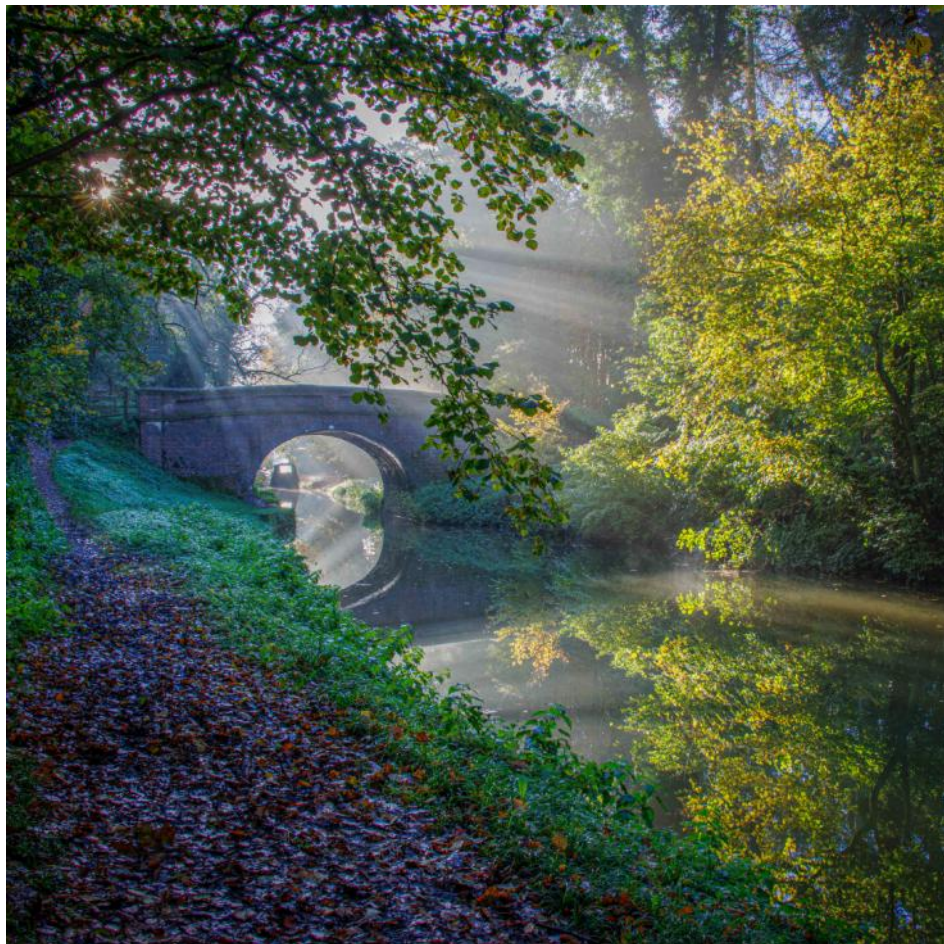

TOWER_{AND}TOWN



Reflection

November 2024

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TOWER^{AND}TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

NUMBER 753 NOVEMBER 2024



EDITORIAL

November can be a month of storms but also of stillness – Keats’ ‘mists and mellow fruitfulness’ – a time of thoughtfulness and contemplation; hence the theme of reflection, so beautifully expressed in Bridget Codrington’s stunning photograph on the cover. (What is the story behind that narrowboat moving off into the distance?)

In ‘Remembrance’ David Du Croz brings to life the stories behind three of the names on the memorial in the Lady Chapel in St Peter's Church. In contrast local author Debi Evans reflects on the importance of storytelling, myths and legends in unleashing children’s imaginations while Bridget Codrington contemplates the joys and challenges of landscape photography. Conversely Barney Rosedale explores the Quaker Testimony of equality and Hugh de Saram expounds on the thorny hot potato of computer passwords!

After all that reflection you may feel like accompanying Kim Wakeham through 2,000 years to the present day in Part II of her archaeology walk along Treacle Bolly. Meanwhile, Peter Noble has polished up another gem of information concerning Savernake Forest and Andrew Bumphrey explains why there has recently been scaffolding on the Town Hall yet again!

Some of you may well be wondering why this edition does not contain written and art work by the students of St John’s School as it usually does. From now on this will take place in August as it suits their school calendar better and they will be able to celebrate their school year in style. It is an exciting development to which I am greatly looking forward. As a result, however, there was a gap in the schedule which, I’m sure you’ll agree, has been filled brilliantly. My thanks go to all this month’s willing and expert contributors.

Sarah Bumphrey, Editor

Front cover: *Misty Morning, Kennet and Avon Canal* by Bridget Codrington

November is the month for remembering. "Remember, remember the fifth of November, Gunpowder, treason and plot..." Perhaps more significantly it is the month of Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. Our churches and towns, our parks and churchyards are full of memorials of one kind or another to those who have died in conflict.



The photo here shows part of the memorial in the Lady Chapel in St Peter's Church containing the names of those from the parish who died in the First World War. We see the names, some familiar local families still today, but often we do not know the stories behind these names. Here are a few from this plaque.

Sydney Napier Hillier: Hillier's Yard in Marlborough is the site of the old builder's yard of the Hillier family who lived at 21 High Street. Sydney was the youngest son of Benjamin and Elizabeth, and served in the 6th Battalion of the South Wales Borderers in the First World War.

On 21st March 1918 the Germans launched their big offensive known as

"Operation Michael", forcing the British and French troops to retreat and surrender all their hard-won gains of 1916 and 1917. On 23rd/24th March the area around St Quentin fell and the road was open to Amiens across the old 1916 Somme battlefields.

Sydney's Division began to make a fighting withdrawal through the towns and villages of that area in what became known as the First Battles of the Somme 1918. On 24th/25th March the fighting was focussed around Bapaume and it was here that Sydney was killed. During this last week of March the Division lost over half its fighting strength. Sydney was 29 years old and is commemorated on the Arras memorial, having no known grave.

William Robert Hill Merriman: William was the son of Robert William and Edith Hannah Merriman of Sempringham, a large house on the west side of the Salisbury Road in Marlborough, near to George Lane. William was a scholar of Winchester College and New College, Oxford, and before the war had been a civil

servant in the Inland Revenue.

William served in the 8th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade which formed part of the 14th (Light) Division. He was killed in action on 15th August 1916, and is buried in the Quarry cemetery at Montauban. However his original burial site was at Longueval (Green Dump cemetery), which links him with the intense fighting for the control of Delville Wood during July and August 1916.

This battle of Delville Wood is one of the most infamous of all the conflicts in the Battle of the Somme. Earlier in July South Africans had been sent in to try to clear the wood and suffered horrendous casualties, which is why today the wood is the site of the South African First World War Memorial.

It was into this desperate situation that the 14th Division (of which William's battalion was a part) was dispatched to relieve the 17th Division on the 12th August. Seventeen days later the wood was finally cleared of the last remaining German defenders, but by then William along with a great many other of his regiment had been killed - a young man of 34 years of age who had been mentioned in dispatches "for gallant and distinguished service in the field".

Thomas Hector Molesworth Maurice: Thomas, a member of the Maurice medical family, was a Commander in the Royal Navy when he died aged 37 on the 27th May 1915. His parents were James and Mary Maurice of 40, High Street and his wife was Cicely Maurice.

Thomas was killed by an explosion when his ship, HMS *Princess Irene*, blew up while being loaded with mines in the Medway estuary just off Sheerness, prior to deployment on a mine-laying mission. A total of 352 people died in the *Princess Irene* explosion, including 273 officers and men, and 76 dockyard workers.

The devastation caused by the explosion was horrific. Flames rose 100 metres into the sky and a huge pall of smoke hung over the Kentish shoreline. Wreckage of all sorts was scattered up to 20 miles from the scene of the explosion, from which there was just one survivor from the ship itself. An inquiry into the explosion blamed the accident on the hurried priming of the mines by untrained personnel; possible sabotage was ruled out by a later investigation.

Thomas Maurice is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial pictured opposite.



I started writing The Secret Adventures of Rolo series in 2014 with a view to engaging children with history in a fun but educational way. The national curriculum for 7-11 year olds seemed a little rigid.

My recently rescued Jack Russell, Rolo, became the perfect vehicle for explaining history. Rolo discovers the ability to time travel through a tree in Savernake Forest and the idea of him ‘making things happen in history’ was born. Events began local to Marlborough, and then became national and international, tying in topics from the national curriculum for KS2 history as the series progressed.

My modus operandi is to thoroughly research an historic event and then weave a story as to how the little dog might influence what is happening – he is seldom just a witness.

Reading about recent analysis of an archaeological discovery on social media inspired a chapter in the 5th book, ‘the blue-toothed woman’ - which led to a meeting in Dublin with an archaeology professor who now uses my books to demonstrate to students how children’s literature can spark young interest in archaeology – an even greater bonus than my original intention! Several of Rolo’s adventures originate from archaeological ‘finds’ from the Iron Age, (Chiseldon) Bronze Age (Amesbury and East Anglia) and Pompeii.

Children have long been fascinated with dragons and other mythical creatures – perhaps because no one has ever disproved their existence, and my stories fuel that fascination. Rolo encounters many dragons including the white of Wessex and red of Wales, as well as releasing a group of unicorns from captivity in Silbury Hill and he discovers he can explore myths and legends, whether the story of Gellert, faithful hound of the Welsh Prince, or Greek Mythology as featured in book 4 ‘Jewel Dog and the Dragons’ where he meets Helen of Troy and helps Persephone.

I am saddened when I hear that some schools don’t allow fantasy or historic interpretations on their library shelves, preferring only ‘current’ and ‘factual’ lessons. A perfect childhood to me involves running around ruined castles using imaginative play to escape from dragons and pretend foe.

My aim in storytelling is all about unleashing creativity with ‘what if’ and children respond with fabulous made-up stories about their own pets or mythical creatures. The world would be a sorer place without the tapestry of stories, myths and legends to enrich childhood. Let us keep children adventuring and ‘believing’ as long as we can!

Debi Evans still offers free author visits to Primary Schools

www.debievans.com



*Rolo inspects the Oak
'Young Paunchy' in
Savernake*

Photograph provided
by Debi Evans

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Photographs by Bridget Codrington



Silbury Hill



Afternoon Stroll, Savernake Forest

The Hobby that Keeps on Giving

Bridget Codrington

My interest in photography started when I was at school where we had the use of cameras and a darkroom. I loved that moment in the darkroom when an image began appearing on the photographic paper! I was given an Olympus OM-1 SLR camera and seriously considered the idea of studying photography on leaving school but ended up going in a different direction.

Fast forward through many years of working and a busy family life only occasionally using a camera to record the children growing up, holidays and family occasions.

In 2015 I was self-employed and had a bit more free time. I bought my first Canon DSLR camera and embraced the digital age! I attended an evening class at St John's School to learn how to use my camera in manual mode in order to control the creativity of my photographs. Living in the midst of the Wiltshire landscape in the Kennet Valley, it wasn't a difficult decision to embrace my surroundings and photograph them in all weathers while recording the changing seasons.

Since retiring my photography has really taken over my life! I joined Devizes Photography Club and have travelled all over the country on landscape photography trips with fellow photographers, friends and on club trips. I am always keen for early morning outings to photograph the local landscape with either mist, fog, frost or snow with a colourful sky.

We are so blessed with beautiful landscape locations within a short distance of Marlborough - the rolling downland, Neolithic barrows, the standing stones in Avebury and Stonehenge, areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty covered in wildflowers, butterflies and insects in spring and summer, ancient woodlands and forests, ancient hill forts as well as the meandering river Kennet. It's impossible not to be inspired as a photographer in this area!

I return to local locations time and time again as the conditions are different every time I go. The success of landscape photography is all in the planning - I use a variety of apps for weather, conditions (frost, mist etc), cloud cover, sunrise/sunset times and tide tables for coastal photography.

Photography is the hobby that keeps on giving, both mentally and physically. I'm always meeting new people on my trips, always learning new skills and always anticipating the 'perfect' shot. Until that happens let the adventures continue!

Equality (fairness, equity) is one of the four Quaker testimonies, the others being Simplicity, Truth, Peace. These are not ethical rules, not commandments, but principles of a better life and ways of behaving towards our fellow human. All are aspirations: in a world of lying politicians, scams, and fraud, when systematic plundering of the earth's resources has brought us all to the brink of extinctions on a huge scale, and when war continues to blight lives even in the Middle East and Europe, these simple-looking values are more needed than ever.

“Dad, that's not fair.” Most children have a clear concept of fairness, but as adults we live in a world of gross, obscene inequality where, in respect of wealth, the richest 1% of the population of this planet owns or benefits from or can exploit 46% of the planet's resources, assets, wealth and riches. Of course, that 1% amounts to about 75 million people, mainly male and white. There are philanthropists among them, but the majority are probably not.

Here is another way of looking at global wealth distribution. After the richest 1%, with their 46% of the pie, the 11% who make up the middle classes have a slightly generous 39%, while the poor and the wretchedly poor, that's 35% of all people, scramble for 15% of the pie.

That's the world: what about the UK? Here the income and wealth of the top 20% is more than that of the poorest 60%; we have child malnutrition, food banks, and gross differences in life expectancy in the world's fifth biggest economy. We are probably the most wealth-unequal country in Europe, while the USA is the most unequal world power.

I have not the space or skill to explain how this came about, or why it continues; why bankers are better off after the 2008 financial crash, while ordinary folk are poorer, or how a British corporation CEO can receive £15m a year, while his workers get a small fraction of that. But Oxfam has said, “*Such inequality is unsustainable, hinders poverty reduction efforts, and makes resilience to future changes more uncertain, whether from economic or environmental crises, climate change or pandemic*”.

There is also evidence that inequality has its costs: more unequal societies imprison more of their citizens, with more violence, homicide, drug addiction, low productivity, and loss of trust. The message is that more equal societies do better than unequal ones for everyone, not just for the poor.

But there are other inequalities. There is still too much male/female unfairness; class/caste differences, with, for example, 200 million untouchables in India; LGBT people still face the threat of imprisonment or murder in many countries, and racism and growing inequality between nations increases the risk of war and an

inadequate response to the threat of climate change.

What can we do? We can be more aware of just how lopsided our planet is, and the cost and damage it entails. We can pay our taxes, vote for a government which takes the problem seriously and try to treat our fellow man or woman fairly, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race, class, or age.

We can try.

The Russian House

Peter Noble

Many country estates that had 'The King's Highway' passing through them charged a toll and installed tollgates. There are, or were, several named gates around Savernake Forest including Forest Hill Gate, Hatt Gate, Prince of Wales Gate, Puttall Lodge Gate and Postern Hill Gate. It is usually assumed that these were indeed tollgates but maybe not all. The most intriguingly named gate is on London Road, the Voronzoff Gate. The spelling should however have been 'Vorontsov'!

Count Semyon Vorontsov (1744-1832) was a Russian diplomat from St Petersburg at the court of Catherine the Great. His wife, Ekatrina Seniavina, was the court pianist and composer and they had a son Mikhail and daughter also called Ekatrina. Sadly their mother, aged just 23, died soon after the birth of her daughter and the following year, the Count, aged 41 and Russian Ambassador, moved permanently to England with his children. Although, it is rumoured, the Count never learned to speak English, the children became very Anglicized, Ekatrina changing her name to Catherine. Mikhail later returned to Russia and had a long and illustrious career in the army being awarded the title of Prince and rank of Field Marshal. Catherine was of course raised in aristocratic circles and married George Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke whose family seat is Wilton House near Salisbury.

In 1804 Earl George and his new Countess Catherine had a daughter Mary who married - perhaps you've guessed - a warden of Savernake, the Marquess of Ailesbury, George Brudenell Bruce, and of course they lived at Tottenham House. No more mystery therefore about the name of the Voronzoff Gate: a minor misspelling of Marchioness Mary's Russian ancestors. The house however, though relatively small, is too fine for a tollgate, and nor is it aligned with or close to the highway but it *is* at the end of a now extinct, private drive into the Savernake estate. Also there was a better-sited tollgate on London Road a little nearer Marlborough. However, as Countess Catherine outlived her husband George by 29 years, and her daughter lived at Tottenham House, it is possible the eponymous 'tollgate' was not such at all, but the dower house of the dowager countess.

The Secret Life of a Webmaster Hugh de Saram

Secret? Well, sort of. Secret in that I need to spend a good deal of time observing and tracking what people are actually doing with the websites I manage.

When you type a website address into your computer - something along the lines of 'https://bbc.co.uk' - clearly the computer uses that address to dredge up a web page for you to look at. Implicit in that operation is the opportunity for the programming behind the web page to record in a database the requested web address together with the address of your computer. So although I don't know which individual is using your computer, I can document in detail your computer's use of my websites.

However, beyond compiling statistics of how often my websites are used – how many 'hits per month' each page gets – I'm not interested in the person behind the page requests.

What I am interested in is any funny business a user tries by meddling with the address of the web page. It's perfectly possible to add malicious programming code to that bbc.co.uk web address and you'd be amazed at the amount of malicious code attempts that I track on sites as innocent as towerandtown.org.uk, much of it churned out automatically by hacking programs running in distant countries.

The other thing that comes high on my list of tasks is prevention of unwanted log-ins through guessing people's passwords – hacking, in other words.

When I first started looking after websites, I was flabbergasted at how pathetically simple many people's passwords were to guess. It very quickly became clear to me that no-one should be allowed to record their own password. So for the last 20 years or so, no website that I manage has allowed private passwords. Instead, whenever those people registered to use a given site want to log in, they send their email address to the site with a request for the site to email them back with a One-Time Password – an OTP. The user then puts the OTP into the login page. The instant the OTP is used, the website (a) checks that it's the same as the one it sent out, and that it's coming from the computer that requested it in the first place, and (b) then kills the record it holds of that password. So no passwords are stored on the website for more than a few seconds and therefore a hacker has nothing to hack. I am delighted to say that recently I have noticed that the Expedia website has moved to exactly this method of logging in, and many other sites now require use of a one-time code sent to your mobile phone in addition to checking your password.

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My previous article (August Tower & Town) looked at Prehistoric Treacle Bolly - this article looks at the archaeological evidence from the last 2000 years until WW2. As previously, what3words is used to help enable you to identify an area.

When the Romans arrived in 43 AD, they quickly settled around Marlborough. Settlements were established, for example Cunetio, near Minal. However, there is little evidence of Roman activity in Treacle Bolly, but future archaeological work may shed more light.

Evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement is also scarce, but there is a section of the Wandsdyke on the top of Granham Hill. A bank and ditch can be easily identified (lousy.feasted.appetite) and it could be a continuation of the Wandsdyke found in nearby West Woods.

Place name evidence also hints at possible Saxon settlement in or nearby Treacle Bolly. The names include: Granham Hill (Gran = Granta's settlement hamm = land hemmed in by water or marsh or possibly by high ground or a river-meadow) Pre-shute (prēost = priest, cyte = cottage; a hermit's or monk's cell).



Photo: Butterfly Valley by Kim Wakeham

The biggest influence on the landscape of Treacle Bolly was the building of Marlborough Castle. The construction of the castle began in the 11th century before it was abandoned and became a ruin in the 15th century. The Kennet was rerouted and managed to feed fish ponds, supply the castle with water and possibly also to fill the castle moat.

The river was also managed to power the many mills along the Kennet Valley. Castle Mill (located on the opposite side of the river from Washpool Cottage) was built in the 12th century, initially as a corn mill but by the early 17th century it was being used as a fulling mill and a dye house. Evidence of the wool trade in Marlborough can also be found at Washpool (kipper.foggy.embodied). Fed by a series of natural springs, the pool was used to wash the sheep prior to being shorn.

The influence of keeping animals can also be found on the slopes of Treacle Bolly where two earthen mounds can be found. These mounds (expired.backs.newer and sizing.worthy.growth) are likely to be artificial Rabbit Warrens. Introduced by the Normans, Rabbit Warrens were built to house large numbers of rabbits to provide meat and fur, almost certainly, to the inhabitants of Marlborough Castle.

Animals also played a part in the construction of the numerous water meadows in the 17th – 19th century along the Kennet Valley. Water meadows were a form of intensive agriculture which used the water from the river to keep the meadows damp, thereby increasing the grass yield of the land to feed sheep and cattle. Traces of the complicated set up of sluices, channels and the familiar corrugated-iron-like humps and bumps can be seen from the footbridge over the river at Preshute.

In 1804, Treacle Bolly saw the cutting of Preshute White Horse (mountains.refuses.sting). The horse was designed by William Canning, who was a pupil at Mr Greasley's Academy, located in what is now the Ivy House.

The arrival of Marlborough College in 1843 continued to shape and change Treacle Bolly. The many buildings clustered around the Mound changed the view into Marlborough, whilst the athletics track was built in 1950 and there have subsequent additions of tennis courts and a pavilion.

Another change in the landscape was the moving of the Pewsey road to its current course (now the A345) sometime between the 1880s – 1900s. The old course of the road, known locally as Butterfly Valley (what3words location mono-rail.shout.prelude), is now an atmospheric hollow-way – a sunken road worn into the chalk by centuries of people and animals.

Treacle Bolly also contains several features which are not able to be dated accurately, for example banks, ditches and flint quarries. The landscape certainly warrants further investigation.

Next time you visit Treacle Bolly, take a moment to think about the 6000 years of change that have occurred, and see if you can find the archaeological evidence of that change for yourselves. And let me know what you find!

What's On in November

Linda Illsley

1st (*Friday*) and 2nd (*Saturday*) 10.00am - 4.00pm (last entry 3pm)

Halloween Spooky Tours at The Merchant's House, Marlborough. Soak up the atmosphere during half term week with a spooky tour. Visit the witch's kitchen, look out for low flying bats and see if you can find the pumpkins hidden in unexpected places. Entry to the house is £10 per adult, under 18's free. (Members are free).

3rd (*Sunday*) 7.00pm

Brilliant International Musicians Series - see advert page 26

7th (*Thursday*) 2.00pm

Marlborough Floral Club – Barking Mad Christmas with Jenny York at Mildenhall Village Hall. £6 to attend and no pre booking is necessary.

8th (*Friday*) 8.00pm

Martin Carthy: A special Evening of Song and Conversation with Jon Wilks
A special chance to hear master craftsman Martin Carthy perform and reminisce on his illustrious career in folk song to date, with musical interludes and conversation with his talented friend, musician and journalist, Jon Wilks. Venue Marlborough Town Hall.

Tickets £22.50 from Sound Knowledge or marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk

10th (*Sunday*) and 11th (*Monday*)

Marlborough At War Exhibition at The Merchant's House. Free for local residents from 11.00 to 15.00 on the 10th and 10.00 until 15.00pm on the 11th.

13th (*Wednesday*) 6.45pm for 7.30pm

Marlborough Gardening Association – Global Warming - Its Impact on the Garden Year with Suzanna Milward at Marlborough Town Hall. Display table will be Evergreen Foliage for a Vase. Information on talks and events at marlbga.org.uk

14th (*Thursday*) 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Marlborough Citizen's Climate Lobby invite you to – Can We Afford Net Zero – Busting the Myths. A talk by Professor David Waltham, Geophysicist, London University. Venue Marlborough Town Hall. Bring your questions. All welcome, refreshments available.

21st (*Thursday*) 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Marlborough Historical Society Talk – Lest We Forget – Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission at St Peter's Church, High Street, Marlborough. Speaker, David Du Croz, Retired Head of History, Marlborough College; authority on the First World War. The Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission was the brainchild of Fabian Ware, whose own story and that of this

most remarkable achievement are the bones of this talk. All welcome. Entry £5.

21st-23rd (Thursday to Saturday)

Marlborough Players present Bothered and Bewildered (see advert page 27)

Fr22nd (Friday) 8.00pm

Steve Tilston, one of our most celebrated song-smiths, widely recognised within the world of folk and contemporary music; the words, arrangements and superb guitar playing could be no one else. Venue Mildenhall Village Hall. Tickets £20.

23rd (Saturday)

Launch of 'The Night Before Christmas' at The Merchant's House which will be full of Christmas sparkle for the entire festive season until Christmas Eve. Visitors will be able to enjoy this glorious 17th Century house where playful mice have the run of the rooms all against a back drop of Christmas Stockings, trees, garlands, toys, stars, gingerbread and snowflakes all lit by twinkling candlelight. Of course, Father Christmas will be appearing too. Historical re-enactors, The Deveraux Regiment, will be here on 7th December. Throughout the season there are many special events from mouse making workshops to children's story time and festive garland making. For more information visit www.themerchantshouse.co.uk

29th (Friday) 10.00am – 7.00pm

Marlborough Christmas Market and Lights Switch-on on the High Street.

St Peter's Church Christmas Lights Switch-on and Santas Grotto 4.00pm – 8.00pm. St Peter's will coordinate switching on their Christmas lights with the Marlborough High Street. As well as Santa's Grotto there will be a Christmas piano performance by Kim Emery (5-6.20pm), Cards for good causes and the Cardinal Coffee Shop selling mulled wine, mince pies and other festive treats. For full details see stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

30th (Saturday) 10.00am – 3.00pm

Christmas Fair at St Peter's Church, High Street, Marlborough.

1st December (Sunday)

Ensemble Renard at St Peter's Church. Details and tickets available from the St Peter's Trust website.

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

St John's School Term 2 Monday 4th November – Friday 20th December.

Marlborough St Mary's Primary School Monday 4th November – Thursday 19th December.

Preschute Primary School Monday 4th November – Friday 20th December.

Marlborough College 9.00pm Sunday 3rd November – 12noon Wednesday 11th December. Exeat 12noon Friday 22nd November – 9pm Monday 25th November.

Marlborough has a beautiful and impressive Town Hall. Whenever I take visitors into the Assembly Room they are wowed by its splendour. However, maintaining such an elaborate a building requires constant vigilance by The Town Council.

One of the biggest problems in common with many similar large public buildings concerns pigeons. Protected species they may be, but they are still a pest. Many measures to combat these beasts have been tried over the years including netting, spikes, gels and even electronic scarers but the pigeons always seem to find somewhere out of reach to perch. Their offerings fall into the gutters and provide the perfect growing medium for the seed which they have ingested causing a lot of plant growth in the gutters which has to be regularly cleared out.

Access to the gutters to do this is a problem in itself requiring the use of a 'cherry picker' vehicle which is difficult to position without causing disruption on the roads. Some of you may remember when the road closure for The Mop Fair was extended to include Sunday morning providing an opportunity for a cherry picker to be positioned anywhere around the building and for the town councillors and council staff to participate in an annual clean of the gutters. I understand that bacon rolls were provided for everyone. Maybe this tradition could be revived!

Often due to the sheer height of the building, the constricted surroundings or the nature of the proposed work it is not possible to use a 'cherry picker' so scaffolding is required. On the north side of the building the narrow pavement means that any scaffolding here projects into the road requiring traffic lights or a one way system causing traffic congestion. Obtaining permission and installing this traffic management is a time consuming and expensive process. The recent installation of new boilers required access to a chimney at the rear of the building. Erecting scaffolding at the front of the building with a walkway over the dormer windows (see picture) proved to be a cheaper quicker and less disruptive option.

The interior with its high ceilings and elaborate panelling requires constant cleaning and maintenance often needing a scaffold tower and a head for heights. This job is ably undertaken by Chris and Izzy the caretakers ensuring that the building continues to look good inside as well as out.



photo Andrew Bumphrey

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Nature Notes: From ‘The Heavenly Mountains’ to ‘Little Avebury’

Guest Correspondents: Diane Gater and Janet Polack

The Avebury Community Orchard group has been gathering apples from our orchard and around the village for pressing and bottling. The juice is selling well in the Community Shop. One variety merited a separate pressing. A 100+ year old tree in a village garden was found after DNA testing to have no match – an Avebury wilding. Designated ‘a new variety’, it now appears in a catalogue of rare fruit trees. Its juice is sweet and delicious. A young tree grown from a graft now sits in the Churchyard. Searching for a name, we found a V&A painting entitled: ‘Mending the Thatch on a Cottage in Little Avebury’. We named our new variety: ‘Little Avebury’.

Why Community Orchards? Our domesticated apples derive from *Malus sieversii*, which originally journeyed here 5,000 miles along the Silk Road from the 24,000-foot Heavenly Mountains dividing China from Kazakhstan. Later, the Norman French arrived in Britain bringing their orchard tradition, and orchards became a significant feature across the land – a treasury of genetic diversity, a rich repository of culture.



*‘Little Avebury tree
in the church yard’
Photo by
Philippe Ullens*

Since 1950, most English orchards have disappeared (95% from Wiltshire). Supermarkets offer a limited choice – 6 varieties maybe. A specialist nursery holds over 600. Happily, renewed interest in local fruit trees has encouraged the rise in community orchards, helping to conserve local varieties and provide for the wildlife dependent upon them.

(continued opposite)

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Partly inspired by Marlborough's example and as a lasting celebration of the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Avebury Community Orchard began in 2012 – with plantings of Wiltshire apple varieties in The Shop garden and on the Sportsfield, many with great names and stories behind them: Wiltshire Monster, Roundway Magnum Bonum, Mary Barnett, Julia's Late Golden, Dredge's Fame and, our latest addition, Wiltshire Dognose.

Alongside the Sportsfield trees, we have restored a hedge with wildlife-friendly species, giving the community the opportunity to learn traditional hedge-laying under expert tutelage from villager, Fred Gillam (fred@thewildsideoflife.co.uk). A map of fruit trees around Avebury reveals 'a village within an orchard' – like Marlborough but smaller. An Avebury Chapel display highlights the hard work and fun of orchard activities: our National Apple Day celebrations, pressings, cider-making, memorial tree plantings, hedging and the next event in the Apple calendar – the Wassail.

Come join us by The Red Lion pub on Saturday 11th January at 1.00pm as we process through Avebury led by Spanker, the Wassail horse, and Mummings, to bless fruit trees and farmland for the coming year.

Autumn is a good time to think about trees whether pruning, purchasing or planting. They provide beauty, shade on a hot day, food and shelter for birds, and help mitigate the effects of climate change. With dwarfing rootstocks to choose from there are trees to suit any size of garden and planting one is a great way to commemorate an occasion such as an anniversary or the birth of a child. What better way to encourage the next generation's interest in Nature than an apple tree that grows with them and provides fruit?

Winter is a traditional time to purchase trees and hedging because they are in hibernation and available bare rooted generally at lower prices, while growing conditions are still favourable for them to establish. They come in all shapes and sizes so it pays to consider what is important and do some research. Do you want an evergreen, blossom, fruit, autumn leaf colour, bark effects, screening etc? Is the tree to be a focal point? Some varieties such as the Amelanchier provide blossom, followed by fruit and then autumn colour.

It's worth considering shrubs for smaller gardens as you can raise the canopy of some showcasing their stems and giving a tree-like effect e.g. Sambucas and Ceanothus. There's lots of information about this on the RHS website <https://www.rhs.org.uk>. It's advisable to soak bare rooted trees and plant as soon as possible unless the ground is frozen or entirely sodden in which case keep them in a cool place such as a shed out of direct sunlight, and don't let them dry out.

Even if you're not planting, winter is a good time to prune many trees, hedges and shrubs as hibernation means they're less likely to sustain shock. After leaf drop it's easier to see what you're doing too; however do research your particular plant to ensure that you carry out the correct regime. The general rules are to remove dead, diseased and cross wood using clean sharp tools. And finally whatever you're doing, enjoy the annual display of leaf colour, one of the highlights of Nature's calendar.

The Marlborough Players

present

Bothered and Bewildered by Gail Young

Marlborough Town Hall

21-23 November at 7.30pm

Tickets £10 from The White Horse Bookshop
or online at wegottickets.com/marlboroughplayers

I wonder what the new academic year has felt like so far to you? To me, it's felt like a big effort to get back up to speed, especially as I suffered a bereavement in the summer. It reminds me of the new start that God's people faced in Joshua 1, in the Bible. Their great leader Moses had died on the threshold of crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land. How could they possibly carry on?

Picture their new leader Joshua, his battle-hardened face streaked with tears at the loss of his great friend. Maybe you know the slightly quaint children's song:

Twelve men went to spy in Canaan: ten were bad, two were good. What do you think they saw in Canaan? Some saw grapes in clusters long; Some saw giants big and strong; Some saw God was in it all! Ten were bad, two were good.

Forty years before, Joshua had been one of the two good spies and now he hears God's voice: 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with you... Be strong and courageous!'

Jesus and Joshua share the same name, which means, 'the Lord saves'. Unlike Joshua, Jesus didn't drive his enemies out of the land, for Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world'. But like Joshua, Jesus mourned the death of a great prophet. He was strong and courageous to defeat evil, and led God's people through dark waters into a heavenly land. When Jesus stepped out of this very same Jordan River, God thundered, 'This is my Son whom I love – listen to him!'

Will we listen to Jesus, who says, 'Come to me all you who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest'?

We may not face, 'grapes in clusters long,' or 'giants big and strong,' but I wonder what great challenges and opportunities we will face. Many, no doubt! Let's listen to Jesus for he is strong and courageous - God will never leave or forsake him. Let Jesus be our champion, who defeated sin, death and the devil! Shall we trust and follow him?

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptised - we welcome:

- 22 Sep Margot Sarah to Geoff & Lavinia Pooley at St John the Baptist, Minal
- 22 Sep David Harbour Thomas to Kate Perritt & David Wells at St Marys
- 22 Sep Kate Perritt at St Marys

Departed - we pray for the family of:

- 7 Sep Cyril Ford (90) Elcot Close, Marlborough at St Marys, Marlborough
- 1 Oct Gerry Denning (87) Manton Hollow at St Georges, Preshute

The Real Story of Christmas

Rodney Cleasby

Christmas is a magical time of year filled with parties, pantos, gifts, gatherings and decorations. While it can be glamorous and enchanting for both parents and children, it can also become demanding with all the planning for the big day.

But amidst all the festivities, presents, and celebrations, we often forget: What is the real reason behind all the dancing and decorations?

Do we need to remember why we celebrate Christmas in the first place? Who will tell the real story of Christmas?

In Marlborough, during the switch-on of the Christmas lights on 29th November, we invite you to experience a dramatic, thoughtful, and humorous retelling of the REAL story of Christmas.

Led by a narrator, the event will feature several tableaux vivants - live, staged scenes - depicting familiar characters from the Christmas story, like Mary and Joseph. These characters will speak directly to the audience, sharing their experiences and narrating the Christmas Story.

The scenes will be performed along the High Street, beginning near the Town Hall and leading down to St. Peter's Church, where the finale will take place. As the play unfolds, the audience will be encouraged to follow along, from tableau to tableau, toward St. Peter's for the grand conclusion: a contemporary nativity scene.

We hope to conclude the performance with traditional Christmas carols and costumes, creating a festive and immersive experience for all.

Of course, such an event requires planning, volunteers, microphones and speakers, carol singers, and stage crew. But with goodwill, optimism, and a bit of Christmas spirit, we are confident this will be a wonderful addition to Marlborough's Christmas celebrations.

You can email Rodney at: RealStoryofChristmas@Outlook.com



photo:
Rodney
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Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Services Times

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

10.30am Meeting for worship

St George's Preshute (Anglican)

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

10.30am Worship

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

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

10.30am Worship

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

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

St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)

9.00 am Worship

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

11.00 am Mass

Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)

10.00am Worship (every 3rd Sunday)

4.00pm Worship (every Sunday)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the College chapel

Family News

Naomi Painter

September was a month of celebration for the Loney and James families. On September 5th Pete and Sue Loney of Barrow Close celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary then on 7th September their youngest granddaughter Bethany James married James Conway at St. Georges Preshute and on September 24th their daughter Sharon James and son in law Ian James celebrated their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We send congratulations to all the family.

From the Churches

EMMANUEL CHURCH MARLBOROUGH

- **Sunday Services**

Join us every Sunday at 4 pm for our weekly church service located on New Road in Marlborough, SN8 1AH. Our service includes crèche and Sunday School groups, followed by refreshments (for adults) and a sandwich tea for the children.

- **Emmanuel Church Homegroups**

Thursdays during term time, Pewsey – 7.30 pm, Marlborough – 7.45 pm, Ogbourne St George – 7.45 pm. Bible study, prayer and fellowship. For more details, email office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

- **Ladies Bible Study**

Every other Friday, 10 am- 11.30 am. Friends discovering God's truth in the Bible (All ladies welcome - onsite crèche available). For more details and dates, email ladies@emmanuelmarlborough.org

- **Hope Explored**

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

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

Children/Family Activities

- **Little Friends Toddler Group**

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

- **Explorers**

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

- **Friday Nights**

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

MARLBOROUGH ANGLICAN TEAM

- **Remembrance services**

9am at St John the Baptist, All-age Worship

10:30am St George's Preshute, Holy Communion

11:30am St Mary's Marlborough, Civic Service (following the Town Parade)

- **St Mary's 5pm Informal Worship sermon series on 1 Peter**

In a world crumbling under our feet, we ask, 'Is there any lasting hope?' St Peter says that it's the Church that is able to withstand the world's tumults. God's plan for the Church is much bigger than we might think - so let's embrace the beauty of God's design and be reassured that our hope is not in vain. If you're new to the area or thinking about the faith, please consider joining us at 5pm on Sunday at St Mary's. We are friendly, informal and open to God's Spirit. On the third Sunday of the month, we break bread together.

- **Start Course**

Are you looking for answers? Maybe it's time to make a Start. This free six-week course introduces Christianity through small-group sessions. To sign up or for more details, please contact Mark Philps on marksphilps@gmail.com

- **Welcome Wednesdays**

Reflection, coffee and doughnuts every Wednesday, 10.30 am in St Mary's.

Children/Family Activities

- **The Ark Parent/ Carer and Toddler Group**

Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless Street. Please contact Caroline Philps for more information cphilps2@gmail.com

- **Energize**

Our young people's group, meets on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month.

- **St Mary's Informal Worship All-age service**

5pm, St Mary's, Marlborough on the first Sunday of the month there is a family tea at 4:30pm followed by a service for all ages at 5pm.

St Peter's Church Marlborough

Sunday 3rd November at 7pm

French "pianist of magnetic presence" Ingmar Lazar returns to delight us

Tickets £15 - (£10 for St Peters Trust members)

from the White Horse Bookshop or on the door on the night.

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Contributions and comments from readers are welcome.

Please send articles and letters to the monthly editor or the chairman,
other notices or announcements to the compiler.

All items for the December issue by Tuesday 12th November please.

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