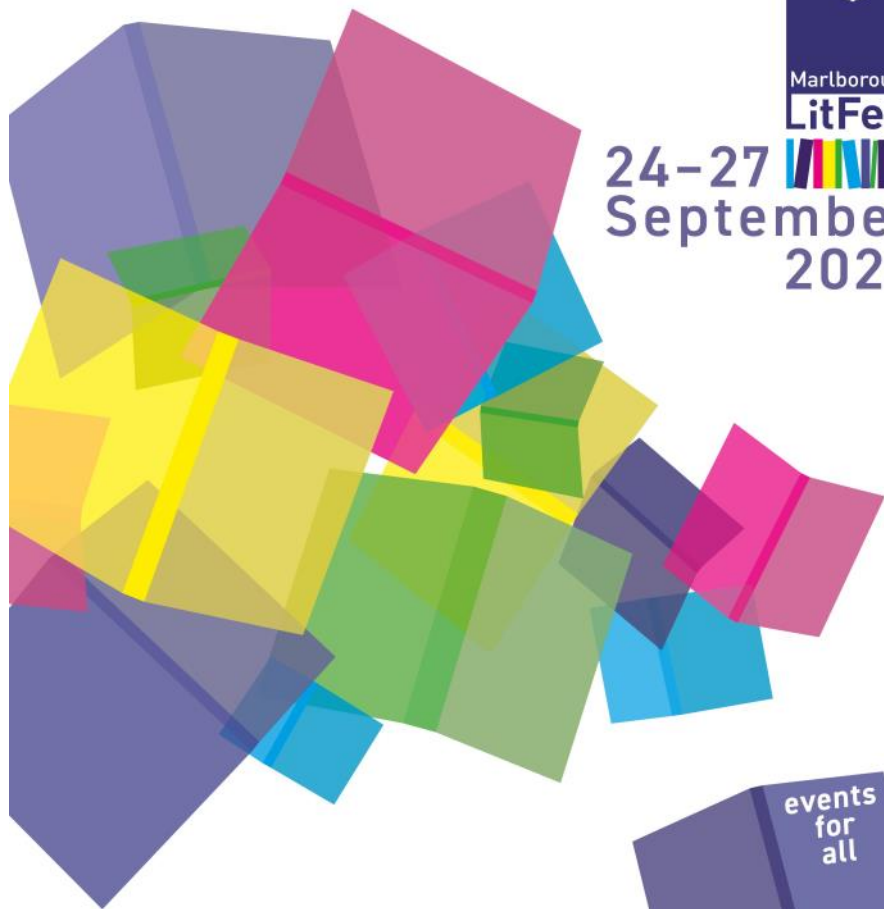

TOWER^{AND}TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



24-27
September
2026



LitFest 2026

No. 773 | SEPTEMBER 2026

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www.towerandtown.org.uk

The Little Gallery

1 The Parade, Marlborough SN8 1NE



SUMMER OPEN 2026

Monday 24 August - Friday 11 September

Celebrate local creativity at our first
Summer Open exhibition.

Artwork Image: Jamie Loyd



BRITISH LANDSCAPES

Friday 18 September - Friday 2 October

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In celebration of Marlborough Lit Fest 2026, come and experience an extraordinary collection of art showcasing the breadth of the British landscape. Discover rural scenes, industrial horizons and vibrant cityscapes through compelling works by James Lynch, Richard Eurich and several contemporary artists from across the region.

Artwork Images: James Lynch and Tessa Newcomb



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September Edition Front Cover:

Marlborough LitFest 2026, 24 to 27 September , Events For All

Credit: Aly Storey

TOWER^{AND}TOWN

Marlborough LitFest 2026

We're so grateful to Tower and Town for hosting this special Marlborough LitFest issue. I hope you enjoy the reviews of some of the books to be featured in our 17th festival and will be inspired to explore more of the 40-plus events on offer.

The 2026 programme has, we hope, something to tempt everyone, from farming to politics, pop music to Tudor theatre, taking in archaeology, art, biography, hares, history, gardening and travel along the way. We have the singing Bishop of St Albans, recently of this parish, and a celebration of HMP Erlestoke's 'Penned Up' literary festival.

Alongside a mix of debut, established and prizewinning fiction and non-fiction authors, there are poetry and sketchbook workshops, a literary walk around Wootton Rivers, open mic pub events and the annual LitFest Big Town Read, Kit de Waal's *The Best of Everything*.

We are very excited about our children's events too. Please take a look at what's on offer to inspire the next generation of readers.

As a charity, Marlborough LitFest just would not be possible without local support. We really value our generous Friends, partners and sponsors, and the amazing band of festival volunteers.

During the festival, it's wonderful to see 'LitFest event here' signs all over town from The Parade Cinema and the Quaker Meeting House to St Mary's Church Hall, The White Horse Bookshop, The Green Dragon, Marlborough Library and St Peter's. You can't miss our banners at Marlborough Town Hall and thanks go to Marlborough Town Council for their support again this year.

In this National Year of Reading the LitFest Committee has worked even harder to spread some literary joy. Huge thanks go to them and to Angus and his team at The White Horse Bookshop for supplying the books that we hope will inspire and entertain you. We can't wait to see you in September!

Mary-Vere Parr, LitFest Chair

**Marlborough LitFest runs from
24 to 27 September. Tickets from:
The White Horse Bookshop,
TicketSource on 0333 6663366 or
marlboroughlitfest.org/tickets**

September Edition No. 773

Compiler: Sarah Bumphrey

Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster Kemp

Marlborough Churches
Together



Frank Tallis: Wise

Frank Tallis offers plenty of reassuring advice for anyone anxious about growing older.

In his new book, *Wise: finding purpose, meaning and wisdom beyond the midpoint of life*, the acclaimed clinical psychologist claims that the key to healthy and happy old age is achieving a sense of “wholeness”. By that, he means possessing a stable sense of self, feeling at ease in one’s body and seeing life as a coherent series of connected events.

If this sounds a bit woo woo, Tallis draws on the greatest philosophers and psychologists for support. Intriguingly, he also turns to neuroscience to suggest that a more “integrated” brain – one in which the left and right hemispheres are better connected – can stave off dementia, a condition that is, in many ways, caused by a process of disintegration and results in profound divisions within a patient such as loss of memory.

In the 1980s, neuroscientists made an extraordinary discovery that seemed to support this theory: autopsies revealed that a group of people who had shown no signs of cognitive decline in old age had biological markers associated with advanced dementia. These individuals

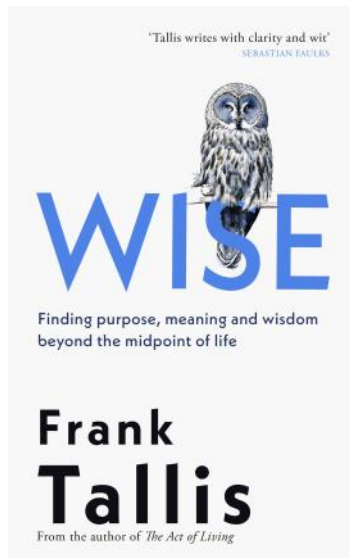
should have been severely impaired in their final years but they were, in fact, in full possession of their mental faculties. Experts remain puzzled to this day by the findings, but there is a theory that they had more integrated brains, thanks to

being stimulated by active imaginations and what’s known as “mindsight” – an ability to understand one’s own thoughts, emotions and memories, as well as empathise with others. “I am not suggesting that integrative psychological practices are a cure for dementia,” Tallis says. “However, most respected medical authorities do recommend ‘protective’ activities and ‘intellectual stimulation’

always features among them.”

And how better to stimulate your brain than hearing Tallis talk more about his fascinating new book.

Jon Stock



Frank Tallis will be in conversation with interviewer Gerry Foley in the Town Hall at 10am on Sunday 27 September.

Kit de Waal: Big Town Read

Sometimes life just doesn't work out. Or that's what Paulette must feel at times, with so much love given and so much loss endured.

Kit de Waal's main character, overflowing with warmth and old-fashioned good sense learned from her beloved grandmother back in St Kitts, just keeps missing out however hard she tries. And try she does, with her son Bird, with her straight-talking Irish neighbour Maggie, with the white boy Nellie a few streets away, and even with his father Frank, who has in her view ruined her life.

The Best of Everything, de Waal's third novel, longlisted for this year's Women's Prize for Fiction, is LitFest's Big Town Read. This means that we hope readers will have had a chance to talk about the book with friends and in their reading groups and come to the event ready to ask the author some searching questions. Copies are available from Marlborough Library and The White Horse Bookshop but look out for them in coffee

shops around the town too!

It's a compelling read with Paulette leading us through the highs and lows of a life dominated by the kindness she readily offers everyone she meets, whether they are the patients she looks after as an auxiliary nurse or the men who don't deserve the care she lavishes on them. There's humour, some devastating plot twists but above all love. Come along to LitFest's finale event to join in the discussion.

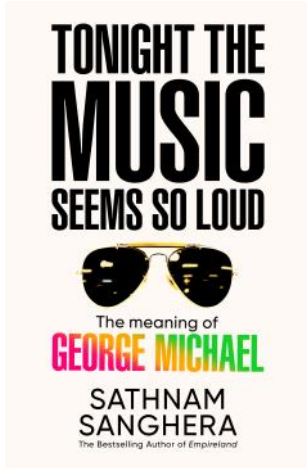
Genevieve Clarke

Kit de Waal will be in conversation with last year's Big Town Read author Susan Fletcher in the Town Hall at 5.30pm on Sunday 27 September.



Credit: Henry J. Allen

Sathnam Sanghera: Tonight the Music Seems so Loud



In an interview on Joy Division's biography *An Ideal For Living*, George Michael sets out his ideas about what makes an interesting and worthwhile account of an artist's career. Does Sathnam Sanghera fulfil Michael's expectations?

In the interview Michael outlines a belief that the purpose of a biography is to provide an honest picture of the artist. Accordingly, Sanghera does well in portraying the career, contradictions and character of Michael in a detailed way. In each chapter he examines another component of Michael's paradoxical persona, from his 'Control-Freakery' to his 'Genius naïf'.

Sanghera contextualises the listening experience of Michael's music and allows

the reader to form their own views on him. Personally, it seemed to me Michael's legacy was to *Listen Without Prejudice*. This meant offering music up as a unitive force.

Michael acknowledges that *An Ideal For Living* is dull due to unnecessary facts. Similarly, the irrelevant statistics Sanghera inserts only serve to reinforce numerically George Michael's popularity, an already apparent fact. I would argue that this does not contribute much to gaining a deeper perspective into the 'meaning of George Michael'.

It is clear that Sanghera is a dedicated George Michael nerd. His humorous and almost fatherly inconsistency of emotion for Michael endears me to both of them. In light of Michael's evaluation of *An Ideal For Living*, the comprehensive, impartial light he is painted in fulfils his criteria. However, any kind of vividly emotional narrative is hard to access amid jumping from anecdote to anecdote. Come along to the event to make your own judgement.

Alice Akers-Douglas
Age 16, St Mary's Calne

Sathnam Sanghera will be in conversation with writer and interviewer Rebecca Fletcher in the Town Hall at 5.30pm on Saturday 26 September.





Lizzie Lewis of Tall Tales Theatre will be performing free events at Pewsey and Marlborough libraries on Saturday 19 September and at The White Horse Bookshop at 10am on Sunday 27 September.

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Children's LitFest

Marlborough Children's LitFest returns this year to celebrate the transformative magic of books.

This year we are marking the National Year of Reading with a programme of talks by authors and illustrators, theatre events, our popular 'Once Upon a Trail' along the High Street, children's craft activities and a showing of *How to train your Dragon*, in conjunction with our partners at The Parade Cinema. Pick up a Children's LitFest leaflet from The White Horse Bookshop or local libraries to find out more.

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a campaign to address the **steep decline in reading for pleasure amongst children, young people and adults**. Reading for pleasure is far more than a recreational activity or an educational milestone. Extensive research from the National Literacy Trust proves that children who read for enjoyment possess broader vocabularies, stronger empathy and

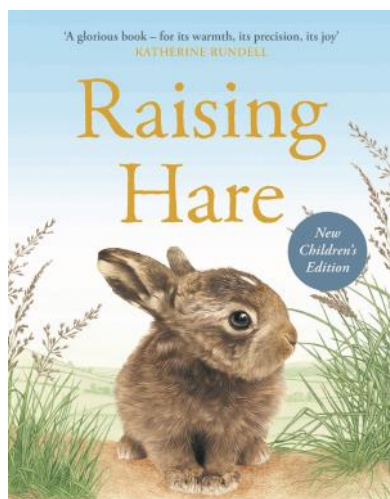
significantly higher levels of mental well-being. Immersing oneself in a book exercises the imagination, reduces stress and expands a child's understanding of the world. However, as digital distractions rise, recent studies show a sharp decline in the number of young people reading in their spare time.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, former Children's Laureate, says "You can't teach pleasure – you can only share pleasure."

Marlborough Children's LitFest aims to share that pleasure through our wonderful weekend programme of events this year. Along with Sue Hendra and her Supertato picture books (see opposite) we have Chloe Dalton back with a children's version of her award-winning *Raising Hare* to delight all the family and comic artist Kev F Sutherland for age 7 and above (see below).

Mandy Pilgrim

Children's LitFest and former teacher



Sue Hendra: Supertato



Sue Hendra's Supertato series of books was always an absolute favourite in my classroom's book corner.

Featuring a caped potato superhero and a hilariously wicked Evil Pea, these action-packed books captivate children with brilliant slapstick humour and relatable, vibrant characters, alongside the fantastic illustrations.

The story is extremely silly, full of laughs and always a hit at storytime. Evil Pea

has escaped from the freezer and is causing trouble with all the other vegetables. Fortunately Supertato is on hand to save the day and, of course, he does so with the aid of a jelly!

There is everything here, slapstick, good versus evil, mild peril and, of course, a happy ending. The illustrations help the story along enormously. Supertato is fabulous, with his super belt around his rather plump middle, and his bandit-like eye mask. Evil Pea is great, and thoroughly evil throughout, with her malicious laugh "Mwahahaha!"

Sue Hendra's event promises giggles galore in a veggie adventure for the whole family. There will be stories, capers and, best of all, everyone will get to make a veggie superhero to take home!

Sue Hendra's event for ages 4 – 7 will be in The White Horse Bookshop at 10am on Saturday 26 September.

Free Events for Schools

Of course, Children's LitFest is not just about the festival weekend. Throughout the year we aim to share the love of reading with multi-schools events where children can meet authors and be inspired by them.

Author Michael Rosen says, "All the time we're talking about literacy and fluency, and how to get children to read – these author visits, they make the leap... You

want to grab that moment of curiosity, wonder, enthusiasm, humour, tragedy, whatever it is."

This year we are hosting free author events for primary schools in Marlborough, Pewsey, Devizes and Calne, featuring authors Ross Montgomery, Onjali Rauf, Emily Randall-Jones and Maz Evans and, for secondary schools, author JJ Arcanjo.

Benjamin Wood: Seascraper

You won't think you need a story about a folk-singing shrimp fisher living with his mother on an isolated stretch of coast until you have read *Seascraper*.

Benjamin Wood's fifth novel follows the daily trials of Thomas Flett, a 'shanker' who scrapes the sand at low tide with his horse and cart, risking his life in a job that is both boring and dangerous.

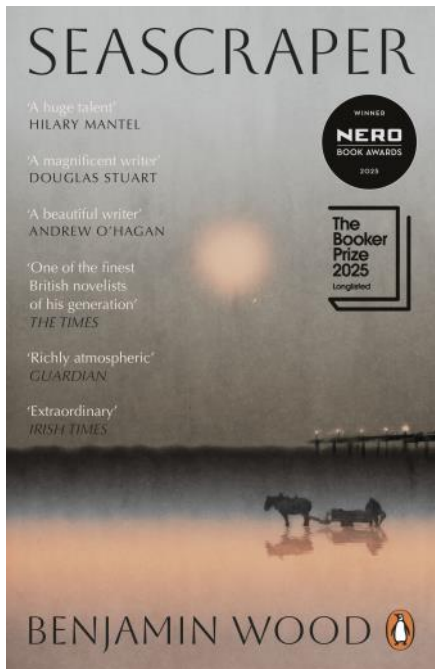
Having been apprenticed by his grandfather Pop at 14, Tom yearns for a more fulfilling life performing folk songs in a local pub and courting a local girl Joan, but lacks the courage for both. Meanwhile his mother entertains suitors in her best clothes in their front room.

The latest turns out to be an American film director named Edgar Acheson who brings with him some Hollywood glamour. Edgar is scouting locations for his new film and recruits Tom as his local guide, thus raising Tom's hopes for a better future. The two soon become fast friends as they set out to recce the beach but it comes with Tom's warning of the treacherous sinkholes which ramps up the tension. Inevitably, Edgar isn't all he purports to be ...

In 2025 *Seascraper* was the winner of the Nero Book Awards and was longlisted for the Booker Prize.

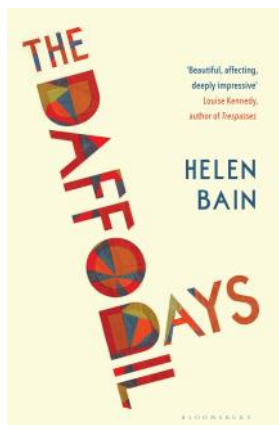
Virginia Reekie

Benjamin Wood will be in conversation with author Jon Stock in St Peter's Church at 10am on Sunday 27 September.



Credit: Marc Sethi

Debut Authors: Helen Bain and Sara Bayat



called home. Told through a cast of different voices, it creates a vivid picture of village life while offering a fresh perspective on one of literature's most fascinating figures. Its strong sense of place and richly-drawn characters make it an absorbing and memorable debut.

Although very different in style and setting, both novels explore the complexities of identity,

Discover two of the most exciting debut novels of the year as Sara Bayat and Helen Bain come together to discuss their acclaimed first books.

Sara Bayat's *Hesket: A Norfolk Haunting* follows a woman whose carefully ordered life begins to shift as unexpected encounters and long-buried emotions start to surface. *Hesket* is a thoughtful and quietly absorbing novel that will stay with you long after the end. What makes it stand out is the way it slowly builds atmosphere, finding something unsettling in everyday moments without ever feeling overdone. Bayat's understated writing style creates memorable characters that feel believable and full of authentic emotion.

Helen Bain's *The Daffodil Days* reimagines the final year of Sylvia Plath's life through the eyes of the rural Devon community she briefly

belonging and how life unfolds within close-knit communities. From different perspectives on village life to the ways memory, relationships and hidden tensions shape everyday experience, there is plenty to spark conversation.

Alice Padfield

The authors will be talking to Dr Nicola Presley from Bath Spa University in St Peter's Church at 11.30am on Sunday 27 September.



Tash Aw: The South

Credit: Tara Sosrowardoyo



Tash Aw is an award-winning author of five novels, three of which have been long-listed for the Booker Prize.

His latest book, *The South*, has been described as “A radiant novel about family, desire and what we inherit, and the longing that blooms between two boys over the course of one summer.” Aw has set out to write an epic saga based on an immigrant Chinese-Malay family over 70 to 80 years. *The South* is the first of a quartet.

The book is set in Malaysia. The date is 1997, a time of acute financial crisis across the whole of Asia. Banks are failing, businesses closing. It’s also a time of extreme weather and the country is suffering from drought. Sixteen-year-old Jay travels with his family to the south of the country where his mother has inherited a run-down farm. There he meets Chuan, the son of his uncle who is managing the farm. Over the course of one intense month Jay becomes close to Chuan and begins to explore his own

identity. In the background, the older generation are struggling. Jay’s father has lost his job and the parents’ marriage is collapsing.

The South covers big themes and has all the ingredients of a great story – love, family relationships, a rapidly changing country, globalisation and the effects of climate change. Tash Aw is exploring much of his own background. Born in Taipei, his family migrated to Malaysia when he was two. He went to school in Kuala Lumpur but spent holidays with his grandparents in the country.

Jan Williamson

Tash Aw will be in conversation with novelist Kate Weinberg in the Town Hall at 2.30pm on Sunday 27 September.



Lottie Delamain: Gardens That Can Save the World

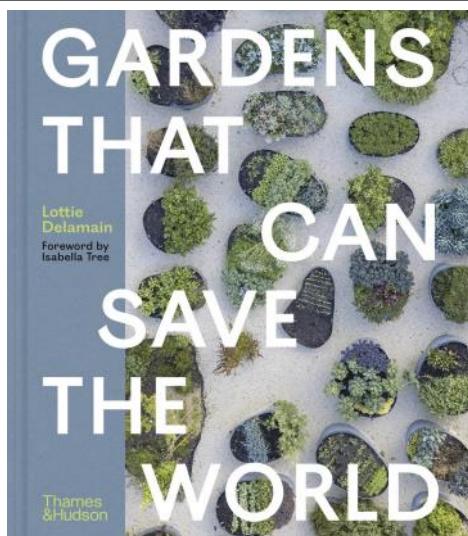
Come and explore the way a garden, or just being in a green space, can change both people and the planet.

In her book, Lottie Delamain shows how good things can happen for the world when people are creative in their approach to their green surroundings.

The five sections of the book, Repair, Empower, Nourish, Heal and Imagine, outline the distinctive ways to nurture our world and our souls. Repairing damage done to the water, empowering communities faced with adversity, nourishing our bodies and minds and healing from stress and isolation are just a few of the benefits of embracing nature.



Credit: Dave Watts



This book reveals how small changes can have a big impact on you, your loved ones and the environment around us. Delamain believes that gardening is a virtuous circle. She says, “the more we start looking after gardens, the more gardens reciprocate and look after us.”

Whether you already have a green thumb or have yet to venture outside, this book will inspire you to harness nature to right the planet’s wrongs and make you feel good along the way.

Joan Pincott

Lottie Delamain will be in conversation with journalist and garden lover Simon Tiffin in St Mary’s Church Hall at 1pm on Saturday 26 September.

Penned Up: Creating a Literature Festival at HMP Erlestoke

Credit: Andy Aitchison



challenging at the best of times: fitting them into the byzantine timetable of a custodial institution, getting authors through security, making sure that an audience of prisoners can be moved to the right place at the right time. To curate a coherent series of author visits, not just once but ten years on

LitFest's links to our nearest prison, HMP Erlestoke, go back to 2019 when we made a donation to support the provision of book bags for children visiting their family members via the charity Friends of Erlestoke.

We also took one of our LitFest authors, Raynor Winn, to talk to the prison's reading group which subsequently took part in our Big Town Read for the last few years. More recently LitFest has donated books to the prison library and supported individual sessions at HMP Erlestoke's annual book festival, Penned Up, featuring Ashleigh Nugent, Jacob Dunne and, back in May this year, Andy West.

All of which makes it entirely appropriate that Penned Up should celebrate its tenth anniversary on a platform at LitFest. Running book events in a prison is

the trot, is an enormous achievement. All credit to Penned Up director and co-founder David Kendall who has run festivals in several other male prisons and in the women's prison HMP Downview.

The roll call of authors who have appeared at HMP Erlestoke is the envy of any literary festival – Nick Cave, Tony Adams, Billy Bragg and this year's Big Town Read author Kit de Waal among them – many of whom were invited and interviewed by prisoners themselves. Joining Kendall will be co-founder Mark Hewitt, former Penned Up committee member Jasper Jamieson and Learning and Skills Manager Elizabeth Williams, together with performance poet Saili Katebe as chair, to tell us how it works.

Genevieve Clarke

Come along to find out more in the Town Hall at 4pm on Sunday 27 September.

Clergy Letter

LitFest transforms our local area into a place of stories, ideas and conversation. This year's festival offers an impressive programme and is a wonderful reminder that books still have the power to bring people together.

As Christians, we believe stories are far more than entertainment. Throughout the Bible, God speaks through the stories of ordinary people – shepherds, fishermen, prophets, widows and children. Their wide-ranging experiences of joy, failure, hope and loss continue to speak across the centuries because they reflect something of our own lives.

Jesus told memorable stories: of a shepherd searching for a lost sheep, a father welcoming home his rebellious son, a traveller helping a stranger in need. These simple parables invited people to look at everyday life in a new way and discover that God's kingdom was often much closer than they realised; and they still speak into our lives today

The best writers do something similar; they explore the questions that matter most. What gives life meaning? How do we deal with suffering? Can people really change? What does forgiveness look like? How do we find hope when life is difficult? Good books rarely provide easy answers, but they encourage us to reflect more

deeply on ourselves, our relationships and the world around us. These are not only literary questions; they are deeply spiritual ones.

A literary festival also celebrates something that has become increasingly precious in our busy world: the art of listening. The Christian faith also begins with listening: listening to God's story, listening to one another, and recognising that each person's life is a story worth hearing. Jesus constantly listened to those whom others ignored and encouraged his followers to love their neighbours by first understanding them. Churches are places where stories are told, too; through Scripture, hymns, sermons and the experiences of ordinary people seeking to follow Christ.

So, if you are heading to LitFest this year, do visit the book sellers, enjoy the authors, and appreciate the conversations over a coffee or a drink, afterwards. Books do come to an end; but the story of God's love for the world—and for each one of us—is still being written. So, maybe you could also ask yourself a few more questions: what story is God writing in my own life? how can I put it into words and whom shall I tell?

Canon Sarah Musgrave
Licensed Lay Minister

What's On in September

The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale

1st Tuesday, 2.30pm

Bouverie Hall, Pewsey.

Hilary Williams (a specialist in 17th century art and lecturer for the Wallace Collection) will speak on 'Rembrandt's "The Night Watch" – The Anatomy of a Masterpiece'. Doors open at 2.00pm, refreshments available. Visitors very welcome - £7 on the door, cash or card.

Marlborough Floral Club

3rd Thursday, 2.00pm

Mildenhall Village Hall.

Hearts and Flowers with Carole Norman.

All welcome. £6 to attend, everyone welcome. For more information contact Mickey Graham on 01672 514301.

Sculpture Exhibition

5th Saturday and ongoing, 10am-5.00pm

The Garden, Avebury Manor.

This autumn the garden becomes an outdoor gallery, hosting a range of beautiful sculptures and art works set against the backdrop of colourful seasonal plants.

Marlborough Gardening Association

9th Wednesday 6.45pm for 7.00pm

Town Hall, Marlborough.

'Healthy Soil, Healthy Plants = Healthy People' with Milly Carmichael. Visitors welcome £3. For more information contact marlbgainforf@gmail.com

Wiltshire Sight

8th Tuesday, 10:00am to 12:00 noon

Quaker Meeting House.

A new monthly social group for blind and partially sighted people in the Marlborough area. More details on p25.

People's Emergency Briefing

8th Tuesday, 7.15pm-9pm

St Peter's Church, Marlborough.

A film screening and discussion on the climate and nature crisis.

Doors open 6.45pm, film at 7.15pm, discussion to follow until 9pm.



Steve Knightley

11th Friday 8.00pm – 10.00pm

St Peter's Church, Marlborough.

Following the acclaim of his recent Winter Yards band tour in 2025, Steve returns with a new concert series:

Sanctuary – Songs from Sacred Places, songs rooted in history, landscape and sense of place. Tickets £22.50 from Sound Knowledge or online at www.marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk

Tarantara Choir

12th Saturday 7.00pm – 9.00pm

St Peter's Church, Marlborough.

The choir will perform in aid of St Peter's Future Fund. Doors open at 6.30pm and the bar will be open until 10.30pm. For tickets see: stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

Tenebrae Choir

20th Sunday 3.00pm

The Chapel, Marlborough College.

This year, Tenebrae, the award winning, professional vocal ensemble, celebrate their 25th anniversary. Renowned for passion and precision, Tenebrae are celebrated for flawless intonation and for performing concerts in spaces that maximise the acoustics and atmosphere of historic venues.

Tickets £25, students £12.50 see:
www.marlbroughconcertseries.org
Enquiries 01672 892566

School Dates

St John's Term 1 begins for Year 7 and Year 12 on Thursday 3rd and all other students on Friday 4th

Marlborough St Mary's and Preshute

Term 1 begins Thursday 3rd

Marlborough College Michaelmas Term begins on Tuesday 8th for Shell, new Lower Sixth Pupils, Prefects and Heads of House. Wednesday 9th for all other pupils between 6.00pm and 8.00pm

Coming Up In October

The (almost) Complete History of Britain Thursday 1st October 7.30pm – 9.30pm
St Peter's Church.

The critically-acclaimed Pantaloons Theatre Company lead a breathless race through the centuries in this delightfully inventive show that tells the entire story of Britain in under 2 hours. Suitable for all ages this performance features live music and audience interaction. For tickets see stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

Linda Illsley, What's On Editor

Family News

Christchurch Methodist Fellowship family recently saw the retirement of its first Minister, or a "Sitting Down" as it is called in Methodist terms, after Revd. Stephen Skinner completed thirty-six years as an ordained Methodist minister. A moving service of farewell was held in St Mary's Church Marlborough where he relinquished the keys to the several church buildings he has been responsible for in the North Wiltshire Methodist Circuit. Many of his immediate, extended and Church family and friends came from across the road and across "The Pond" to join the celebrations.

Stephen and his wife Jane had moved to Marlborough from Kent in 2019 and so we negotiated Covid 19 together during which Stephen started his own YouTube channel and regularly conducted services on line. He also led the congregation to become Christchurch Methodist Fellowship following the sale of our former building in New Road to Emmanuel Church in January

2023. We became a "Church without walls" but continue our fellowship, now worshipping with our Anglican friends in St Mary's Marlborough. We have been wonderfully welcomed and now enjoy a variety of service forms worshipping together.

Stephen and Jane have brought much to our town, throwing themselves into the community with Art and Music at the forefront of their many activities. They leave us with fond memories of happy fellowship together, our best wishes and numerous cards and gifts as they move to Devon, where Stephen grew up a proud Devonian, but he promises to come back and see us in the future.

We look forward to welcoming Revd Andrew Bird of North Wilts Methodist Circuit who will be supporting us in the coming year.

Naomi Painter, Family News Editor

Gardening in the ‘New Normal’

I love my garden but this year it began to feel like a chore. While writing this we’re into our third heatwave and gardening has been reduced to essential watering and perhaps a bit of ‘tidying up’.

Creative jobs have ceased, my June veggie sowings scorched and flowers that usually last for weeks went over in days. With the Met Office advising this is the new normal here’s a round-up of advice to help our plots survive and thrive.

It’s widely agreed good soil holds moisture with the main elements being No Dig and covering your beds e.g. mulching with manure, home-made compost and chop n drop, and sowing green manures in empty spaces. Planting is another key area – what, when, where and how. Beth Chatto’s saying “right plant, right place” was never truer. Some of my plants were real stars. Established lavender, *verbena bonariensis* and hollyhocks flowered well without water as did mediterranean herbs and many grasses. When buying new plants think about their drought tolerance. Try bethchatto.co.uk for inspiration. She developed a world famous garden on a former car park in Essex.

My early crops such as gooseberries, beetroot and lettuce thrived thanks to Spring rain and early harvesting. Summer crops of french beans and sweetcorn also did well with extra water. Large pots of flowers by the back door blossomed benefiting from their proximity to the kitchen tap. In my beds I planted into shallow dips where possible to pool water. Water can also be sent to the roots by cutting the bottom off a plastic bottle and sinking it into the ground next to the plant. On the subject of water, consider water butts and providing fresh water for wildlife wherever possible.

Finally, create somewhere pleasant to sit and enjoy your space. The shady part of my garden was noticeably nicer than the sunny side for both plants and people and they’re not hard to develop. Choose the best location by observing how the sun and shadows fall on your plot at the times you will want to use it. Consider whether there are any existing trees or structures that might form a starting point and from this determine any enhancements or new planting that might need bringing in. Happy gardening.

Debs Schofield

Marlborough Gardening Association

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General Practitioner

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

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www.avichealth.co.uk or

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07508 464318

(He will call you back within 24 hours but please note that if it is a medical emergency call 999 or 111 as appropriate)

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is fun and
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Nature Notes: Signs of Autumn

Credit: Helen Llewelyn



Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*)

Spotted Flycatchers, Willow Warblers and Redstarts are also on the move, making the most of the insects before travelling south.

It is an extraordinary time for bird migration. While some species are leaving us, others are passing through from further north. Wheatears can still appear on the Downs, stopping to feed before continuing towards their wintering grounds in Africa.

Much of this movement can go unnoticed, with birds quietly passing through the countryside around us.

Along the River Kennet, otters have been making frequent appearances recently, and I have been lucky enough to see

September is one of those months when the countryside seems caught between two seasons.

There can still be warm, sunny days that feel summery, but the mornings are cooler, the evenings are drawing in and signs of autumn are appearing, perhaps a little earlier after the hot, dry summer we have had this year.

For many of our summer visitors, September is the signal to start heading south. Swallows and House Martins begin gathering in larger numbers, often feeding over fields or resting along telegraph wires before continuing their journey.



Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Credit: Helen Llewelyn

them on several occasions. They can be elusive, so it is always a special moment when one appears, sometimes giving just a brief glimpse before slipping beneath the water again. As the vegetation begins to die back, hopefully there will be more opportunities to spot them.

Up in the forest, the Fallow Deer are beginning to gather as the autumn rut approaches. Through September, the bucks become increasingly restless and move towards their traditional rutting areas, with the main rut usually beginning in October. Before long, the forest will echo with their distinctive

deep groaning calls as the bucks compete for the attention of the does.

One day can still feel like summer and the next unmistakably autumnal. This year, though, I wonder whether the autumn colours will be rather short-lived. After such a dry summer, many trees are already showing signs of stress and beginning to lose their leaves. Rather than the gradual change we usually enjoy, autumn may arrive and disappear more quickly this year.

Helen Llewelyn

Marlborough Church Contacts

Fr John Blacker

513267; marlborough@catholicweb.org.uk
Parish Priest, St Thomas More RC Church

Reuben Mann

07894 048146
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org
Minister, Emmanuel Marlborough Church

Canon Sarah Musgrave

511286 sarahmusgrave99@hotmail.com
Lay Minister, St John the Baptist, Minal

The Revd Tim Novis

892209; twgn@marlboroughcollege.org
Senior Chaplain, Marlborough College

The Revd Pete Sainsbury

512364; revpetesainsbury@gmail.com
*Team Vicar and Worship Director,
St George's Preshute & The Marlborough
Anglican Team*

The Revd Andrew Bird

01249 736695; ambird05@googlemail.com
Minister, Christchurch Methodist

The Revd Chris Smith

514357; revcjsmith@outlook.com
Rector, Marlborough Anglican Team

Rachel Rosedale

512205; rachelrosed1@gmail.com
Member, The Religious Society of Friends

Karolina Bull - Parish Administrator

marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk
Church Cottage, Silverless Street, SN8 1JQ
01672 512357
Mon-Fri 9am to 1pm

Helen Slater - PA to Rev Chris Smith

01672 514357
teamrectorpa@gmail.com
Mon-Thurs 9:30am to 12pm

Penny Reader

St Mary's Children and Families Worker
penny.families@gmail.com

Methodist Office Coordinator

07564 082092
office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk

Family News

The Rt Revd Jeremy Walsh Rector of Marlborough, 1966-1976

Jeremy Walsh, who was Rector of Marlborough from 1966 to 1976, has died at the age of 96. He is survived by his widow, Cynthia, and children David, Helen and Andrew.

He arrived in Marlborough at a time of change in both the life of the Church and the Town. He achieved a change of the pattern of worship which was moving from the traditional matins and evensong to a "family communion service" in the morning. There was a reordering inside St Mary's and it was during Jeremy's time that St Mary's acquired the beautiful nave altar made by local craftsman Alan Solly and installed on the nave platform.

There were two active churches in the town when he arrived with St Peter's having services as well as being used by the College. St Peter's was used less and less and it was a burden for the PCC to maintain the fabric of both St Peter's and St Mary's. It was decided to make St Peter's a "redundant church" with the ownership transferred to a Trust under the leadership of a former Mayor, Jake Seymour. This has been a great success and St Peter's is now a centre for music, a meeting place and for lectures.

During Jeremy's time there was a coming together of the churches in Marlborough and an "Ecumenical Parish" was established with the enthusiastic support of all the churches and the writing of the Covenant by the Rev Hubert Pitts of the

Methodists. A result of this move was that there was a united Sunday School and Tower and Town became an ecumenical magazine rather than just an Anglican publication

Another important legacy of Jeremy's time in the town is his chairmanship of the Governors of the newly created St John's Comprehensive School which opened in 1975. St John's came about through the amalgamation of Marlborough Grammar School (founded in 1555) and Marlborough Secondary Modern School (opened in 1946). Jeremy, as chair of the interviewing panel, appointed Mary Marston, an outsider, to be the first Head of St John's. This decision laid the groundwork for the successful school we have today.

I was Mayor of the town (1971-1972) during Jeremy's time here and I thought he could have a good conversation on any topic be it "theological", the state of the country's economy or the merits of automatic or gear shift cars!

After his very successful ministry in Marlborough Jeremy went on to be Archdeacon of Ipswich from 1976 to 1986 and Bishop of Tewksbury from 1986 to 1995. Jeremy and family returned to live in Suffolk, at Martlesham Heath, upon retirement.

In memory of a remarkable servant of the Church.

David Chandler

Family News

Richard Allen

11 June 1954 - 11 June 2026

Richard Allen, who made Marlborough his home from 1988, was someone whose kindness, generosity and commitment to others left a lasting mark on our town and on everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Born in London in 1954 and educated at the City of London School, Richard enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the NHS as a healthcare consultant, working in hospitals across the UK and Ireland. Later, he became deeply involved in helping shape health and social care policy, ensuring that the voices of patients, carers and service users were heard. He was always passionate about this role and took immense pride in his achievements within it.

Richard's compassion extended far beyond his professional life. When his eldest daughter was born with Angelman Syndrome, he and his family founded a charity in 1991 to support others living with the condition. As chairman for many years, he dedicated countless hours to helping whole families navigate the challenges of securing support, health access and education for their children.

Marlborough meant a great deal to Richard. He served as an Independent Town Councillor on more than one occasion and was an active member of the Marlborough Surgery Patient

Participation Group, sharing ideas with other members to improve local services for all.

Those who knew Richard will remember not only what he did, but how he did it. Even in the face of life's difficulties, he met challenges with optimism, good humour and quiet determination. He was someone people could depend on, steady, thoughtful and always willing to help. His positive outlook, warmth and ability to lift the spirits of those around him made a lasting difference to many lives.

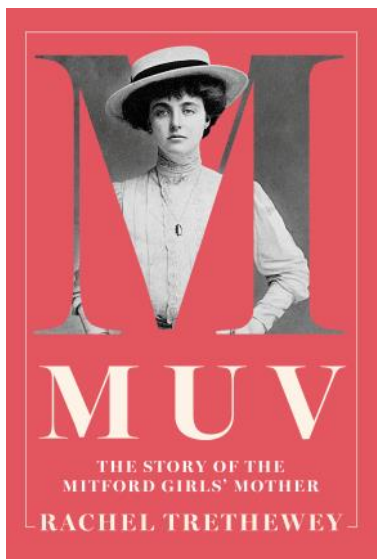
Richard's strength of character, kindness, sense of humour, love of music and sport (particularly Swindon Town!) will live on in his children and grandchildren, and in the memories of the many people whose lives he touched. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and the Marlborough community.

Jonathan and Alison Allen

In July two significant **Wedding Anniversaries** were reached: on 1st **Gill and Peter Morgan** with a Blue Sapphire (65 years) and on 16th **Peggy and Norman Dow**, a Diamond (60 years). Congratulations to both couples who enjoyed celebrating with their respective families.

Naomi Painter
Family News Editor

A Good Read: Muv



There have been many biographies of the Mitford sisters but this is the first full biography of their mother, Lady Sydney Redesdale, known to them as Muv.

It is essentially a mother's story, exploring what it was like bringing up six exuberant girls – Nancy, Pamela, Diana, Unity, Jessica and Deborah. She often had to sort out the chaos left in their wake and did so without fuss or complaining. She once said whenever she saw a headline beginning with 'Peer's Daughter' she knew one of her children had been in trouble!

How could these exceptional daughters have sprung from such seemingly ordinary parents? In reality, Sydney, was far from ordinary. She was arguably the

original Mitford girl from whom her daughters drew much of their self-confidence, strong will and extremism.

Her relationship with them highlights the generation gap that developed after the First World War between the 'Bright Young Things' of the 1920s and their Edwardian parents. Trethewey not only catches the atmosphere of life in the interwar country house but she also reminds you that it was a period when people were taking sides between the huge political movements – communism and fascism. Sydney and her children were all serious women who believed in their own way that they could make a difference. This took them away from their sheltered lives and in the end caused a split in the family. Sydney found herself on the wrong side, which had devastating consequences for her marriage, her relationship with two of her daughters and her reputation.

I think you will enjoy this new perspective of the Mitfords.

Virginia Reekie

Rachel Trethewey will be talking about her book in the Town Hall at 1pm on Saturday 26 September.



Credit: Poppy Jakes

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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

4:30pm (1st Sunday of the month) All-age worship with Children's tea

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 & 4.00pm Worship (every Sunday)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the college chapel

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

Wedding - We congratulate:

01/08/26 Claudia Joan Rollings Jardine and Lucas Ethan Thompson.

St Mary's, Marlborough

Funerals - We pray for the families of:

16/07/26 Joyce Chapman (88), Baylie Acre, Marlborough St George's , Preshute

05/08/26 Rosemary Clarke (79), Town Mill, Marlborough St George's , Preshute



Wiltshire Sight is launching a new monthly social group for blind and partially sighted people in the Marlborough area.

Venue: Quaker Meeting House, The Parade, Marlborough

Our first session takes place on **Tuesday 8 September from 10am-12 noon** and we'll be celebrating with tea, cake, and an opportunity to meet the Wiltshire Sight team and others living with sight loss in your local community.

The group is free to attend and new members are always welcome.

News from the Churches

Emmanuel Church

All are welcome to join us every Sunday for our weekly church services on New Road, Marlborough:

- At 10am our service includes a group for children from age 3 to school Year 4, followed by refreshments.
- At 4 pm our service includes crèche and Sunday School groups, followed by refreshments (for adults) and a sandwich tea for the children.

In addition to our Sunday services, we also offer various activities throughout the week for children: **Sparklers, Little Friends Toddler Group, Explorers and Friday Nights.**

We also hold **Homegroups** in **Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George**, as well as community groups and **Women's Bible Study.**

Rooted, a discipleship group for Y7-9 and Y10-13, on selected Fridays from 6-7.15 pm at the Priest's home for Bible study, training and discussion. For **dates** and the **location** address, please email ruth@emmanuelmarlborough.org

For more information and updates on our events, please visit our website at emmanuelmarlborough.org.

Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

New: Reflective Services, 10.30am at St Mary's, monthly starting on Sunday 27th September - creative services where we will look at more

contemplative types of worship.

New: 5pm Sermon Series - Her Story, God's Glory: Women of the Bible looking at Eve, Ruth, Deborah, Esther, Mary, Martha and more!

All-age worship, Sunday 6th September

Children/Family Activities

The Ark Parent/Carer and Toddler

Group Mondays, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall. cphilps2@gmail.com

Energize Saturday Sing, Saturday 12th September, St Mary's, 2-4pm. A fun, relaxed afternoon for primary-aged children and their grown-ups, with lively songs, interactive Bible stories, games, crafts and refreshments. For more details, or to let us know you're coming, email: penny.families@gmail.com

Midweek Activities

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

St Mary's Women's Group, Thursdays, 10am to 11 am. Coffee, chat, Lectio and prayer.

Men's Fellowship Group, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, 12noon-1pm at Church Cottage, Silverless St.

Coffee Morning, St George's, Preshute Lane, Friday 18 September, 10.30am - 12 noon. On the third Friday of each month, do drop in for coffee/tea and biscuits, and good conversation.

Social Event: Men's Supper Club: Friday 4th September, 7.30pm, Castle & Ball.

For more information and updates on our events, email marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk

Listening for God, Living by the Spirit

This September, St Mary's is offering two opportunities to explore what it means to hear God and to grow in the life of the Holy Spirit.

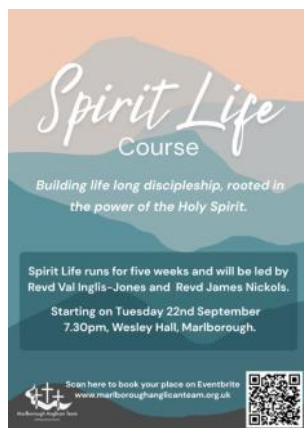


On Saturday 19 September, we welcome Paul and Becky Harcourt for *Learning to Hear God's Voice*.

Jesus says, 'My sheep follow me because they know my voice' (John 10.4) – but what might that mean in practice? How might we become more attentive to God, and how can we discern what we are hearing?

Paul has been Vicar of All Saints Woodford Wells, Essex, for 26 years and served as National Leader of New Wine England from 2016–2023. He and Becky have considerable experience of helping people listen to God, both in their own church and internationally. Their teaching combines experience with an honest understanding of the challenges and richness of everyday life.

The day will cost £7 and booking is via Eventbrite.



Then, from Tuesday 22nd September for five weeks *Spirit Life* will explore what it means to live more fully in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Rev'd Val Inglis-Jones and Rev'd James Nichols will look at subjects including inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives, speaking in tongues and praying for healing. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions, discussion, prayer and practical exploration.

You may be new to these ideas, or simply curious to go deeper. Either way, these events offer space to ask questions, discover more about Christian faith, and consider how God might be at work in our lives today.

The course is free, but booking is required via Eventbrite

Tower and Town Staff

Chairman	Sarah Bumphrey	chairman@towerandtown.org.uk 16 George Lane, SN8 4BX	516862
Advertising	Matt Gow	advertising@towerandtown.org.uk	
Distribution	Sue Tulloh	distribution@towerandtown.org.uk	288912
Subscriptions	Peter Astle	4 Laurel Drive, SN8 2SH	515395
Treasurer	Peter Astle	treasurer@towerandtown.org.uk	515395

Production Teams

October

Editor	Caroline Baynes	oct.editor@towerandtown.org.uk
Compiler	Hugh de Saram	oct.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk

November

Editor	Richard Pitts	nov.editor@towerandtown.org.uk
Compiler	Peter Noble	nov.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk

Every Month

<i>What's On</i>	Linda Illsley	whats.on@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>News from the Churches</i>	Karolina Bull	church.news@towerandtown.org.uk	512357
<i>Family News</i>	Naomi Painter	family.news@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>Books</i>	Debby Guest	books.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>Nature</i>	Helen Llewelyn	nature.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>Gardening</i>	Grace Hoskin	gardening.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	

Website, searchable article archive <https://www.towerandtown.org.uk>

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All items for the October issue by Tuesday 8th September please.

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