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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

NUMBER 692 MAY 2019



WATER

Water is universal in that it is the essence of life itself; and that it is central to civilization, culture, faith, and the underpinning of a future hydrogen economy through a possible breakthrough in its efficient splitting into its hydrogen and oxygen components.

The idea behind this “water” themed edition is to celebrate the universality of water through a tapestry of diverse information. In this sense I trust that you will agree with me that the authors have responded eloquently to the challenge by enlightening us with delightful and diverse details. Their efforts include Sumerian water irrigation in Mesopotamia, (Nasrat Adamo); Japanese angle on water, (Hugh de Saram); drought in Iran, (John Osborne), and the question of faith, (Janneke Blokland). I have also taken this opportunity to complement their efforts by penning articles on water as a time metaphor, heavy water, and political/historical events in the vicinity of the Elbe river. Moreover, I would like to thank the authors for sharing with us their thoughts, and extend my gratitude to Nasrat Adamo for agreeing to write for us all the way from Sweden.

These contents are balanced by invaluable local information about art, books, plus family and church news which I am sure will delight many of our readers. Relevant contributors as well as the chairman and staff responsible for this community product are much commended.

Raik Jarjis, Editor

Front cover: Raik Jarjis

Sumer: The land where civilization had begun

by Nasrat Adamo

In the long history of mankind, it is very interesting to note that Man ‘*Homo Sapiens*’ first appeared in Africa 200,000 years ago where climatic conditions were favorable, while large parts of North America, Northern Europe and Asia were covered with ice sheets. The last Glacial Maximum over these parts was about 26,000 years ago and deglaciation in the northern hemisphere only commenced about 20,000 years ago. The humid period began 14,800 years ago in North Africa, and the regions that are known later on as the Sahara and the Arabian Peninsula were wet and fertile and aquifers were full. In northern Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) 10,000-9,000 years ago cultivation of barley and wheat began. At first they were used for beer, gruel, and soup, eventually for bread. Between 8,200 and 8,000 years ago a sudden decrease of global temperatures led to drier conditions in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, so rapid migration from these parts led to the increased settlement in the Mesopotamia/Fertile Crescent region around 4000 BC. The twin Rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, with their abundant waters, supplied the needed water for agriculture, and the rich fertile valley formed by their sediments accelerated the advancement of irrigation, (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The Historic Map of the ‘Fertile Crescent’

Sumerians, whose origin is not settled, had inhabited the lower Mesopotamian valley around 4000 BC. They did not only invent irrigation as we know it but also were the builders of the first world civilization and saw to the emergence of urban life. This civilization had already flourished when the Egyptian civilization began in 3100 BC, followed by Indus River valley civilization early in 2600 BC. It was the Sumerians who had developed the oldest form of writing known as the “Cuneiform” around 3200 BC, thus triggering the beginning of recorded history. We may say, therefore, that anything before that time is called “Prehistory”, which justifies the title of the book “History Begins at Sumer”, written by the world authority on ancient Sumerian language and literature Samuel Kramer.

The Sumerian Civilization was based on irrigated agriculture. The first successful efforts to harness the flow of water on a very large scale were made in Sumer. The people built cities and temples and dug canals which are the earliest of the world’s engineering works. These people also fought over water rights and agricultural land, and irrigation was extremely vital to them. Flooding problems were more of a challenge here than in Egypt because the Tigris and Euphrates were much swifter than the Nile and carried much more silt. This resulted in rivers rising faster and changing their courses more often in Mesopotamia, and the Sumerians had to solve much bigger hydraulic problems than did the Egyptians.

The processes leading to Sumerian civilisation cannot be understood except as creative adaptation to the priceless resources of the Tigris and Euphrates waters which led to this civilization. The vigorous later traditions continued to build on the assured food supply ensured by the two rivers.

Growing in wealth, the Sumerians had the leisure time to develop their cultural and religious life, and their scribes documented on clay tablets essays, prayers to the gods, poetry and myths. The Epic of Gilgamesh, one of their greatest literary works, has many stories parallel to those in the Bible such as that of Adam/Eve and Noah’s flood. In technology, they learned how to obtain copper from ore and to make bronze. They traded food, cloth, and items manufactured from raw materials, such as timber, copper, and stone. Their merchants travelled up the Tigris and Euphrates to trade with the people of Anatolia and the Mediterranean coast. They also traded in the Persian Gulf for items from further east. For solving complex surveying problems related to cultivated land they developed multiplication tables, trigonometry and geometrical exercises in which the Pythagorean Theorem finds its roots. The Sumerians also believed that the gods owned the land so it was farmed by the temple staff or by farmers who paid rent to the temple. Rents and offerings paid to the temple supported the poor. Slavery was the outcome of military campaigns, but even locals could become slaves to pay debts. Slaves could work extra hours and use any savings to buy their freedom.

For the Sumerians, successful agriculture was a matter of life and death; they needed to know exactly when to plant and harvest. So they followed the cycles of the seasons and lived close to the natural rhythms of planets which made them masters of astronomy. The need to maximize the yield of the land and produce the best crops encouraged the development of effective irrigation and cultivation procedures. In this, they needed to invent and manufacture all the equipment and tools required to fulfil the intended tasks and to use available resources such as wood, bitumen, leather and the iron, the production of which they had already

mastered. In summary, the Sumerians were one of the great nations of antiquity to whom humanity owes a huge debt.

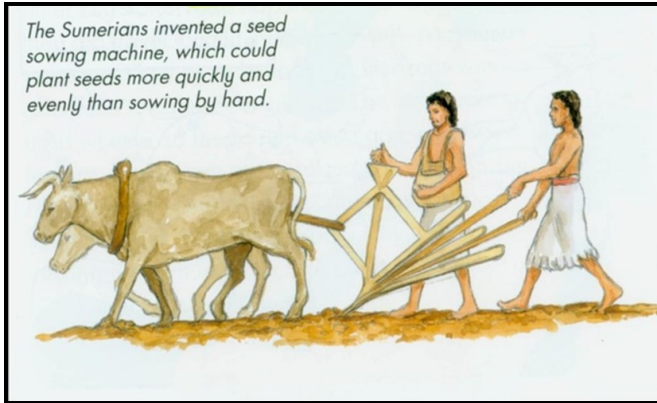


Figure 2: A Plough and seeder of the type used by the Sumerians

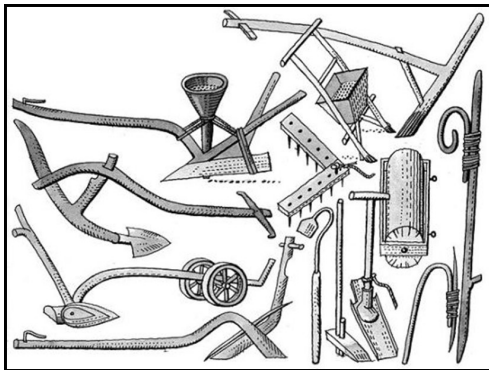


Figure 3: Tools and equipment used in Sumerian agriculture

Nasrat Adamo is a specialist in water resources, irrigation and dams. He is the former Director General of Dams and Reservoir Organization in Iraq. Educated as an engineer in Iraq and the UK, he is now based in Sweden. Nasrat is also responsible for numerous technical publications and several books. He is presently writing a book on the history of waterworks and agriculture in Mesopotamia.

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Japan has an interesting relationship with water. For one thing, although like Great Britain it is an island, it was late in becoming a seafaring nation. James Clavell's famous book *Shogun* contrasts the global range of a shipwrecked British mariner with the shore-hugging ways of his Japanese rescuers. Japan itself, with its four main islands, from north to south, of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, tends to be steeply mountainous, its rivers short and rapid. With frequent earthquakes, sparkling streams may be instantly transformed into raging torrents that trigger mudslides. Even worse is the threat of tsunami – Japanese for 'great wave' – such as the one that broke through the concrete defences of the Fukushima nuclear plant.



That's the downside. The glorious upside is the hot-spring bath – the '*onsen*'. Of all the civilised things that man has invented, the *onsen* has to be one of the very best. As in every country, for hundreds of years few houses had their own bathing facilities; people went to the public baths. Natural hot springs make Japanese public baths, their *onsen*, a luxury of the highest order, with the accompanying cleanliness a centuries-old cultural norm. Everyone goes, even though every house now has its own bathroom. It's a key social activity. A friend of mine, head of a secondary school, goes every day with his wife and daughter. And it's a matrix for superb, beautiful architecture, with subtle use of rock and bamboo, light and shade, sound and silence. My best experience was a couple of days spent with my wife at an *onsen* hotel at the foot of Sakurajima, the active volcano rising out of Kagoshima Bay in the south of Kyushu. This *onsen* was open air, with just a few rocks separating its steaming waters from the open bay. And it's not just humans who enjoy *onsen*: at the famous tourist spot of Nikko, the local monkeys have claimed some of the natural hot pools for their own evenings out.

Japan's other glories are its temples and gardens, where water again plays an integral part in their carefully planned beauty. The Hasedera temple in Kamakura scintillates with water channels full of multi-coloured carp; at Tokyo's Asakusa (pronounced 'asaxa') temple, the same. On every hillside, water is carefully channelled to prevent flooding, but wherever possible it also becomes a feature, a means for beautifying the environment and delighting in nature.

It's a complex relationship that the Japanese have with their water: a source of enormous danger but at the same time an opportunity to create great beauty and luxury.

“Ab Chesmeh -ye- Zendegi Ast” or “Water Is The Source Of Life”

In 1950 four Oxford undergraduates went on an expedition to Persia to look for a species of sightless fish that was rumoured to inhabit the country's underground aqueducts. Their adventures were written up by one of them, Anthony Smith, who later became a prominent science journalist and TV presenter, in an amusing travelogue entitled *'Blind White Fish in Persia'*. They failed to find the fish, though Smith discovered one on a return visit in 1976 and brought it back to the Natural History Museum in London, where they named this newly-discovered species after him.

The underground water channels that they explored, called *qanats* in Persian, are the traditional means of bringing water from sources in the mountains to towns and villages in the plains for domestic use and most importantly for agriculture. I have come across one which is 60 km long and was constructed 2400 years ago. In a country where 60% of the land is arid, these man-made water channels 'make the dry places green'. It was estimated in 1950 that up to half the male population of the countryside was engaged in excavating and repairing the tunnels and access shafts of the *qanats* to keep these vital channels open. But things have changed.

In the last half century in Iran, with a doubling of the population, decreasing rainfall (despite the amazing countrywide precipitation and flooding at the end of March), and poor government water management, 30,000 villages have been abandoned and their inhabitants have migrated to already overcrowded towns. There have been anti-government protests at the increasingly severe shortage of water. The construction of 600 dams in the last forty years has not provided a satisfactory solution. The regime has blamed foreign powers for “stealing our clouds”.

Of the countries of the world that will be suffering 'extreme water shortage' in 20 years' time half are in the Middle East, and of all the industrialized nations in the world Iran, arguably, faces the most severe outlook. In many countries which are far from self-sufficient and rely on increasingly expensive imported food supplies there is the prospect of an even greater movement of people away from the countryside and increasing civil unrest.

As we have been reminded recently in our own press, this country, too, should be addressing the business of providing adequate supplies of water in an era when there is, and will continue to be, less available and an increased need.

(Writing this, I owe a large debt to a recent article by Prof Afshin Shabi of the University of Bradford in the Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs.)

Time is Like a River: Raik Jarjis

The character of the six years old Little Prince of the Terraces in 1956 Mosul (Iraq) was introduced in the May 2018 edition of Tower & Town, (Awakening), pp 8-9. This second instalment is narrated by the boy himself, and it is again laced with some scientific annotations. It unfolds in the early spring of 1957, a noted annual time in Mosul which is nationally described in Arabic as Um-AlRabe'ain, (Mother of Two Springs). It is also the time of the year when excess of water downstream of the river Tigris is generated by the thawing of snow in the Taurus Mountains that separate the Mediterranean region of Turkey from the central Anatolian plateau. The setting for the present narrative is Mosul's old metal Bridge which consists of two footpaths physically separated from a central path for the traffic of animals and vehicles. The bridge was constructed during the post WWI British Mandate of Iraq as a replacement for the Ottoman pontoon connecting the old Mosul quarters, developed on a cliff that overlooks the Tigris, with the east bank where Nineveh and Nabi Yunis, (Arabic for tomb of Jonas), are located.

Baba, (Dad), and I have just arrived half the way across the northern footpath to look upstream when I settled my arms and chin upon the bridge railings whilst baba stood by my right shoulder. Here some sad thought crossed my mind. If time, as baba once said, is like a fast river that we can not stop or swim against, then I shall not be seeing him again down the stream. But as thoughts were drifting through I perceived that the local tumult behind me was fading away. Here, my field of sight unconsciously started to narrow and I sensed the bridge moving steadily forward against the flow of the river. I was now at last sailing back in time!

Revisiting my Bridge over Troubled Water

And eventually March 2019 came along when I journeyed back 'in my mind' to the same spot on the bridge to try travelling back in time again to find baba. But as I once more narrowed my field of sight and the ambient noise began to recede I was stirred by the sight of many drowned children floating swiftly past the pillars of the bridge. And in those moments of awakening I looked up left at the old Mosul cliff and discovered that the cliff dwellers had long gone. And then I looked over my right shoulder to where my 'Bridge over Troubled water' once stood, and I found out that baba is no more. *(In March 2019 a ferry capsized upstream from the Mosul metal bridge. Over a hundred people, mostly women and children, drowned in the spring water of the Tigris. Old Mosul, including the cliff dwellings, is currently uninhabited as the 2017 battle to dislodge the Islamic State from Mosul brought utter devastation for the city.)*

Mackerel Sky over Telemark: Raik Jarjis

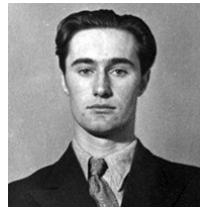
Details of key events can surprisingly come to light through tapping into some overlooked linking. This is the framework adopted in this article in which I aim to breathe life into an overlooked heavy water linking from when the World was at war. Welcome to the real world of network science and complexity, firstly popularised through fiction by the 'Six Degrees Separation', (John Guare 1992), and the 'Butterfly Effect (as in The Sound of Thunder)', (Ray Bradbury 1942).

On 21 October 2018 the living legend of Telemark was finally claimed by history at the age of 99; and it is his own history that is here narrated for the first time through the prism of the small World in which action somewhere could shape destinies elsewhere. The product is a story that revolves around two seemingly unrelated protagonists, who belong to different generations, and yet linked through water-related events in 1932.

Harold Clayton Urey, (1893-1981), was a son of small town, pre-industrial America; he once told colleagues that the first time he saw an automobile was at age 17 in rural Montana. After graduating from high school, he taught in small country schools in Indiana for three years, before working his way through the University of Montana. His original intention was to study psychology. He actually majored in zoology, combining it with chemistry courses. During WWI he worked as an industrial chemist, and then entered graduate school late in life at age 28.



The Norwegian Joachim Rønneberg, (1919-2018) grew up in Ålesund, a shipbuilding town in north-western Norway; and remained living with his parents as a young adult whilst working for a fish exporting company.



Why 1932?

The year 1932 is considered special in the annals of nuclear physics; and its events subsequently proved life changing for the then 13 years old Joachim Rønneberg.. The events include neutron and atom splitting discoveries at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, plus the discovery of deuterium, (heavier hydrogen isotope whose nucleus comprises 1 proton plus 1 neutron), by our first protagonist who was by then Professor Urey of the University of Columbia in New York. These discoveries merited Nobel Prizes, including Chemistry (1934) for Urey.

Why Heavy water

Good science is more about curiosity, and that was the primary motivation that led to the deuterium discovery by Harold Urey. However in order to appreciate the enormity of this I have to remind you that a normal water molecule, H_2O , consists of two atoms of hydrogen bonded to a single oxygen atom. Similarly, the bonding of two atoms of the heavier deuterium with one atom of oxygen forms a heavy water molecule, which can be also called deuterium oxide D_2O . Moreover, bulk heavy water is defined as water containing predominantly D_2O molecules. Now it so happened that later on heavy water, which can be distilled from sea water, proved to be vital for the production of nuclear weapons

This finally brings us to a significant juncture in the unfolding of our story; and that is the 1935 commencement of commercial heavy water production at the recently commissioned Rjukan plant in southern Norway, (then the world's largest hydroelectric power plant).

When War Came to Ålesund

As a young man Joachim Rønneberg was still living with his family whilst employed by the fish export company at Ålesund. Then his world fractured when the Germans advanced on Norway and became occupiers by 4 April 1940. Within two months the armed resistance collapsed, and resentment of the occupier grew. Ten months later, this led the 20 years old Joachim Rønneberg, to join eight friends on an escape to Britain using a fishing boat. Armed with his clear moral compass, self-control, and physical fitness, he then passed difficult tests and managed to get recruited for the Special Operations Executive, the secret organisation that Churchill had set up to conduct sabotage missions behind enemy lines. Based in Cambridge-shire, he underwent rigorous training and was promoted to a trainer. One day in December 1942 he was summoned to London. He was to select, train and lead a team of five on a secret high risk mission in occupied Norway. The exact purpose of the mission was not disclosed.

Decision to Destroy

As WWII raged there were growing debates within the scientific and political circles about the capabilities and intentions of German nuclear research, including efforts to secure heavy water supplies from the Norsk hydroelectric plant (named Vemork) near Rjukan within the Telemark region in southern Norway. This brought Churchill onto the scene and a decision to destroy the plant was made.

Special Moment at Telemark

Joachim Rønneberg was eventually briefed on operation Gunnerside to place explosive charges on the massive water electrolysis chambers of the Rjukan plant, and his team started training in earnest on a model based on drawings secured by British Intelligence. Members of the team were convinced that this would be a one way mission but they were consoled by the fact that they were in it together. Then the mission day arrived and the RAF plane circled high above the Telemark Mountains. The six parachutists, camouflaged in white smocks, were then dropped off just after midnight on 17 February 1943. However they soon found out that they were in the midst of a storm in temperatures of -20°C and some eighteen miles off target. Nevertheless, the team persevered and eventually rendezvoused six days later with the reception committee of two before setting off at 8pm skiing through the pine forest that leads to the ravine where the hydro plant nestled on the mountainside. They arrived exhausted at 11:45pm, worked out a strategy, and then left their radio operator behind and proceeded to slide down the opposite wild, windswept mountainside, and then to swim across a freezing river in order to reach their target. When the 30 seconds timer went off they were on their way to safety well before the Germans found out. The sun came up at 6am whilst they were in the mountains. "It was a mackerel sky," said Rønneberg. "It was a marvellous sunrise. We sat there very tired, very happy. Nobody said anything. That was a very special moment."

The raid was successful and although 3,000 German soldiers were dispatched to search the area for the commandos, all of them escaped; five of them skied 400 kilometres to neutral Sweden.

Closing Curtains

Over seventy years later a day came along when the true leader made his final departure. Having survived all the members of his team, Joachim Rønneberg finally passed away aged 99 in a nursing home on 21 October 2018, a legend in his lifetime. Not a small feat for a boy from Ålesund who was only 13 when heavy water first came to light, who became a hero at 24, and who carried with him till the end a steadfast moral compass, "People must realise that peace and freedom have to be fought for every day."



Joachim Rønneberg (Aged 90)

Phoenixes by the Elbe: Raik Jarjis

The river Elbe is a major central European river that rises in the northern Czech mountains and passes Bohemia before entering Germany where it eventually flows into the North Sea northwest of Hamburg. Of interest here is the German region of Saxony which is close to the Czech border, and where the Elbe winds its way past two cultural centres; the capital of Saxony, Dresden, and the capital of porcelain, Meissen.

Widely known as the Florence of the Elbe, Dresden is a renowned cultural and technological centre that benefits from stunning natural surroundings. Historically recognised as one of the most beautiful European cities, the Allies' carpet bombing and the rise of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) weakened its status but never destroyed it. This fact did not escape the young Russian official despatched to Dresden on his first foreign assignment in the mid 1980's. He and his young family enjoyed exceptional German formative years which ended painfully for them when on 5 December 1989 demonstrators came out in Dresden, and Moscow went silent. The name of the young KGB official was Vladimir Putin.



'Our man in Dresden' was now 'Our man in Moscow': that's how Graham Greene would have seen it, and it is presumably how the KGB saw it too. And it followed that on a fine October day in 2006 two risen phoenixes stood contemplatively by the Elbe. The first was Vladimir Putin on an official state visit as President of Russia, gazing at his old patch, and the second was Dresden's Baroque church, the Frauenkirche, celebrating its rebuilding after succumbing to the fire-storm of incendiary bombs on the night of 13 February 1945. The former a new symbol of a new Russia, the latter a resurrected symbol for the Florence of the Elbe.

(The Frauenkirche remained a pile of rubble until the demise of the GDR. Sorting of the rubble started in 1993 and the rebuilding was completed in 2005.)

What's On

Regular events

Every Monday

7.30pm: Christchurch. Marlborough Choral Society.

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

Every Tuesday

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

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

Every Wednesday

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

12.30pm: St George's, Preshute. Teddy Prayers & Picnic. A special service for U5s & carers, followed by a picnic lunch. (*1st Wednesday*)

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

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

7.30-9.30pm: St Mary's Church Hall. Marlborough Community Choir.

Every Thursday (or some Thursdays)

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

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

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

7-8.30pm: Wesley Hall, Oxford St. Hangout & Devotion. Youth Club.

Every Friday

10-12 noon: Christchurch

Every Friday and Saturday (1

10am-4pm: 132 High Street Museum. £3 (u 16s free).

Every 2nd Saturday

10-12 noon: Library. Marlborough Association. Drop-in advice

May calendar

1st (Wednesday)

7.30pm Wesley Hall, Oxford St. New members and guests

2nd (Thursday)

2pm Minal Village Hall. Floral Club. 861279.

5th (Sunday)

3pm Marlborough College. Southbank Sinfonia. £20 (u 16s free). 892566.

6th (Monday)

11am-3pm Bushton Manor. & Plant Fair. £2, in aid of

8th (Wednesday)

7.45pm Wesley Hall, Oxford St. Marlborough Association. Talk by Victoria. 'Most out of your Garden'.

12.30pm 40 St Martins. Wesley Hall. Lunch. 514030.

11th (Saturday)

9.0am - 6.0pm Town Hall, Mildenhall. 8pm Marlborough College. Marlborough Folk-Roots. with support from Richard

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Art Exhibition (see p.17)

Memorial Hall.

Concert: Show of Hands,
d Shudell. £22.50. 512465.

12th (Sunday)

10.0am - 4.30pm Town Hall, Art Exhibition (see p.17)

13th (Monday)

2.00pm Kennet Valley Hall. Marlborough
Embroiderers'. Talk by Val Toomes: 'Textile
Journeys'.

14th (Tuesday)

6pm The Merchant's House. Spring Drinks for
Volunteers, Staff & Trustees.

16th (Thursday)

11am-3pm The Merchant's House. Cake Stall.
7.30pm St Peter's Church. Marlborough History
Society. Talk by Clare Mulley: 'Eglantyne Jebb –
Founder of the Children's Society who taught in
Marlborough, for whom there is a Blue Plaque on the
Public Library'. Guests welcome £5.

18th (Saturday)

9.30-11.30am Wesley Hall, Oxford St. Gardening
Association Plant Sale.
7.30pm St Peter's Church. Concert: Katharine Gowers
(violin) & Simon Crawford-Phillips (piano). Brahms &
Enescu.

19th (Sunday)

7pm St Peter's Church. Tales of Afghanistan: an
evening of storytelling by Oxford Storytelling Circle.
In aid of Afghanaid. £12.50 from WHB.

20th (Monday)

11am Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton.
Lecture by Antony Buxton: 'William Morris: 'The Art
of Life & the Life of Art'. Guests welcome £7.
Membership Secretary:01793 840790.
7.30pm Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge. National
Trust Association. Talk by Terry Gilligan: Aldbourne
Bell Foundry. £4 non members.

22nd (Wednesday)

7pm St Peter's Church. More Music at St Peter's. Marcus Corbett, Ben Cipolla & The Hub-Caps give you a night to remember! £5 from Sound Knowledge.

24th (Friday)

St John's Academy: End of Term 5.

7.0 for 7.30pm The Merchant's House. 'Security in the Age of Information Incontinence' - Bill Egerton (see p.21)

25th (Saturday)

Marlborough College: Prize Day & Start of Half Term.

26th (Sunday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Concert: An-Ting Chang (Piano). £10 (£8 members of St Peter's Trust).

28th (Tuesday)

7.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. The Arts Society Pewsey Vale. Lecture by Zara Fleming: 'The Tiger in Asian Art'. Visitors welcome. £7 phone: 07775 683163.

Outstanding Concerts in St Peter's Church

Saturday 18 May 7.30pm

Katharine Gowers (violin) and Simon Crawford- Phillips (piano)

Katharine and Simon are both internationally acclaimed.

Their programme will include music by Brahms and Enescu.

Sunday 26 May 7.30pm An Ting Chang (piano)

An Ting played in the 2017 Brilliant Young Pianists series to great acclaim.

Her programme will include music by JS Bach, Chopin and Schumann.

Tickets at £10 from the White Horse Bookshop or Sound Knowledge.

WANTED: outgoing and enthusiastic volunteers to support children aged 4 to 11 taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge in libraries this year from 13 July to 7 September. The aim being to support children to continue reading throughout the summer holidays. Last year over 9,000 children took part in Wiltshire and many say it has made a real difference to their reading.

The volunteer role involves registering children, supporting them in their reading and giving out prizes.

Application forms from your local library. Closing date 10 May 2019.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries-childrens-area-summer-reading-challenge>



Marlborough Players present

'Entertaining Angels'

by Richard Everett and directed by Simon Coates
Marlborough Town Hall

Thursday 23rd to Saturday 25th May at 7.30pm

A funny, warm and poignant play centred on Grace, the widow of a recently deceased vicar. Having been on her best behaviour for years, even as she grieves for her husband, she revels in her new found freedoms., but her missionary sister starts skeletons rattling in their closets that force Grace to question everything she once believed and felt.

Tickets: £10 from the White Horse Bookshop, Marlborough High Street ^[L]_[SEP]

Online: www.wegotickets.com/MarlboroughPlayers

Enquiries only (no ticket sales): 07470 362723



**For our 90th Anniversary year Swindon Choral Society
presents**

'Atlantic Odyssey'

by Robin Nelson

*A cantata using music and visuals to tell the story of the
remarkable bird, the **Arctic Tern***

Saturday, 25 May Performance at **STEAM, Swindon SN2 2EY**

With professional orchestra and soloists

Tickets £20

For further information and ticket purchase please visit www.swindonchoral.org.uk

Marlborough Arts Society (founded 1949)

celebrating 70 years

Spring Exhibition in support of Wiltshire Air Ambulance

Marlborough Town Hall

Saturday 11th May 9.0am - 6.0 pm

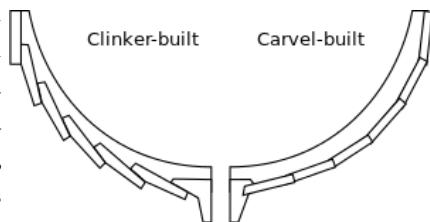
Sunday 12th May 10.0 am - 4.30 pm

Paintings, prints, cards for sale by award winning artists at affordable prices

A Good Read recommended by Debby Guest

When he became a father, for the second time, and later in life, Jonathan Gornall decided, rather randomly, to construct a traditional clinker boat for his daughter, a genuine labour of love and a concrete (well, wooden-planked) symbol of his aspirations for her. **How to Build a Boat** documents

the process, but of course it's more than a record of how a 'soft-handed, desk-bound modern man' painfully started to master the skills needed to create a vessel that the Vikings would have recognised. It's about forgiveness and acceptance of failure, about (finally) growing up. And metaphors about putting out to sea, bold adventure, steering your own course, following your own star, all the things that



parents hope for their children. After 300 pages of sweat and blisters I do so hope that Gornall's daughter doesn't turn around one day soon and say 'Daddy, I really want to be a glider pilot'.

I have a bad habit of rolling my eyes and sighing when presented with books that re-write classic literature, so I wasn't terribly enthusiastic when presented with **The Silence of the Girls** by Pat Barker. It's a re-telling of *The Iliad*, from the point of view of the women who are taken as slaves and concubines, trophies of war. Sigh. But I told myself 'it's Pat *Regeneration*' Barker, it must be worth the effort'. And so it is, and it's no effort at all. Not a 'light' read – couldn't be, given the subject matter -

but immensely readable. Nothing's perfect, there are things I could criticise if I wanted to be nit-picky, but this column is about recommendation rather than serious Lit Crit, and this is a book I'd mark very highly, and which I plan to read again soon.

It's obviously 'Debby Eats Her Words' month, because another classic re-write that I snorted and swivelled my eyes over has turned out to be delightful. **Becoming Jo**, by Sophie McKenzie is an updating of *Little Women*, and I'm enjoying the way the author has caught the spirit of the original, while transposing the setting to C21st South London.

Clergy Letter from Janneke Blokland

A Question of Faith

‘Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty’ – John 4.10

In the human quest to find extra-terrestrial life, life outside the earth, the search for water has been crucial. NASA’s motto in the pursuit of extra-terrestrial life has been ‘follow the water’. Why? Because, as far as we know, liquid water is essential to all life on earth, and therefore we assume it may well be essential to life outside our planet as well.

Given the fact that we cannot live without water, it is no surprise that in most world religions, including Christianity, water has a major role to play. It can be a threat: both gods and creatures have been thought to hide in seas and lakes, representing the dangers that people experience at sea. The power of gods and God has been shown in having power over water, such as the parting of the Red Sea and Jesus calming the storm.

Water also is the symbol of purity and healing. Just as we clean and refresh our bodies with it, also through ritual our souls can be cleansed and made whole; Baptism exemplifying this in the Christian tradition. Another famous example is the water that flows out of the spring in Lourdes, or the Zamzam water in Mecca, which is claimed to have healing power for those who drink it or bathe in it. However, in cases of these ‘healing miracles’, often the claim is made that it is only the spiritual wholeness of the person that is achieved, the physical recovery being a consequence of this.

For some of us, an understanding of the connections between the physical and the spiritual, can diminish the power of ritual and worship, and ultimately persuade us that God Himself is a product of human imagination. But what if it is the other way around? If these connections are not obvious because we made them, but instead are obvious because they are part of the fabric of the life that God created.

This by no means implies a literal reading of any creation story, but an acknowledgement that the world in which we live has both a natural and divine order. The natural order we can see all around us, in the universals of life, such as our need for water. The divine order we can discern in the particular, such as the water of Baptism or sacred springs.

Does the natural enhance or diminish the sacred? Do they exclude or depend on each other? That is the question we need to answer for ourselves; that is the question of faith.

Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Service times

Christchurch, New Road (Methodist)

- 9.00am Service with Communion (1st Sunday)
- 10.30am Morning Service with Junior Church and crèche

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

- 10.30am Meeting for Worship

St George's, Preshute (C of E)

- 8.00am Holy Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)
- 10.00am All Age Service (1st Sunday)
Parish Communion (other Sundays)

St John the Baptist, Minal (C of E)

- 8.00am Holy Communion BCP (2nd Sunday)
- 9.30am Parish Communion (1st and 3rd Sunday)

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

- 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP on 4th Sunday)
- 10.00am All Age Worship (1st Sunday): Parish Communion and Junior Church and crèche on all other Sundays
- 5.30pm Informal service except on 1st Sunday.

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

- 11.00am Sung Mass (See also below)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the College Chapel

Weekday Services

St Mary's Holy Communion: 10.30am Wednesday

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

St George's 4.30pm Weds: Tea Time followed by Evening Prayer
12.30 pm (1st Wednesday): Teddy Prayers & Picnic,
a special service for U5s & carers followed by a picnic lunch

Marlborough Church Contacts

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Anglican Team Office, Church Cottage, Silverless Street, SN8 1JQ

The Revd Tim Novis

FROM THE REGISTERS

Departed - we pray for the families of:

16 March – Mary Helen Patricia ‘Pat’ Steggall (94) of Coombe End Court,
Marlborough

St Mary’s and North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett

17 March – Elaine Julia Terry (52) of Blowhorn Street, Marlborough

St Mary’s and North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett

Why can't we keep our data safe?

Security in the Age of Information Incontinence

a conversation with Bill Egerton

The Merchants House

Friday 24th May 7.0pm for 7.30pm

Tickets £12 (members) £15 (non members)

Available at the Merchant's House Shop or contact Vicky on 01672 511491

Limited space and no reserving of seats



Family News compiled by Jessy Pomfret

David Collins was appointed head of St Peter's Junior School in 1965, 3 years after the Grammar School moved out and St Peter's became the first junior school for boys *and* girls. Several of his staff went on to headships and he was very proud of having set up the special needs class. He retired to enjoy his hobbies, DIY, wine-making and art. He died recently, aged 92. A thanksgiving service was held in Malmesbury Abbey on March 19th. We send our sympathy to his family: Sue, Robert, Geraldine and Adrian, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Alec Thomas has lived in Marlborough since 1978. Married to Elizabeth, they have one daughter, Sara-Jayne, who works as a community nurse in the town.

For Alec, the Church has always been a refuge from the pressures of life and the business environment. His busy career as an agronomist meant that he spent much of his time in the open air, exposed to the elements. Lack of sun protection resulted in a diagnosis of Advanced Stage 4 Melanoma in 2016. This was operated on but then it was discovered that the cancer had moved to the right lung. Alec admitted, "I decided in my own mind, 'I will go and see my Mum and Dad in heaven and my family will join me later'."

He was given 6 months to live with the option of going on a clinical trial at Oxford using a new unproven immunotherapy technique. Only 40% of the population has the correct T cells to be able to participate in this therapy. He decided to take part.

The treatment not only had a significant effect on the cancer but also on the adrenal, thyroid and pituitary glands. He lost a dangerous amount of weight. When his wife and daughter took him to Oxford to seek advice he was so weak that he could only just manage to climb up the stairs to the oncology department and could not even carry a newspaper. It was discovered that he lacked cortisol. This was rectified and within 5 hours he was back to normal. Latest scans show that the cancer is withering and he has no need to go back for at least 9 months.

Throughout this time, Alec never missed a night's sleep. The car parking situation caused him more worry than the cancer. He gives thanks for the incredible work carried out by the doctors and nurses in the Churchill Hospital oncology department and for his family, faith, rugby club and friends, especially fellow church parishioners, who have supported him during this difficult episode.

Alec's associates have described him as 'LUCKY'. He does not believe in the word, "I know there is a Greater Power looking after me."

Continued page 27

Found and discarded objects, ephemera of every kind form the building blocks of Timmy Saville's work. Her exhibition at The White Horse Gallery comprises montages in two dimensional and three dimensional relief, as well as acrylic painting, and sketchbook drawings.



Described as 'post-Cubist methodology that is reworked into different forms', Timmy's collages are made from objects of transitory value, reimagined into new compositions. Whether it be food packaging, torn pages from newspapers and magazines, bus and train tickets, or old bits of frayed rope, these materials are up-cycled and reworked into new constructions. Many of her collages are figurative, cardboard arms and legs for example determining a stance or a pose. The figures are inventive and amicable. Interestingly, there is a definite sense of womanliness with many of the figures, whereas others feel genderless. The sketches are like fashion drawings, and therefore I suppose, there is an assumption that they are female.

The densely layered wooden montages are bulky and boisterous. They have been welded together forming a strong and heavy construction, yet remain immensely attractive artworks. The viewer is drawn to them in a different way compared to Timmy's 2D work because you can see underneath the piles of wood, over and under the rope loopholes and in between the sticky layers of paint. (Not actually sticky of course, just the finish.)

The acrylic paintings mimic that Cubist style of bold shapes and fast brushstrokes. There is a clear and definite link between the sketches, paintings, and collages. It is an artist's working portfolio. One idea leading and developing onto the next, forming a complete project.

This exhibition is about using objects that would have otherwise been just more rubbish. It is about turning used things into something new.

If we are looking for ways to recycle our waste, this must be one of the best.

Timmy Saville – Paintings & Collage was at the White Horse Gallery between 20th March – 12th April 2019.

Dianne Mackinder Funeral Service



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News from the Churches

Ramadan – 30 days of Prayer for the Muslim World

How can we respond to the news of the attack on the Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand ?

Two actions are being taken locally in response.

Following the shooting and murder at mosques in New Zealand, a faith-based group from Marlborough visited Swindon Mosque on Tuesday (March 26) - in solidarity for the atrocity. The terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch during Friday Prayers on 15 March killed 50 Muslim worshippers and left many others seriously injured.



<http://www.marlboroughnewsonline.co.uk/news>

There is an opportunity to join with Jesus-followers to pray with love & respect for Muslims around the world during Ramadan this year. A booklet, produced by 30 days of prayer, is available from Mustard Seed - suggested donation £2.

More information at <https://30daysprayer.org.uk>

Women's Fellowship

Christchurch, New Road at 2.45pm for tea, coffee and chat on Tuesdays May 7th, 14th and 21st. No meeting on 28th May.

The meeting on June 4th will be at the Manse.



Quiet Day

Pewsey Churches Working Together
Quiet Day - Saturday 11th May



St Mary Magdalene and the Risen Christ
Icon in St Paul Church, Dayton. (The iconographic Christy Shrouded, copied for non-commercial use)

Learning to talk with the Lord
How to be a reflective Christian

On Saturday 11th May at 10.00 am for 10.30 – 4.00 pm at St Katharine's Church, Savernake SN8 3BG. The theme is : **Learning to talk with the Lord - How to be a reflective Christian** - led by **Euan Tait**, writer, musician, poet (<https://euantait.com>). Organised by Pewsey Churches Working Together , with a suggested donation of £10. For more info or to reserve a place please contact Jennifer Totney 01672 562886 jennifer.totney@gmail.com or Matthew Devlin 01980 630312 mdww46@gmail.com

Lunch Club

Sunday May 19th at Christchurch Wesley Hall at 12.15. To book a place please ring the office before 10am on Friday 17th: 513701. Cost £7.50.



Christian Aid Week 12th – 18th May



The Christian Aid service takes place at Christchurch, New Road on Sunday 12th May at 10.30am

On Saturday 18th May the annual Christian Aid Street Collection will take place. As there is no collection without collectors, we are looking for people who would be willing to take a one-hour slot on Saturday morning between 9am and 1pm. If you feel able to do so, please contact Janneke Blokland (jblokland@gmail.com / 892291). Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Egyptian Adventure

Friday 17th May from 4pm – 6pm at St John's School, Marlborough



For primary school children
GAMES, CRAFT, FOOD, DRAMA,
BIBLE STORY

For more information or to reserve a place, please contact

club@emmanuelmarlborough.org, : by Friday 10th May



Marlborough Churches Together Fraternal



Meets at 12.45pm on Monday May 20th at the Friends Meeting House. Open to all or please contact the clergy if you would like anything raised.

Ascension Day Service

All are welcome to join us at St Mary's Church, Marlborough at 7.30pm on Thursday 30th May for a Marlborough Deanery Ascension Day service with visiting speaker Revd Rhona Floate. Rhona is the Rural Field Officer for Wilts Archdeaconry and a Vicar in the Whitton team.



Devotion

Devotion continues to meet on Thursdays evenings. Please continue to remember them in your prayers.

devotion

Lent talks feedback

It has been a privilege to be in Christchurch Methodist Church on each of the Wednesdays in Lent and to listen to Reverend Colin Heber-Percy's talks on the theme 'God of the Gaps'. The 'Wilderness'; 'our hearts, relationships'; gaps in our 'maps'; 'lives, grief, loss'; and finally 'gaps in time, waiting'. Colin helped us explore the idea of God sharing the gaps using St Mark's gospel. Each of the evenings was very interesting and well attended.



St Non's



St Non's Retreat will be from September 17 to 20th in the house on the lovely Pembrokeshire cliffs, and will be led by Edwina Fogg, centering on the remarkable 12th century mystic, Hildegard of Bingen, writer, composer, philosopher and polymath.

Places are limited to 14; to book, contact Barney on 512205 or barney.rsdl@gmail.com.



Family News continued....

Ann Johnson's daughter **Becky Millar** is in Liberia with 'Life For African Mothers'. She and two colleagues are voluntarily training local midwives who, Becky says, work very hard for little or no pay, contending with drug shortages, power cuts and poverty. Despite this, they continue to attend the courses with great enthusiasm. We wish Becky strength and protection.

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Contributions and comments from readers are welcome. Please send articles and letters to the Monthly Editor or the Editorial Coordinator, other notices or announcements to the compiler. All items for the June issue by Tuesday 14th May please.

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