'd have the opportunity to wear the three lions on my shirt and sing the national anthem! It is such a privilege – every time.

**Gareth**

Definitely beating the Australians in the final. Singing the national anthem and knowing what was at stake made it a very nervy game.

**5. How do you keep yourself fit for international duty?**

**Chris**

I enjoy keeping fit but having the World Cup really gave me a focus to work towards, especially with several pre-world cup training sessions with the squad

**Sophie**

Keeping the body together post 40 has been a challenge; I am now a Pilates advocate, a (reluctant) gym goer and swim at least once a week. I am running again, though more sensibly, and trying to do more functional training.

**Gareth**

A lot of work in the gym and trying to avoid injuries that come along more frequently now I am over 50.

**6. What next?**

**Chris**

Back to playing for Marlborough for the season. It's a different challenge as in the league we play against all ages unlike in the World Cup where we are all of a similar age.

**Sophie**

I am looking forward to getting back on those blue pitches again this season, aiming for the O45s regional team selection at the end of the year. Nine months away from hockey has made me realise how much I miss being part of a team.

**Gareth**

Club hockey, Masters trials for the European Championship next summer—season never ends!

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## School Games Organiser

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Across Wiltshire, School Games Organiser Charlie Wildman leads opportunities for young people to experience the transformative power of sport and physical activity.

Responsible for 43 schools stretching from the Woodford Valley to north Marlborough—Charlie works across all ages and types of schools as one of just five School Games Organisers in Wiltshire.

Every festival is designed to build

motivation, competence and confidence—particularly for those who need it most. By March 2026, nearly halfway through the academic year, Charlie had delivered 34 sports festivals involving activities ranging from traditional sports like football, and hockey to alternatives such as boccia and dodgeball.

Many events focus on multi-skills and non-competitive formats, allowing pupils to simply “have a go.” For some, just

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attending is a major achievement. Getting changed, travelling by coach, and entering an unfamiliar sports centre can be a huge challenge. A standout feature of the programme is the involvement of secondary school pupils as sports leaders. These young volunteers take on responsibility for supporting events, and in doing so, develop confidence, resilience and leadership skills themselves. “In a time where resilience and determination can be lost early, these festivals act as an antidote,” says Charlie. “The leaders thrive on the responsibility.”

While newer sports are growing in popularity, traditional sports remain strong—particularly when supported by local clubs. One shining example is the annual Marlborough primary hockey festival which brought together 180 pupils, supported by 11 student leaders from St John’s School and eight volunteers from Marlborough Hockey Club. Held at Marlborough College, and with both 7-a-side and 4-a-side matches, the festival catered to all levels—from experienced

club players to complete beginners. Despite challenging weather conditions, the club’s commitment has remained unwavering. “Come rain or shine, they are there,” Charlie says. “Their support, along with the training they provide to young leaders, makes this event truly special.” Among more than 50 festivals planned this year, the Marlborough hockey event stands out as a model of collaboration—demonstrating what can be achieved when schools, clubs and communities work together.

Marlborough stands out as the most supportive community across Charlie’s area. Beyond hockey, both the local rugby club and golf club consistently open their facilities for festivals and outreach programmes, providing valuable opportunities for primary school coaching. This level of community engagement strengthens pathways into sport and ensures that more young people can access high-quality experiences beyond the school environment.

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## Juniors

Marlborough hockey club has a thriving junior section, with over 250 current members.

Every Sunday morning from September to April our wonderful volunteer coaches train our juniors (ages 6 to 16).

The club works with other local hockey clubs to provide tournaments for the children to play in, to give them the opportunity to experience matches and

play competitive games.

Supporting our coaches are our young leaders who volunteer to help with the training sessions. Some of these are participating in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme at school and some do it for their own love of the game, inspiring those younger than them.

There is specialist training for the goalkeepers and the club provides all their kit—essential protection against that fast

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flying ball!

The club has had many successful teams who have won the Wiltshire County Hockey tournament and gone on to the regional games. In April, the U14 girls team reached the final of the U14 tier 2 league, playing teams from as far away as Taunton and only narrowly missing out at the final.

As the children progress through the ages many go on to play for the adult teams,

playing alongside those who have coached them as juniors – truly showing the family nature of the club.

Spaces in the junior section are in demand, with many age groups having a waiting list. However, there are some spaces if children want to try hockey – please contact

[juniors.mhc@gmail.com](mailto:juniors.mhc@gmail.com)

**Cath Poole**

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## College Hockey

Hockey has always been a fundamental part of life at Marlborough College. What began as a new pursuit in the mid 19th century has since developed into one of the College's largest sports, with hundreds of pupils playing across the boys' and girls' teams.

Hockey was first introduced to the College in 1874 by Henry Richardson, the Master of the Lower School at the time. A year later, in 1875, Marlborough XI hosted their first ever game. Since then, Marlborough has continued to establish itself as a centre for hockey and enjoyed a long tradition of university hockey success, with four Oxford and five Cambridge blues in 1890.

Since then, hockey has gone from strength to strength. Marlborough can field up to 30 teams across girls and boys, displaying the depth of the programme and the desire of pupils to get involved with this tradition and proudly represent the College.

With the recent arrival of our new Head of Hockey, Mr Willars (a former GB and England international), the programme has entered an exciting new chapter. Recent results are already beginning to display his impact across the club.

2025 and 2026 were particularly notable years for Marlborough Hockey: the Boys' 1st XI competed in the semifinal of the Tier 2 National Plate in 2025, and last year, the Girls' 1st XI achieved their highest finish to date, placing among the top 12 schools in the country. Most recently the U16 Girls' team finished 2nd in the Tier 1 National Final, highlighting the strength of the programme that is evident not just among the first teams.

In addition, this summer the College took two girls' teams on a two-week tour to South Africa. This trip gave the girls a chance to be tested against some high-quality international opponents as well as to create lasting memories on and off the pitch.

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These successes speak to the continued progress and development of hockey at the College. From the first game in 1875 to the 30 teams stepping onto the astros today, Marlborough hockey has come a long way. With this exceptional history behind it and new, exciting players coming

through, Marlborough hockey looks well placed to continue developing for years ahead.

**Scarlett & Sholto  
Hockey Captains**

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## View from the Chair

After over 125 years, the club is used to change, which is just as well because this season the West league structure has changed, creating some imbalance and travelling for our teams, but making it more exciting, with some new opposition, pitches and teas to encounter.

The senior men's sides have new captains. However, it won't feel much different in many ways – Ed Gosling captaining the 1sts has been playing at Marlborough since he was a youngster, encouraged by his dad, Nick, who's played for Marlborough for decades and they both farm locally. New 2nds Captain, Josh Franklin has also come up through our junior ranks as our thriving junior section continues to provide players to the senior teams. There's also the excitement of a new men's coach in Ed Whitworth. Ed has coached the ladies' first team for a number of years and now becomes player/coach for the men. Ed teaches PE at Marlborough College and previously captained Bath Buccs 1st team and so will bring a new level to the club.

There is less change on the ladies' side, with the first team captained again by Loz

Edd and the seconds captained by Emma Davies, and no change in the coaching team of Ed Whitworth and Ed Kendall. However, the ladies have had a more significant league restructure with the 1sts encountering some new opposition, and the 2nds in a smaller league, having to play each opposition 3 times.

We are immensely proud of our junior section with dozens of volunteers coaches, parents and young adults encouraging over 250 children on a Sunday morning to get active and enjoy themselves. Our organisers do an amazing job every year and we are very thankful to all of them, especially Charlotte Dines who takes over leading the team this year.

Finally, I am immensely grateful to Louisa Gosling, our outgoing chair. Louisa's previous career in the army has clearly refined her natural organising skills and she leaves her role with the club in a great place - and big shoes for me to fill.

**Will Hodge, Chair**

<https://www.marlborough-hockey.org.uk/contact>  
[will@hodgeonline.co.uk](mailto:will@hodgeonline.co.uk)



Oscar Lack, 2026 Wilts champion goalkeeper  
Credit Bob Holman



EK Dykes RA Chamberlain AA Bryant R Toole J Sherwood  
C Luxton WJ Osmond JB Macklen O Merrick  
H Billington H Hathaway



Ladies 1st 2025.  
Credit Charlotte Holborough



Goal-Keepers.  
Credit Sarah Kendall



Men's 1st 2025-26. Credit Karen Jones

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# Footprints to Marlborough

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## **'Marlborough Pets' owner Tina Kelly (photo p.25)**

### **1. Where were you born?**

I was born in West London and lived there until I was 11. My family then moved to Wiltshire in the 1980s, where I have lived ever since and where I met my husband and raised my family.

Growing up, we had a much-loved family pet, a Golden Retriever called Robbie, who would happily ride a skateboard alongside me on the way to school, much to the amusement of everyone we passed.

### **2. What passion have you followed in life?**

After college, I worked for several years with Nationwide. It gave me a strong foundation in customer service, organisation, and business, but I always had a passion for animals and the outdoors. When my daughter was born, I took time out to focus on family. As she grew older, I decided it was the right time to turn my lifelong love of pets and nature into a business, and that's how Marlborough Pets was founded. Sixteen years later, the business is still thriving, and I'm incredibly proud of what I've built and the relationships we've developed with our customers and the local community. One of the highlights of my career has also been welcoming my daughter into the business.

### **3. Had you heard of Marlborough before moving here?**

Yes. As a child, my grandparents would often bring us to Marlborough as a special treat, and one of our favourite places to visit was Polly's Tea Rooms. Those visits created some wonderful family memories, which I also continued with my husband on shopping trips to Marlborough, so I already had a real affection for Marlborough long before I came to establish the business here.

### **4. What brought you to Marlborough?**

I came to Marlborough in 2010 to establish Marlborough Pets. I chose Marlborough because it had such a strong sense of community and a vibrant high street that was full of independent, unique businesses. Unlike many other towns that had become dominated by national chains, Marlborough had retained its individual character, and that really appealed to me.

### **5. Why did you decide to stay?**

It didn't take long for me to realise that Marlborough was the perfect place to build both my business and my future. The town has a wonderful community of animal lovers who genuinely care about their pets, and it has been incredibly rewarding to provide the products, advice, and service that local people value. One of the greatest joys has been getting to know generations of local families through their pets—helping people welcome a new puppy or kitten and then supporting them throughout their pet's life.

**Matt Gow**

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# What's On in October

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## **The (almost) Complete History of Britain**

**1st Thursday 7.30pm – 9.30pm** St Peter's Church, Marlborough. Mud, blood and stiff upper-lips! Join the critically-acclaimed Pantaloons Theatre Company on a breathless race through the centuries in this delightfully inventive show that tells the entire story of Britain in under 2 hours. Have you ever wanted to see the life of Henry VIII told as a romantic comedy or the tale of the Spanish Armada reimagined as a light operetta? Probably not, but that won't stop The Pantaloons retelling great moments from the country's past in a variety of surprising genres. Suitable for all ages this performance features live music, audience interaction and wild historical inaccuracies. For tickets see [stpetersmarlborough.org.uk](http://stpetersmarlborough.org.uk)

## **Marlborough Floral Club**

**1st Thursday 2.00pm** Mildenhall Village Hall. Ship Shape and Bristol Fashion with Jenny York. All welcome. £6 to attend. Contact Micky Graham on 01672 514301 for more information.

## **The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale**

**6th Tuesday 2.30pm** Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. Christopher Bradley will speak on Libya Uncovered – Magnificent Leptis Magna, Sabratha and Cyrene. Ancient rock paintings deep in the Sahara show the artistic skills of semi-nomadic traders 10,000 years ago. It was under the powerful Roman Empire that Leptis Magna was the greatest city in Africa when local

leader Septimus Severus became emperor. Many private villas have only recently been uncovered, showing that the 3rd century AD was the golden age of the finest examples of Roman mosaics and art. The arrival of Islam brought new forms of mosaics, Ottoman-influenced mysteries and ornate houses inside the old city of Tripoli. Doors open at 2.00pm, refreshments available. Visitors welcome. £7 on the door.

## **Little Mop Fair**

**10th Saturday** Marlborough High Street. Opening ceremony 12.00 noon.

## **Hungerford's Heritage Festival**

**11th Sunday 10.00am – 3.00pm** Croft Field, Hungerford RG17 0HY. Free entry. For full information see [hungerfordfoodcommunity.org](http://hungerfordfoodcommunity.org)

## **Chris While and Julie Matthews**

**14th Wednesday 8.00pm** Town Hall, Marlborough. Chris and Julie are folk/singer-songwriters whose songs are varied and colourful and draw inspiration from the overtly political to key social issues and real-life human stories. Their vocals and harmonies are sublime. Full information and tickets at [marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk](http://marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk)

## **Big Mop Fair**

**17th Saturday** Marlborough High Street

## **Marlborough Gardening Association**

**21st Wednesday 6.45pm for 7.00pm** Town Hall, Marlborough. National Trust Garden

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# What's On in October

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Avebury with Garry Mumford. Visitors welcome £3. For more information contact [marlbgainforf@gmail.com](mailto:marlbgainforf@gmail.com)

**Concerts at St Peter's Church, Marlborough. For full information and booking links for all 5 concerts see [stpetersmarlborough.org.uk](http://stpetersmarlborough.org.uk)**

**Brilliant International Musicians Series: Judith Choi-Castro (violin) and Jean-Paul Ekins (piano)**  
**3rd Saturday 7.00pm.** Doors and bar open 18.30pm. Judith Choi-Castro enjoys a versatile career performing internationally as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestra player. John Paul Ekins is a concert pianist who has performed across Europe and beyond in some of the world's most famous concert halls, also featuring on the BBC.

**Brothers Broke**  
**11th Sunday 7.30pm.** Doors and bar open 6.00pm. This Irish duo present a musical journey alternating between Bob Dylan and The Beatles.

**An Evening with Kristin Hersh**  
**19th Monday 7.30pm – 9.00pm.** An intimate, solo show from 'the queen of the alternative release'.

**Merchants House 22nd Thursday 7pm.**  
**Halloween and Maleficium: Magic, Fear and Beleaf in 17th Century England** - a fascinating evening talk followed by a candlelight tour of The Merchant's House.

**A Mystical, Musical Samhain Night with AWEN The Bardic Band**  
**24th Saturday 7.30pm.** Doors and bar open 7.00pm. Join this creative troupe of musical storytellers for a mystical evening to mark the ancient Celtic celebration of Samhain.

**The Zoots Halloween Concert**  
**31st Saturday 7.30pm – 11.30pm.** The Zoots will be returning to their home town of Marlborough for their legendary Halloween concert for the first time in 8 years. There will also be guest performances from students of Marlborough Academy of Dance and Drama.

**School Dates**  
St John's, Marlborough St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary Half Term Thursday 22nd – Friday 30th. Term 2 begins Monday 2nd November.  
Marlborough College Exeat 12 noon Friday 2nd – 9.00pm Monday 5th. Half Term 12 noon Friday 23rd – 9.00pm Sunday 8th November.

**Linda Illsley - What's On Editor**

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# Gardening: Putting the Garden to Bed

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I hate putting the garden to bed. All the once-colourful flowerpots around the garden are brought into the greenhouse to overwinter. Shrubs and hardy plants are pruned and some are left for “shape” over the winter months.

I wouldn't say I was a “natural gardener” but, more by luck than design, I have tried to create something of beauty which works in harmony with the area and soil type and is easy to look after and I'm still learning! I also cover the garden beds with a mix of Carol's well rotted horse manure, compost from the household bins and the compost heap. This year we welcomed Luigi, our robotic mower. He has saved hours of mowing. Over the winter he will go into hibernation. My husband suggested that Luigi is “put to sleep”, I decided that was a bit drastic, so “hibernation” it is! Even he cannot cope with the chore of autumn leaves.

We have a large shrubbery which mostly survives the frost pocket we live in. This requires lots of “hacking back” so we use our little trailer and motor up to the recycling centre on a regular basis. Now there is the added problem of climate change thrown into the mix. Our garden looked more like a desert with only spinach and beetroot surviving in the veg patch. We must learn to adapt to our seasons being different.

Credit Marion Gordon-Finlayson

It's a huge learning curve that we are presented with. Let's hope it doesn't prevent the glorious array of daffodils we have in the Spring.

My husband and I have lived in our house in Ogbourne Maizey for 32 years with an acre of garden and beautiful views of the Marlborough Downs. We have a smaller front lawn with a border and a larger lawn which has hosted many memorable parties, our children's weddings and numerous performances by the Miracle Theatre over the last 21 years! Indeed the lovely Catalpa (Indian Bean) tree was only a sapling when I sat next to it at our daughter's 21st and now is a beautiful flowering tree of some 8 metres! But back to the present .... I'm off to trim the hedges now, and wish you happy Autumn gardening.

**Marion Gordon-Finlayson**  
**Marlborough Gardening Association**



# Dianne Mackinder Funeral Service



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# Nature Notes: Season of Mists

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October is when autumn begins to make its presence felt. The mornings have a distinctive chill, mist often hangs over the river valley and in the combes up on the Downs. The darker evenings are drawing in, so my evening walks will have to wait until spring.

Up in Savernake Forest, October brings the arrival of our winter visitors. Bramblings begin to appear, having travelled south from Scandinavia and northern Europe. They often join flocks of Chaffinches, feeding beneath the trees on fallen beech mast. Siskins and Redpolls also become more noticeable, often moving through the treetops in lively flocks as they search for seeds. Listen out for the Siskin's soft, rising "tsu-ee" and the Redpoll's sharper "chet-chet-chet" overhead, as you will often hear these small finches before you see them.

Hawfinches become easier to find during autumn and winter as they search amongst the leaf litter for fallen hornbeam seeds. The largest of our finches, with an unmistakably powerful bill, they are a wonderful bird to come across. In 2022, we had a memorable influx in Savernake, when a flock of up to 30 Hawfinches could be seen feeding on the ground amongst the leaf litter. They can be difficult to hear and spot, so seeing that many together was quite a sight. Hopefully, this autumn might bring another good year for them.

On warmer October days, Red Admirals and Commas may still be on the wing, while Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells begin searching for sheltered places to hibernate through winter. Sheds, garages, outbuildings and hollow trees can all provide somewhere safe and dry. If you find a hibernating butterfly in your house, please don't put it outside. Leave it where

Credit Helen Llewelyn



Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)



Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Credit Helen Llewelyn



Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*)

it is if you can, or move it to a cool, sheltered spot in a shed or outbuilding where it can continue its hibernation. When the warmer days of spring return, it will wake from its winter sleep and be ready to venture outside again.

With winter visitors arriving, butterflies preparing for hibernation and the woodland changing around us, October feels like autumn has well and truly arrived.

Helen Llewelyn

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## Marlborough Church Contacts

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### Rachel Rosedale

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Member, The Religious Society of Friends

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### Methodist Office Coordinator

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office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk

# Family News

**Robin Nelson**, who died peacefully on 21 August, was *Tower and Town's* Nature Correspondent until May 2025. Robin's passionate interest and knowledge was broader than simply that of an ornithologist and it showed in his lively articles. His annual birdwatching course at Marlborough College's Summer School was hugely popular for his good-humoured idiosyncratic leadership "thorough bush thorough brier".

As the College's Director of Music for two decades, he never let up, running the Orchestra, Chapel Choir, Choir tours, House Song Competition and umpteen varieties of musical activity around the school, besides teaching. He invited top-class musicians to the regular Subscription Concerts and ran the Choral Society. Both were immensely popular and attracted wide support locally. After he retired, he

conducted the Swindon Choral Society and performed in the Swindon Railway Centre the cantata he himself composed, ***Atlantic Odyssey***, which celebrated the remarkable migration of the Arctic Tern, combining his two passions: music and birds. His musical taste and expertise was of the broadest sort, as his much-appreciated home-based music courses also demonstrated. A performance of one of his Christmas Carols in the King's, Cambridge annual ***Nine Lessons and Carols*** was a fitting triumph.

We miss his vitality and energy. Swatting his way around a squash court, he was the noisiest player in Marlborough. With a slap on his thigh, things were “Hilarious” and “Terrific” and lots more.

Our thoughts and sympathies are with  
Sally, Giles and Kirsty.

John Osborne

## FROM THE REGISTERS

**Baptisms - We welcome:**

|          |                               |                            |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 30/08/26 | Esme Bowen (Mr & Mrs S Bowen) | St John the Baptist, Minal |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|

**Departed** - We pray for the families of:

|          |                                                                          |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13/08/26 | Peter Michael Macpherson (84), Cherry Orchard<br>North Wilts Crematorium |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|          |                                                                       |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14/08/26 | Jean Mildred Gooch (100), Wye House Gardens<br>St Mary's, Marlborough |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

|          |                                          |                        |
|----------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 25/08/26 | Sarah Hicks (78), Brendoncare, Froxfield | St Mary's, Marlborough |
|----------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|

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# Clergy Letter: What Are We Afraid Of?

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What are you afraid of? How afraid are you? Is your fear rational? Or irrational? Are you afraid of things that might happen? Or things that are already happening?

Perhaps you are worried about climate change. About what kind of world our children will inherit. Perhaps you are worried about immigration. Or how our communities will cope with rapid change. Perhaps it is crime. War. The economy. Housing. The loss of a familiar way of life. Perhaps it is something much more personal.

These questions are worth asking. We are living through anxious times and it is healthy to talk about our fears.

We should not dismiss them. Nor should we assume that every fear is justified. We need to listen. We need to ask questions. We need to ponder and think things through.

And, as Christians, we need to pray.

We can bring our fears to God. We can name them before him. We can ask for wisdom. For courage. For peace.

But there is another challenge: other people are afraid too.

They may be afraid of different things from

us. They may look at the same world and see things quite differently.

Can we listen to them as well?

This matters in a democracy. When people feel their concerns are being ignored or dismissed, they will look for new answers. They will support new ideas. Sometimes they will support new political movements.

That is not necessarily a failure of democracy. It may be democracy doing its job.

Our task is not to make one another more afraid. Nor is it to pretend that difficult things are not happening.

We can talk. We can disagree. We can listen. And we can do all this without ‘othering’ those who disagree with us.

John puts it beautifully in his Gospel: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.”

Perhaps this is where God is leading us. Not to ignore our fears. Not to let them rule us. But to bring them into the light of His love and from that calmer place, to listen to one another, and to Him.

**Chris Smith**

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# A Good Read

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My book of the month is Matthew Sweet's *The Great Dictator*, a biography of Barbara Cartland – remember her? You have to be of a certain age to be aware of this producer of a record-breaking number of truly terrible but enormously popular books with ludicrous and tissue thin plots, a pedestrian and repetitive prose style and guaranteed swooningly happy endings.

Costumed like a Frankenstein hybrid of the Queen Mother and Dolly Parton, Cartland was a seething mass of contradictions and an entirely self-aware, self-created phenomenon. The author was granted access and co-operation by her surviving family and has written a thorough and sympathetic account of his subject, taking her entirely seriously while acknowledging the frequent absurdities with nicely sardonic asides.

Behind the candyfloss exterior was a will of iron, forged as she transcended the obstacles that the C20th threw at her. Born into what could be called the lower-upper classes, business failures and the death of her father in WW1 left Cartland and her mother ruthlessly determined to achieve social status and financial security. Marriage was the obvious route, but despite receiving (she claimed) 49 proposals, and marrying twice, a satisfactorily wealthy, titled and acquiescent husband proved elusive. Never mind – onward! Onward through divorce, war and the death of her beloved

brother at Dunkirk, onward through opposition to her projects as a Conservative County Councillor (she secured a permanent site for Romany travellers), ever onward in the face of scathing reviews of her novels. Onward, promoting saccharine, ethereal romance, unsullied by the sordidly physical, while also, in an advice column, offering highly explicit advice on sex. She embodied the fluffiest form of femininity while being as commercially ruthless as any alpha-male industrialist. Fuelled by alarming quantities of vitamins, sustained by her belief in the occult, blithely immune to criticism or sympathy alike, she was, as Matthew Sweet perceptively shows, a product of her time, tempered by misfortune and tragedy into a woman one almost reluctantly finds admirable, however hard it is to warm to her.

I have a couple of tiny quibbles about the production of this otherwise superb book, illustrations wrongly captioned, and at least one footnote mis-attributed. But I am of course a middle-class, “ham-faced” (fabulous insult!) dull little woman, thus insignificant and ineligible, alas, to be clasped in the strong arms of a handsome Duke and transported, trembling yet trusting, to roseate realms of pure love.

Just enough space left to slip in a quick recommendation for *Drayton and Mackenzie* by Alexander Starritt, warm, comic, dense and mildly heart-breaking, I loved it.

Debby Guest

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# Marlborough Churches Together

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## Usual Sunday Services Times:

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### **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.

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'Marlborough Pets'  
owner Tina and  
daughter Martina.  
See Footprints article  
p.13  
Credit Matt Gow

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# News from the Churches

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## **Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship**

**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 will start on Sunday 27th September and the following dates are Sunday 25th October and 29th 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](mailto:cphilps2@gmail.com)

### **Energize Saturday Sing – Saturday 3rd October**

Families are warmly invited to **Energize Saturday Sing** at St Mary’s Church on **Saturday 3rd October, 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.

There is 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](mailto: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 October is on Sunday 4th October at 5pm, where we will be celebrating Harvest. We will have a Harvest exchange, where you are invited to bring your home grown produce to share and can take something else home with you! 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 [marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk)

## **Men’s Fellowship Group**

You’re warmly invited to join a friendly and relaxed gathering for Bible study, prayer, refreshments, and conversation. This group is especially for gentlemen who attend St Mary’s Informal 5pm Worship and would enjoy connecting more deeply with others.

The group will run on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, at 12noon-1pm at Church Cottage, Silverless Street. If you’d like to know more, feel free to get in touch with Tim Gauntlett at [tim.gauntlett27@gmail.com](mailto:tim.gauntlett27@gmail.com).

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# News from the Churches

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## Social Events

### Men's Supper Club

Feel like having a good dinner with the guys down at the pub? Why not try the Men's Supper club on Friday 2nd October, 7.30pm at the Castle & Ball. Please contact David Chandler if you would like to join.

### Faith on Tap

Do join us for our new sessions of Faith on Tap, at the Green Dragon, Marlborough. Our next session is on Wednesday 14th October at 7pm.

All are welcome to join us for discussions in a relaxed, friendly setting.

### Emmanuel Church, New Road in Marlborough, SN8 1AH

[emmanuelmarlborough.org](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org)

[various]@emmanuelmarlborough.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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto: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@...](mailto:ruth@...)

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# Tower and Town Staff

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|                               |                |                                             |        |
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| <i>News from the Churches</i> | Karolina Bull  | church.news@towerandtown.org.uk             | 512357 |
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Please send articles and letters to the monthly editor or the chairman,  
other notices or announcements to the compiler.

All items for the November issue by Tuesday 13th October please.

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