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Polymathic Pleasures

Some years ago, the late Dr Robert Ornstein, early expounder of the left brain and right brain theory, published a book entitled *Healthy Pleasures*. Recently reading it again gave me the idea for the polymathic theme of this edition of Tower and Town.

From the earliest days it is important, nay vital, to develop and train as many aspects of the brain and body as possible. Self-cultivation, as the great Victorian, Sir Richard Burton, expounded is an imperative for human survival and wellbeing.

Here in Marlborough, we are blessed with two outstanding secondary schools educating more than two and a half thousand students (Marlborough College and St John's Academy). Teenagers beaver away to fit themselves for academic qualifications leading to financial security but they are also engaged in a huge range of further activities that will test them and challenge them – no gain without pain – but lead to pleasure and satisfaction in later life. William Morris who entered Marlborough College in the winter of 1848 became a textile and furniture designer, poet, translator and social activist. The author William Golding was educated at the Grammar School and developed skills in acting, teaching, music and sailing.

The Marlborough College Summer School is an amazing enterprise that develops folk of all ages in many, many ways. These days we are especially aware of the importance of continued development after retirement as we live longer and face the threat of mental and physical deterioration.

Isn't it true that we admire those who have developed multi skills – true polymaths? The great Winston Churchill: soldier, orator, writer, statesman, horseman, bricklayer and artist is a fine example as was Burton himself (see page 3). How many high achievers listed on the walls of the College Chapel and Town Hall were also polymaths (see Robert Twigger's comments: page 4)?

Many of us are polymaths or will know others closer to home. This magazine concentrates on how to develop skills and describes examples of abundant skills honed by neighbours, friends and friends of friends.

Neil G M Hall

Summer School - the Mother of Polymathic Opportunity

Sign up for Summer School and discover why Marlborough College have been inspiring lifelong learning since 1974.

Marlborough College's annual Summer School will take place from 12 July to 8 August 2020 and once again hosts an amazing array of more than 550 courses suitable for all ages, abilities and interests. Whether you wish to learn a new skill or spend time enhancing an existing one, there is bound to be a course just perfect for you.

Five great reasons to attend Summer School:

Time to explore your creative, physical or intellectual self

All courses run from Monday to Friday and last for either five full or five half days giving you a wonderful opportunity to totally immerse yourself in a favourite pastime or discover something completely new. You will benefit from the guidance and support of tutors who are experts in their chosen fields.

A course for everyone

Summer School offers a diverse programme of art, history and culture, wellbeing, country pursuits and life skills. Traditional favourites run alongside a wide range of inspiring new courses encompassing everything from Macramé to Mental Health, Picture Framing to Smartphone Video, Fundamental Physics to *A Cappella* singing and Wordsworth to Lebanese cookery. In addition to the huge range of adult courses, there is also an impressive programme of activities to entertain young people aged from three to 17 years.

Top class entertainment

Another highlight is the impressive array of evening entertainment on offer to both Summer School students and the public. In addition to recitals, film nights and 5.15pm lectures on a range of fascinating topics, showcase Gala Performances take place every Tuesday and Friday evening. This year's superb line-up includes evenings with Kate Adie and Janet Street-Porter, outdoor family theatre from Illyria and music from The Locrian Ensemble, Only Men Aloud, Andy Abraham, The Rocket Man tribute to Sir Elton John and much, much more.

Excellent Hospitality

Marlborough College offers the option of convenient accommodation throughout Summer School, which is ideal for those attending from further afield.

In fact, with full board included in the accommodation costs, even locals are tempted to stay and take advantage of the indoor swimming pool and state-of-the-art gym, free admission to all entertainment and especially, the delicious food served by the College's talented chefs.

A unique and vibrant holiday

The mix of generations, groups and individuals creates a unique experience and makes the atmosphere at Summer School so vibrant. Last summer saw over 27 nationalities in attendance, making Summer School a truly international event set amidst the history and tradition of Marlborough College. Many students return year after year to renew friendships and enjoy the company of like-minded people. A regular student assures Summer School newcomers to, "Have no fear of coming on your own as there will always be someone to talk to and share experiences with. I first came alone and now we are seven to eight ladies who meet up every year."

For more information and to request a brochure, call the Summer School team on 01672 892388

Travel

Lucinda Hall

'What should they know of England who only England know?' Rudyard Kipling

Most of us 20th and 21st century Brits have been fortunate enough to travel. Travel broadens the mind and apparently studies suggest that taking a gap year or studying abroad can positively influence your brain, making you more outgoing and open to new ideas. So, if you are a traveller, you can add travel to your burgeoning list of polymathic skills.

Travel! And thou shalt find new friends for old ones left behind:

Toil! For the sweets of human life by toil and moil are found:

The stay-at-home no honour wins nor aught attains buant:

So, leave thy place of birth and wander all the world around!

These lines are from *'The Tale of Nur Al-Din Ali and his son Badr Al-Din Hasan: The Thousand Nights and a Night'*, translated by the amazing English polymath Sir Richard Burton KCMG FRGS who was an explorer, geographer, translator, writer, soldier, orientalist, ethnologist, spy, linguist, poet (*The Kasidah*), fencer and diplomat. He was famed for his travels and explorations in Asia, Africa and the Americas, as well as his extraordinary knowledge of languages and cultures. According to one count, he spoke 29 European, Asian and African languages, as well as another 18 dialects!

We live in the age of specialisation; we encourage our children to specialise to get good wages and a secure living but is this really a good thing?

In researching my book *Micromastery* I found that specialisation might have some disadvantages. For a start, we now know the model of the brain has changed from a static computer type system to a plastic, evolutionary organ that grows in accordance with use. The brain follows the hard dicta of ‘use it or lose it’, and the more you specialise the more you lose the wide range of cognitive potentialities that the majority of children display.

I found that according to UNESCO research done by Michigan University's Professor Robert Root-Bernstein, those seeming specialists, Nobel Prize winning scientists, were rather different to how we imagine. Compared to regular scientists a Nobel Winner is 4 times more likely to practise some kind of craft, 15 times more likely to practise music and 22 times more likely to pursue acting, dancing or magic. The Nobel economist with whom I spoke was an excellent pianist - he said he needed the change from maths theory in order to come up with new ideas. But it isn't just the relaxation a different activity provides, it can also supply new material to cross-fertilise with your main area of study: a formidable way to produce advances. One Nobel winner who had learnt to sew as a child (from a seamstress mother) became a pioneer of suturing as a medical doctor.

But for us everyday folk mastering different skills not only keeps us learning it also keeps us interested in life. I have found that learning one small skill, such as making a perfect omelette or perfecting your handwriting - rather than trying to master a whole raft of complicated skills - is a way to avoid the sense of ‘it's not worth trying, the field is just so big’. By breaking up areas of interest into micromasteries you give yourself permission to be interested in anything, since you can drop that interest and get another without losing a big investment of time.

Books by Robert Twigger are available at the White Horse Bookshop. These include:

Micromastery

Angry White Pyjamas

Red Nile: A Biography of the World's Greatest River

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For further enquiries, please contact Lorraine Wash on (020) 8569 8364 or email lorraine.wash@ospreymc.co.uk



Many Marlborough people will know Jenny Atkins as the dedicated resourceful Savernake Hospital Night Nurse who, for twenty years from 1982 onwards, administered to the sick and injured. Marlborough born and bred, a Wiltshire lass, Jenny decided in 1971, aged 20, to follow in her sister's footsteps, completing a Nursing Training at Guy's Hospital, London. "A strong desire to put things right" was her main motivation.

A patient arriving poorly and then eventually discharged well and fit gave Jenny immense satisfaction. Observing patients over the years taught Jenny that those with a positive attitude to life improved more quickly than others. These patients insisted, when able, on doing small things for themselves, saying they wanted to get home as soon as possible to friends and family and, in particular, to hobbies and to the many skills that gave them fulfilment and self-esteem.

When a child during the late 50's and 60's, Jenny and her friends learned to make their own clothes, to garden and to cook. Many turned their hands to crochet, knitting, pickling, baking and jam making. Likewise, male friends could turn their hands to a myriad of skills, including decorating, wiring, carpentry, mending cars and machines. "It was the norm to be fairly capable and independent," she told me.

Jenny worries that the present generation are no longer taught, either in or out of school, to make things with their hands. Sadly, even the Scout movement has dwindled. "Too much emphasis is put on the intellect. Hours are now spent on mobile phones and social media which waters down our sense of independence and eats up time that could be spent on skills encouraging self-worth," she adds. She agrees with Robert Twigger when he says in his book *Micromastery* that "we need to create; not just consume."

After her retirement from Nursing, Jenny joined The Wiltshire Guild of Spinners Weavers and Dyers in Steeple Ashton (www.westwilts-communityweb.com), where she learned to make lovely finely woven fabrics, as well as durable woven floor rugs. Local stained glass classes and making mosaic tops for tables has also provided further tactile satisfaction. 'The Practical Book of Woodworking' was her guide for making a set of wooden shelves because she loves the smell and touch of wood. And she was proud to achieve a near perfect mortise and tenon joint. She continues to sew, to bake and to make jams.

But one of her greatest loves is her allotment on Elcot Lane. "I like to be outside more than inside", said Jenny, so "when the spring arrives, I am off to dig and plant and watch my vegetables pop up out of the soil. When I have time, I stroll between the beds to learn from my allotment friends' ideas! We support and help each

other.”

Reading and travelling to America, Europe, even to China are also on her Polymathic list of achievements. She and her husband, Geoff, are presently passing on their knowledge, including trainsets, to their grandchildren, whom they hope will gain the same contentment and satisfaction from life as they have.

We are what we experience? Rebecca Jerstice

Neuroplasticity and the importance of doing ‘something’.

For years psychologists assumed that our brains held a finite number of brain cells or neuronal connections, and that, as we aged, we inevitably would lose a great number, and so too the functionality that they brought.

Recent research however, has confirmed that this is not the case. Rather than being a fixed entity, our brain’s communication pathways are essentially malleable and rather akin to plasticine (hence the term neuroplasticity). This means that every interaction, conversation and activity that we partake in will strengthen our ‘pathways’ and conversely, if we stop doing a certain activity or indeed selection of activities, these sections will weaken, and will eventually be ‘pruned’.

Messages in the brain are carried along neurones and at the end of each neurone are passed electrochemically across a gap called the synapse. It is this precise action at the synapse that is of upmost importance. The more frequently a synapse is activated, the stronger the overall connection is made, as each stimulation actually changes the shape of the synapse. This changing of the shape of the synapse can lead to further new connections being made and existing paths being made more ‘effective’. This is how ‘learning’ occurs at a minute level; therefore every interaction, conversation and deliberate action that we make contributes to our brain’s ‘network of motorways’ and moulds connections between those individual networks. So, in essence, when you are gardening, playing Sudoku or reading a new novel by your favourite author, you are changing your brain.

Likewise, when we cease to engage in our usual (or indeed new) activities, our brain will start to ‘prune’ connections that have been allowed to ‘wither’, thus weakening connections and associated memory traces. The result being the loss of certain pathways, which will lead to the reduction in your efficiency to carry out certain actions, such a sight-reading piano music due to lack of practice.

This brings me onto the importance of taking the wisdom of a ‘varied diet’ and ‘5 a day’ into our ‘mental diet’, just as we have been doing for years with our

nutritional diet. The more varied our lives are in terms of new experiences and knowledge, the more complex and varied our neuronal connections are. We are able to do more, simply because we do more. The more frequently and more deliberately we engage in actions, the more accomplished we become. As the old idiom suggests, ‘practice makes perfect’, and indeed in regards to our brains ‘practice certainly does mean physical presence’. This can be seen in recent research where neuroscientists have been able to map various areas of our brains that are responsible for certain actions, and amazingly even the location of certain memories.

You might be thinking that to reap the benefits of ‘practice’ that you will have to be up with the larks and slaving away for hours on end; luckily this isn’t the case! A popular idea with many psychologists and counsellors at the moment is the idea of ‘Mind Apples’. This is where a person takes five things that bring them a certain amount of joy or comfort and ensure that they do them every day. This is not intended to be an onerous task; we should simply spend the amount of time it would take you to eat an apple, doing something you love. The positive effects of engaging in this practice have ranged from improved mood, heightened sense of awareness and engagement with our surroundings, and more energised.

On the opposite note, it is also really important, at times, to do nothing. Or, more precisely, to spend time quietly reflecting. If you choose to use more formalised spiritual ways of engaging in this, maybe in prayer or meditation, or the more secular practice of mindfulness, there is evidence to suggest that this will be of immense benefit to your health both now and in the future. Spiritual mindfulness has been suggested to be of a great benefit in terms of decreasing anxiety and improving positivity of mood (*Wachholtz AB, Pargament K, 2005*). Newberg, a research scientist from the University of Pennsylvania, states that prayer and meditation can improve concentration, emotional reasoning and compassion. There is also fledgling research that indicates that undertaking such practices could isolate from some of the common side effects of age-related ageing issues.

This brings me to the most important question: what is the most effective way of improving your brain? Whilst brain training games, apps, etc. have been lauded as the best way for improving our brain power, recent work has suggested that it may be simpler than that. Engaging in light exercise, conversation, and learning something new are as powerful as any so-called training.

Overall, we don’t have to live the perfect life to have a ‘well-connected’ brain; we just have to live a life where we ‘feed’ our brain with stimulating treats each day and keep enjoying our hobbies!

Rebecca teaches psychology to the 6th Form at Marlborough College

My conversation with Marion Gordon-Finlayson about her Polymathy divulged a joyful whirlwind of experience, as well as many deliberate acts of learning, providing a lifelong balance between the intellectual and the creative.

An amiable people person, her positivity and inquisitiveness about the world around her is infectious. Now approaching her 70's, her good health and fitness are due to many on-going pleasurable pursuits like walking, art classes, music, gardening, water sports, 'kitchen' bridge, an ardent love of cycling and more recently beekeeping with her husband, Ian. Perhaps, because of the bees, she agrees with Robert Twigger in his book *Micromastery* that 'the various parts of the brain need ample cross fertilisation.' "Our honey is delicious. Only been stung once", said Marion. As her mother was a practical woman, it is no wonder Marion once completed a Car Mechanic's Course!

After a broad childhood education and later a rigorous Secretarial Qualification, Marion put her typing and shorthand skills to good use landing a London job in 1970 with the British Tourist Authority. This underpinned a desire to travel and see the world. During the first 6½ years of her 46-year marriage to Ian, they found themselves on a steep learning curve working in Paris, immersed in a completely different culture and a new language. Fortunately, a challenging job for Marion in the OECD Environment Department proved fun. Back in Marlborough years later, her amateur psychology and counselling skills were tested while working for SLCA, the Specialist Letting & Caretaking Agency where every day was mind bogglingly different. "Fortunately, I dislike regimentation. At times, I was comforting a tearful divorcee having to rent; on another day a mournful widower or possibly a couple who had been forced to sell their beloved house due to a failed business".

As Dr Robert Ornstein says in his book *Healthy Pleasures*, "The great surprise of human evolution may be that the highest form of selfishness is selflessness." So, engaging in philanthropy for the past 16 years, by holding an annual play for charity performed by the resourceful Cornish Miracle Theatre has been one of Marion's foremost life achievements. Her welcoming Ogbourne Maizey garden is the venue for the stage where a core of regular actors as well as new recruits make up the troupe. "Having an avenue to raise money for others less fortunate than ourselves has been very gratifying, last year's charity being Diabetes UK. In 2020, Youth Adventure Trust is our chosen charity. An average of about £1700-plus has been raised each year with an ever-increasing audience of now over 250 people. This year's epic production of King Lear on 22nd July will be perfect for the offbeat and inventive Miracle treatment - the only real worry is always the weather and we hope

it will treat us kindly!”

I asked Marion what she had learned from observing the actors over 16 years. “Besides acting, dancing and singing, they are all polymaths” she laughed. “Their practical skills kick in when needed; carpentry, costume design, as well as the electricians. A truly professional company, with high standards, they’re very deft at lots of things, not just with iPads, mobile devices and laptops. They’re self-reliant nomads from June until August; with no fixed theatre, instead they travel from venue to venue We house and feed them. In fact, over the years they’ve become part of our extended family.”

Marion often attends the Summer School. I wonder what course she has chosen for 2020? One has the feeling that Marion’s thirst for knowledge will continue until her last breath; and then - the Universe will be her oyster!

Ballroom Dancing and Health

Gordon Nelson

Over eleven million viewers tuned in to watch the final of Strictly Come Dancing last December. Are there health benefits from actually taking part, if not at a professional level, by attending local classes ?

The vast health benefits of ballroom dancing are well documented by scientific research and confirmed by dancers themselves. Ballroom dancing improves your cardiovascular system, helping to prevent heart disease. It will noticeably improve your posture and body alignment, as well as strengthen your body’s core abdominal muscles. Ballroom dancing is also a superb weight loss treatment, helping you burn as much as 400 calories in one hour, all while you are having fun at almost any age!

The movements of many types of dances also strengthen weight-bearing bones and can even help prevent or slow bone loss. As you practise dancing, you become more flexible, agile, and graceful both on and off the dance floor. Dancing will also improve your mental acuity and research shows that it can reduce the likelihood of Alzheimer’s disease in older people who dance on a regular basis.

Physical exercise in any form promotes a healthier self-image. Perhaps more than other sports, ballroom dance has a social component: you can feel the camaraderie when you learn dances within group lessons, make new friends, and laugh with a partner during a private lesson. These benefits alone can help reduce stress and encourage a feeling of overall wellbeing.

Gordon is a professional piano tuner. He plays the harpsichord and taught the trumpet at Marlborough College and elsewhere. He was a founder member and first conductor of the Marlborough Concert Orchestra. At Summer School he partners the ‘partnerless’ during the Ballroom Dancing classes.

Bell ringing and especially what is referred to as ‘change ringing’ is an ancient art that requires physical and mental dexterity.

The first step in learning to ring bells in England is to master control of the bell. Not so easy, as each bronze bell can weigh from a few hundredweight to several tons and is housed in the bell chamber, at the top of the church tower. Swinging easily on bearings that are set in stout – often ancient – oak frames, the bells are controlled by a handmade rope that drops from a wooden wheel, attached to the bell, through the floor and down to the ringing chamber, frequently many feet below. The number of bells range from up to four or five in a small church to perhaps six, eight or ten in a substantial tower. Most cathedrals have twelve bells.

The ringing chamber is usually hidden away and reached by a spiral staircase within the tower. A degree of anonymity suited pious worshippers in times gone by, as ringers were sometimes unruly and given to drink.

The normal resting position of the bells is down, and ringing starts by taking hold of the ‘sally’, the familiar, colourful, woolly section of the rope, with one hand and the ‘tail’ with the other and gently swinging the bells. Then, with each tug, they move faster and faster until their increased momentum brings them up with their mouths facing heavenward. The bells are stopped from tipping over the top by a wooden ‘stay’. From then on, each stroke of the clapper requires a 360-degree revolution of each bell. Every ringer controls his own bell and great care must be taken not to break the ‘stay’, by overthrowing the bell, in which case the full weight of the bell would cause it to tumble over and over, pulling the ringer up to – or even through – the ceiling with catastrophic results. That is, unless he or she has been quick-witted enough to let go of the rope!

Ringling a bell up requires one to exert considerable energy and is one good reason why this activity is sometimes known as ‘the exercise’. However, once in position the bell is delicately balanced and can be handled by a ten-year-old or an octogenarian.

Once up, the bells are in position for ‘rounds’, which means that each bell follows the next; round and round in a circle – the familiar do, ti, la, so, fa, mi, re, do.

Once bell control has been mastered, the next step is to make the sound more interesting. This is achieved by the Captain of the Tower, who calls for changes in the order of progression. Following a string of commands – moving to the right – do will follow ti, then la, then so, *ad continuum*.

The next development is for the ringers themselves to follow a pattern that they

hold in their heads. This is known as 'hunting a plain course' and means that each bell will follow a different bell on each stroke, working through a set pattern. Once this has been learned the ringer can exercise mental agility by studying complicated method ringing and equip him- or herself to ring a peal. A typical peal is just over 5000 changes, with no sequence repeated, taking several hours to complete. Ringing a peal successfully is no mean achievement for both mind and body.

Many methods have curious names. These may, like Stedman's, denote the name of the originator of the method, or the name of the place where it was first rung, as in Cambridge Surprise. Names with Minor (Little Bob) or Doubles (Grandsire) or Triples (Single Oxford Bob) denote a technical aspect of the method, as does Bob. A single error will disqualify the peal attempt, but there are plaques in churches all over the country commemorating successful peals, the names of the ringers who participated and the event celebrated. These are usually for coronations, jubilees, royal weddings or a local occasion; perhaps a ringer's significant anniversary or in memory of long-standing service. For funerals, bells are rung half-muffled, which is achieved by tying a leather thong to one side of the clapper, and the clear call of the bell followed by an echo signifies this world and the world beyond.

The first peal in England was rung in 1715, and I think most people agree that the sound of church bells, rung by real experts, is beautiful. If you are looking to exercise a new skill that provides fun and camaraderie bell ringing could be for you!

More information about bell ringing in Marlborough and especially attempts to restore the ringing facilities at St Peter's church in the sixties – together with much else – can be found in my book: 'An English Baby Boomer: My Life and Times' which is available at the White Horse bookshop.

For those wishing to try their hands at bell ringing you may care to contact:

St Mary's: Marlborough

Dorothy Blythe 01672 512993/07785 274413

St George's: Preshute

Ian Wyld 01672 513284

St John the Baptist: Mildenhall

Tom Otley 01672 516506



THE ARTS
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The Arts Society Pewsey Vale holds monthly Lectures* on arts subjects, organises Study Days on fascinating topics, and arranges Visits to great places. It meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Bouverie Hall in Pewsey at 7 for 7.30pm. Annual membership costs £40 - contact pewseyvale@theartsociety.org or 07775 683163 to join.

*24 March: Sian Walters lectures on 'Raphael: A Master in the Making'

A snail goes to buy a car. When the snail picks out a fast sports car, the Salesman is surprised. He's also surprised when the snail requires a big 'S' to be painted on both sides of the car. Why do you want 'S's painted on your car', asks the Salesman? The snail replies, 'I want people to say - look at that S-car-go!!'

No doubt, this short silly joke has brought a smile to your face, but when was the last time you had a side splitting, burst of laughter, the positive health affirming carefree hilarity that reverberates on and on?

'A happy convulsion, a psychophysiological reflex, an uninterrupted, rhythmic spasmodic expiration with open glottis by a baring of teeth and facial grimaces' is one scientific definition of laughter. A kind of inner jogging; laughing is essentially good exercise. Face, diaphragm and abdomen muscles are stretched. One's heart rate and blood pressure temporarily rise as breathing increases, becoming deeper, while oxygen surges through the bloodstream. Laughing boosts T-cells, reduces levels of the stress hormones epinephrine and cortisol, triggers a release of good endorphins and apparently, bolsters immunity by deliberately altering mood.

Making people laugh is a great gift, so if you are not naturally funny, why not learn to be? Observe those who are. Why not add the art of telling jokes and amusing stories to your polymathic list? Practise jokes at home in the mirror; take a course in telling jokes, anecdotes and stories; memorise quotes and sayings that spice up your conversation. When was the last time you memorised anything, even a song? Become an eccentric wise fool!

'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine', so *Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)* tells us. No doubt, Jesus of Nazareth enjoyed a good laugh. King Henry VIII's fool, Will Somers, often relieved the King's sadness through jokes and silliness and Elizabeth I was regularly amused by her Jester 'who cured her melancholy better than all her physicians'. Fools and jesters and many of Shakespeare's plays were the Music Hall comedy, the Rowan Atkinson, Two Ronnies, Dad's Army and Benny Hill, of their days. But over the centuries in the West, have the written word, film, radio, TV and now a myriad of technologies, combined with our intellectual logical Western form of education, pushed out the real thing?

Riveting comedy is rare these days. Why? Are those writing comedy too influenced by an invasive political correctness? Are we taking ourselves too seriously? Is a lack of laughter directly affecting our health?

Researchers have discovered that laughter involves various regions of the brain, so perhaps a good joke bounces from the left to right brain, around the back and frontal lobes like an electrical impulse in a computer's circuitry? Our DNA contains

the unconscious capacity to laugh. We do not decide to laugh and we can inhibit it, but generally laughter is caused by a spontaneous reaction. The best jokes build on a set of expectations and have a punchline to update the knowledge of the listener in an unexpected way. It's the unexpected challenge that intrigues us in many of life's convoluted, sometimes, very testing patterns.

Across the Middle East, Central Asia and Asia, the oral tradition is still strong and jokers' tales like those of Joha and The Mulla Nasrudin help to remind those parts of the world on a daily basis that a good joke is a way to avoid confrontation. Jokes poke fun at all human weaknesses. Humour may indeed be an effective antidote to adversity because when animals are confronted with a threatening situation, they have two choices; flee or fight. Humans have a third alternative: LAUGHTER! Humour allows us to distance ourselves from a threat, short circuiting feelings of anxiety or anger.

One of the best-known tales of the joker Mulla Nasrudin concerns his life as a smuggler. *For years, the Mulla was known for his habit of crossing the Afghan border with nothing but a straw-laden donkey. Asked by customs officers whether he had anything to declare, the answer was always the same: "nothing but straw." A search always followed; but no matter how hard the officials prodded and probed the donkey's load; no contraband was ever found.*

Years later, the now-retired chief of customs happened to meet the Mulla in a teahouse. 'All those years ago,' he tells Nasrudin, 'we knew you were up to something, but we never found anything. Since we are both old men now, can you tell me what it was you were smuggling?' 'Donkeys!' replied Nasrudin, 'Donkeys.'

Another Nasrudin style anecdote is attributed to Churchill. *A group of clever clogs Civil Servants complained that Churchill always answered a question with a question. They had a plan. In a Whitehall corridor, they stopped Churchill and one of them asked him the time. 'What time do YOU make it, young man,' replied Churchill. The original goes like this: A conceited customer approached Nasrudin in the teahouse. 'Why do you always answer a question with another question?' he asked. Narrowing his eyes, Nasrudin sipped his tea, and replied, 'Do I?'*

How any society deals with humour and uses it to best advantage is interesting. I find the British very self-deprecating and able to laugh at themselves. In fact, the British sense of humour is probably one of the most sophisticated in the world. Douglas Jerrold, a dramatist, remarked, 'If an earthquake were to engulf England tomorrow, the English would manage to meet and dine somewhere amongst the rubbish, just to celebrate the event' – and, no doubt, have a good laugh!

As an English proverb reminds us; 'he is not laughed at who laughs at himself!'

What's On

Regular events

Every Monday

2.30pm Manton Village Hall. Social Dancing with tea and cakes. Come on your own or bring a friend.

Contact 07443 646695 or 01672 515151. (*Between September and Easter*)

6pm Recreation Ground, Salisbury Road. Bowls Club.

7.30pm Christchurch. Marlborough Choral Society.

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

Every Tuesday

10.30-12noon Mildenhall Village Hall. Music and Movement for the Mind, for people living with dementia & family carers. Alzheimer's Support 01380 739055 or www.alzheimerswiltshire.org.uk

2-3.30pm Savernake Hospital. Carers' Support Café. (*2nd Tuesday*)

2.45pm The Parlour, Christchurch. Women's Fellowship. (*2nd & 4th Tuesdays*)

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

Every Wednesday

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

10.15-11.45am St Peter's Church. Carers' Support Cafe. (*Last Wednesday of month*).

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

7.30-9pm Bell-ringing practice at St John's, Minal .

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

Every Thursday

10.30-12noon Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge. Music for the Mind. Alzheimer's Support. 01225 776481. (*Every Thursday during term-time*).

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

Every Friday

10-12 noon Christchurch C

6-7.30pm Marlborough Sc
ages 7+. Fun, games, tuck
(*Every Friday during term-time*)

By Appointment

Library. Marlborough & D

Drop-in advice. Help line:

March calendar

1st (Sunday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church.
Concert: Johanna Roehrig
Richardson-Eames pianist
members).

2nd (Monday)

2pm Kennet Valley Hall, L
Marlborough Embroiderer
Nichols: 'From Graduation
Artist'. Visitors £5. 861410

4th (Wednesday)

7.30pm Wesley Hall, Oxford
Pot Luck Supper.

5th (Thursday)

2pm Mildenhall Village Ha
Demonstration by Jane Be
Visitors £6. Micky Graham

7th (Saturday)

7pm Town Hall. Jubilee C
Dinner & Auction. Tickets

7 for 7.30pm St Peter's Ch
Magnificent AKs: The Sing
Keynes. £10 from <http:///>

8th (Sunday)

3pm Marlborough College
Southbank Sinfonia. £20 (

11th (Wednesday)

10am-12.30pm. The Merch
Lecture by Michael Hart: '5
English Character'. Tickets
for Friends) including coff

Crush Hall. Foodbank.
out Hut. Explorers club for
& a short Bible talk. £0.50.
)
istrict Dyslexia Association.
07729 452143.

Brilliant Young Musicians.
(violin) and Cameron
and tenor). £10 (£8

Lockeridge SN8 4EL.
s' Guild. Talk by Louise
n to a Career as a Textile
)

rd Street. WI. AGM and

ll. Floral Club.
lcher: 'Intermingled'.
n 514301.

entre Fundraising Grand
s £30 from Jubilee Centre.

urch. Music and song. The
ging Blokes of Ashton
bit.ly/tmak47gigs.

Memorial Hall. Concert:
£10 students). 892566.

ant's House. Reformation.
Protestantism and the
s from the shop. £15 (£12
ee & cake. See page 25.

12.30pm 40 St Martins. Widows' Friendship Group
Lunch. 514030.

7.45pm Wesley Hall, Oxford Street. Gardening
Association. Talk by Davina Wynne-Jones: 'The
Influence of my mother, Rosemary Verey'.

16th (Monday)

11am Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton SN4
9LW. The Arts Society Kennet & Swindon. Lecture by
Clare Phillips: 'Decadence and Dreams – Jewellery
from around 1900'. Guests £7. 01793 840790.

7.30pm Slade House, St James' Gardens, Devizes.
National Trust Association. Lecture by Susan Fox:
'The Beau Street Hoard'. £3, £4 (non members).

17th (Tuesday)

7.30pm Town Hall. An illustrated lecture by Tim
Craven: 'Norman Thelwell'. £10 (£7 members). In aid
of The Merchant's House. See page 31.

18th (Wednesday)

10am-12.30pm The Merchant's House. Reformation.
Lecture by David Evans: 'Reformation in England and
the Arts'. Tickets £15 (£12 for Friends) from the shop
including coffee & cake. See page 25.

19th (Thursday)

6pm Garnett Room, Marlborough College. Sun-Earth
Day lecture by Charles Barclay 'Stories in the Stars -
Cultural Interpretations of the Night Sky'. Free entry.

7.00pm St Peter's Church. Marlborough History
Society. AGM followed at 7.30pm by talk by Major
General Peter Williams: 'The End of the War in
Germany'. Guests £5. Students half price.

21st (Saturday)

7.30pm St Mary's Church. Marlborough Concert
Orchestra. Wagner, Mendelssohn and
Tchaikovsky. £10, students £2. See page 25.

22nd (Sunday)

3pm Kennet Valley Hall. Film: 'The Lion King'. £7
adults, £5 children.

24th (Tuesday)

6pm St Peter's Church. St Peter's Church Trust AGM.
Members only.

7.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. The Arts Society

Pewsey Vale. Lecture by Sian Walters: 'Raphael: A Master in the Making'.
Visitors £7. See page 13.

27th (Friday)

12 noon Marlborough College end of Lent Term.

28th (Saturday)

7.30pm Merchant's House. Presentation by Sophie Matthews:
'Music in Art'. £15 (members £12) See page 31.

Family News

compiled by Jessy Pomfret

Ian Robert Anderson died on 26th November 2019 and at his request was cremated privately. He leaves his wife, Patricia, three children, James, Lucy and Kate and four grandchildren. He enjoyed retirement in Marlborough and took part in many societies after a life working for Cargill in Switzerland and France. We send our condolences to his family.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptism – we welcome

26 January Lyra Elizabeth Anne Williamson at St Mary's

Funerals - we pray for the families of:

16 January Elizabeth 'Bet' Ann Bicknell (80)
and two days later, her husband:

18 January Charles 'Charlie' Henry Bicknell (83), both of Laineys Close,
Marlborough
*Jointly at St Mary's, Marlborough and North Wilts Crematorium,
Royal Wootton Bassett*

21 January Suzanne 'Sue' Mary Bailey (73) of Rogers Meadow,
Marlborough
*St Mary's, Marlborough and North Wilts Crematorium, Royal
Wootton Bassett*

31 January Brian Gordon Ashley (84) of Stonebridge Lane, Marlborough
St Mary's, Marlborough and Marlborough Cemetery

3 February Martin Leonard Edminson (55) of Poperinghe Way, Reading
*St Mary's, Marlborough and North Wilts Crematorium, Royal
Wootton Bassett*

10 February Susan 'Sue' Armitage (73) of St Margaret's Mead, Marlborough
St Mary's, Marlborough

It's March, and I do hope that if you were rash enough to embark on any kind of change-your-life regime in January you've given it up and are ready to retire to the sofa with a good book. If you really want to make drastic reforms, wait a few weeks until the clocks go forward, you'll have a much better chance of success in springtime.

Or be like me and read books about other people's lives and interests – they're always more exciting anyway. In the case of Keggie Carew, life is interesting, awkward, adventurous and (occasionally justifiably) paranoid. *Quicksand Tales*, her book of vignettes, essays, call them what you will, is funny and clever and, she says, all entirely true. I loved the descriptions of a truly excruciating writing workshop, a stay at Scotland's most horrible hotel and a meditation on how gardening is all about murder. This eccentric collection is hard to categorise, but a very enjoyable read, especially if *schadenfreude* is your thing (everyone needs a hobby).

I have a completely unscientific theory that readers are also radio-listeners – something to do with creating one's own pictures, maybe? If you stop to think about it, radio is utter magic. Charlie Connelly is a true radio enthusiast, listener and broadcaster, and *Last Train to Hilversum* is his celebration of the history and personalities of this most immersive and intimate medium. From the electrophone, through Beatrice Harrison and her cello, to the switch-off of the analogue signal, Connelly looks at the broadcasting content and the technology. He visits weeny remote little commercial stations, talks to well-known broadcasters and revives memories of big names and events (and scandals) of the past. And do you remember the SOS messages?

Finally, if we're considering other lives, in *A Bit of a Stretch* Chris Atkins has written about an experience most of us will hope never to have – that of being sentenced to a term in prison. A documentary film-maker, Atkins was sentenced to six years for tax fraud. Advised to keep diaries while inside he has used them to create this record of how the penal system in this country fails so dismally. Shocking, despairing, amusing, it's an eye-opening call for progressive modernisation.



NASA/ESA Sun-Earth Day Public Lecture
Thursday 19th March 6pm
in the Garnett Room*, Marlborough College
**Charles Barclay BSc FRAS FRSA: 'Stories in the Stars:
Cultural Interpretations of the Night Sky'**
*upstairs in the History Block, E side of the courtyard. Free

“I was tempted to take a course in lawn mowing maintenance at college in Canberra, New South Wales, where I was raised but switched to Commercial Cookery,” Dan told me, as we were sitting in his sunlit restaurant on the Parade, Marlborough, one bright January morning.

“However”, he continued, “when I discovered that the cookery course was more challenging, with the highest drop-out rate I thought this was for me!”

So commenced a career as chef and restaurateur that has lasted some thirty years. Egged on by a friend, he arrived in the UK in 1999 and started working at Coles, the former restaurant in Kingsbury Street, before starting DAN’S – his own establishment.

“What is the appeal?” I asked. “I absolutely love creating dishes that people would not normally expect to eat and I am thrilled to know that as many people as possible are enjoying what I and my staff (three chefs) have produced. I divide my time between the kitchen and front of house because I like to know whom I am cooking for and observe the pleasure they get from our efforts. At Christmas, when we are closed, I cook a huge meal for staff, friends and neighbours – I call it my orphan’s feast!!”

“Is there any particular new dish Dan would like to introduce?” I ask. “Goat” he replies. “Cooked in the right way goat is very tasty but I am not sure if Marlborough is ready for it yet,” he chuckles. “Firstly, if you are expecting something like tender lamb it is delicious but not so succulent, secondly, it is expensive because the rearing and slaughtering process is costly, thirdly people raise their eyebrows if I mention ‘goat’- it is a cultural problem!” At this point our conversation widens to discuss the enormous changes in England since the war with regard to eating habits. When I was a boy in London during the fifties the only choice for eating out was Indian or Chinese unless one went to an expensive establishment in the West End. Now the world is your oyster – no pun intended.

“As you know, Dan, this edition of Tower and Town is focusing on polymathic skills. Do you encourage people to do their own cooking?” I ask. “Oh, yes” he replies. “I give them what tips I can or direct them to the internet or a book called *Practical Professional Cookery*. Western gastronomy is based on classic French dishes, start there and innovate, I am just about to introduce octopus with apple!”

“What about the business side?” I ask. “I hate paperwork,” he says, “but have always been good with figures – so no problem. I love food and I love observing people enjoying food”, he concludes.

Jesus said: “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?” That might not seem like a compliment. Before the day and age when you could buy salt at Tesco for under a pound, it was a profoundly valuable commodity. Jesus emphasises the precious value of his followers with his simple comparison. To call someone ‘Salt of the Earth’ is to praise their contribution to our world; without it we wouldn’t be living in half as nice a place.

Today we use salt on our roads when the weather threatens to turn icy because, of course, salt melts ice. I remember quite a few years ago this part of the UK was hit with a snowy, icy period of a few days - as close to a blizzard as England ever gets, and the Motorway Agency ran out of road salt. A mountain of it needed to be purchased from Italy to ensure we could continue to use the motorways.

Luckily, in the UK, road salt isn’t often needed, because on the downside it causes cars to rust and their bodywork to fall apart. I’ve seen its appalling damage in North America and owned numerous cars that fell victim to being exposed to it for months and months at a time.

In food, we use it as a flavour enhancer. The most trendy salt is ‘Himalayan Pink’; especially among those who believe in regular fasting, as it suppresses hunger pains.

Too much salt on our roads or in our diet can be bad news. There is a special very low-salt diet that NHS doctors put you on before they try medication for high blood pressure. It’s called the ‘DASH’ (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) diet. I’ve been on it and I must say I really missed the white stuff!

So, what might Jesus be up to with this lavish compliment? Yes, salt is deeply valuable and adds so much to so many things, as might his followers if they follow his teaching; but, it seems also to be the case that Jesus is suggesting that it might be possible to have ‘too much of a good thing.’ Does too much salt in one place, like lawn fertilizer, merely burn the grass rather than help it to grow? Are there an over-abundance of Social Justice Warriors who are trying to outdo each other with progressive good deeds?

Jesus was simply saying that, just as a little salt goes a long way - just a few followers, just a few who heed his words, just a few who attempt as faithfully as they can and as often as they can, and not even necessarily without fail and always, to make the world a better place by enhancing it with a dash of goodness, that’s all it will take to improve the lives of a great deal of people. It only takes one hero to save Gotham City. A small family team like ‘The Incredibles’ can save the world. A little ‘dash’ and nothing more.

Exhibition at The White Horse Bookshop

Gabriella Venus

The first exhibition of 2020 at The White Horse Gallery is a selection of Deep Space photographs taken from the new book by Gavin James and Jonathan Genton, *In the Marlborough Night Garden: Vol 2*.

If we step inside the space time continuum and whizz back to 2016, you may recall the publication of the first *In the Marlborough Night Garden*. Fast forward four years, and we have Volume 2. Still puzzled? Read on...

The back garden of a regular house in River Park, Marlborough, Wiltshire is home to the River Park Observatory. On every clear night, it is the scene of intense astronomical activity as the imaging set-up in the observatory is busy hoovering up photons to create another beautiful photograph of the night sky. In the Marlborough Night Garden: Volume 2 shows the results of the activity between July 2016 and June 2019, with over 500 hours of data in 30 colour photographs of deep sky objects. Gavin James.

This is a more unusual exhibition for me to review, but here goes...

Sadly, by the time this month's edition of T&T is out, the exhibition will have come down. It was a truly mind-blowing show for many reasons. Firstly, because WOW, secondly, because these phenomenal photographs were taken from, what could mistakenly be, a garden shed and have produced unbelievably clear and staggeringly inconceivable images of Deep Space. The exhibition was broken down and categorised into Nebulae, Clusters and Galaxies. These matte acrylic prints were coupled with labels detailing information such as: object type, constellation, discovery, diameter, telescope, data gathered and exposures. *The Full Moon* (a personal favourite) was a particularly beautiful brushed aluminium print.

Gavin James is an accomplished astrophotographer, and has been "addicted to the pursuit of deep sky object image creation for over seven years." Jonathan Genton, who has also long been "fascinated by physics and astrophysics" taught physics and astronomy at the College, where he was also Head of Science.

Perhaps one of the most pleasurable things about this exhibition was the collaboration between art and science. The photographs are awe inspiring. It is a wonderful marriage of scientific fascination and understanding, with artistic beauty and skill. It really focusses the mind, and reiterates how art and science are constantly forming partnerships and collaborating, I give you Concorde, the London Underground, electric cars, sustainable fashion...

If you missed the exhibition, I suggest you either buy the book available from The White Horse Bookshop, or visit Gavin's website for more information: www.gjmultimedia.co.uk.



The Flame and Horseshoe Nebulae
Distance 1400 light years. Exposure 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours over 11 nights



Bode's Galaxy. *Distance 12 million light years. Exposure 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours over 8 nights*

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

Also **Emmanuel Church, Marlborough**

- 4.00pm Main Sunday Service with Sunday School, at St John's Academy, Marlborough

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 Weds March 4th: Teddy Prayers & Picnic, a special service for U5s & carers followed by a picnic lunch

Marlborough Church Contacts

Fr John Blacker

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

The Revd Dr Janneke Blokland

892291 jblokland@gmail.com
Assistant Chaplain, Marlborough College

The Revd Dr David Maurice

514119; david_maurice2000@yahoo.com
Associate Minister, Marlborough Anglican Team

Reuben Mann

07894 048146
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

The Revd Tim Novis

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

The Revd Chris Smith

514357; revcjsmith@outlook.com
Rector; Marlborough Angliкан Team

The Revd Stephen Skinner

512457; rev.stephen.skinner3@gmail.com
Minister, Christchurch Methodist

Rachel Rosedale

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

Andrew Trowbridge

513701; office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk
Christchurch Office, New Road, SN8 1AH

Laura Willis

512357; marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk
Anglican Team Office, Church Cottage, Silverless Street, SN8 1JQ

The Merchant's House Spring Study Series 2020

The Reformation



Wednesday 11th March
Protestantism and the
English Character
given by **Michael Hart**



Wednesday 18th March
Reformation in England
and the Arts
given by **David Evans**



Wednesday 1st April
Monarchy to Mansion - Architecture
in Britain after the Reformation
given by **Christopher Rogers**

All lectures are from 10:00am to 12:30pm in the panelled room
at The Merchant's House
132 High Street, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1HN

Tickets £15 each (£12 for Friends) including coffee and cakes
available in person at The Merchant's House Shop or
online at: www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events



All profits in aid of the Merchant's House (Marlborough) Trust. Charity No. 1010902

Marlborough Concert Orchestra Saturday 21 March 2020 at 7:30 pm St Mary's Church, Marlborough

Conductor Roselise Gentile Leader Edward Judge

Wagner
Overture
'Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg'

Mendelssohn
Incidental Music to
A Midsummer Night's Dream
(excerpts)

Tchaikovsky
Nutcracker Suite
(excerpts)

Tchaikovsky
Swan Lake (excerpts)

Tickets £10 adults £2 students available from
Sound Knowledge, Hughenden Yard, or on the door
Licensed bar, and raffle in aid of St Mary's Church Organ Fund
Registered charity 1113775



Local resident, enthusiast and prime mover for *Marlborough in Bloom*, Steve's work can be seen all around the town with some thirty plant troughs he constructed from discarded pallets. Having known him for nearly twenty years I acknowledge that he can adapt any bit of old wood for some useful purpose – a very valuable neighbour! That is not to deny that he has made some excellent pieces of furniture as well!

“I have always been interested in wood”, he tells me as we sit down to talk about his life. Working with wood may well be a key to Steve's polymathic skills but this has also led to the development of both the right (artistic) and left (intellectual) sides of his brain. From his achievements he must have, surely, derived much satisfaction and self-esteem!

Very early memories include witnessing the skilful manoeuvres of Spitfires and Hurricanes from his home town, Dover, during the Battle of Britain. Educated at the grammar school followed by entry to Canterbury Art College he qualified in Furniture Design. Then, following National Service in the RAF Security Police, Steve spent a number of years in the Midlands working as a designer for several companies in the furniture business including The Stag Cabinet Company who were developing the use of chipboard in furniture construction. “My strong Kentish accent conflicted with Brummie and Nottingham, but somehow I got by”, he chuckles.

Seeking a change by moving south, the bills were paid as a salesman by selling equipment to the woodworking industry and taking on odd jobs but in time he was employing craftsmen in the building trade and this led to forming a fully blown property maintenance company – a highly creative procedure - based in Newbury. By this time he had married his delightful and hugely supportive second wife, Jenny. Somehow he found the time to develop his skills as a church organist and keen gardener and soon became involved with the local parish council.

Steve is multi-talented and his administration skills were clearly appreciated leading to his becoming a district councillor and eventually Chairman of West Berkshire Council.

“None of us is getting any younger” he acknowledges ruefully, “so this year I am keen to encourage new blood to join our *Marlborough in Bloom* team. Seeing all the flowers blossoming around the town is a huge source of satisfaction and pleasure for all of us so new volunteers please call”, he concluded! (01672 519304)

Good luck, Steve!

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Marlborough & District

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My wife and I were sitting in David's office in his intriguing manor house on the edge of the Marlborough Downs. The origins of the house go back to 1447 and the family have farmed the surrounding area for more than a hundred years. David's son has now taken over responsibility and farms something in the region of 4000 acres, conventional arable but no dairy now. He also runs a herd of Highland cows on their downland. Our meeting had been arranged because we had heard that David was something of a polymath and this proved to be very true.

School was followed by several years at what is now the Royal Agricultural University at Cirencester and this led to travelling in Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand learning the secrets of efficient dairy production.

On the walls above where we were sitting are the most magnificent crystal clear colour photographs – each one is something in the region of four foot square - and depict scenes from the surrounding countryside. What particularly intrigued us was a picture of the 'Wolf Moon' rising between the pinnacles of St James church, Avebury. "That can't have been taken by chance". I commented. "Oh no!" he replied. "I researched when that moment was likely to occur and was ready poised with my Olympus!" Discussing the matter later, my wife and I agreed that David's work exhibited remarkable artistic flair (right brain) with disciplined technological skill and precision (left brain).

Smaller detailed photos that he showed us were of a variety of birds including the bar-tailed godwit, turnstone, little egret and kingfisher with a fish in his beak! Photography was clearly a passion and taking photos of the natural world had obviously developed from farming to David's other passion – conservation. This has led to him to becoming involved with the Marlborough Downs Space for Nature Project and the World Pheasant Association based in Hexham. While supporting all forms of wild life, practical efforts include maintaining hundreds of nest boxes on his land and he is particularly proud of the fact that ten years ago only two pairs of the endangered tree sparrows were in evidence while now he expects to see a winter flock of some 500 birds. "How has this been achieved?" I ask. "By careful and constant feeding with millet", he replied.

David's efforts are not restricted to the United Kingdom and he will soon be in search of more stunning images in Arctic waters. One of his photos appeared on the front page of *The Times* in 2018. He has also been involved with The Fluency Trust; in 2010 he ran in the London Marathon and raised £22,000 for this cause.

A selection of David's photographs is on display and for sale at the Framemakers Gallery in Marlborough High Street.

News from the Churches

Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group

meets at the Friends Meeting House, The Parade at 7.30pm on Monday 2nd March with guest speaker from Kennet Furniture Refurbishment (recycling household goods). All welcome.

Marlborough Churches Together Fraternal

meets at 12.30 on Tuesday 3rd March at Thornsend. Please speak to the clergy if you would like something included.



Teddy Prayers and Picnic

Wednesday 4th March at 12.30pm at St George's Church. A special service for Under 5's and their carers followed by a picnic lunch. Teddy Prayers is much enjoyed by under-fives, but we now include dates for older siblings, who have started school, to join us when they can, at their request! For details of future dates please contact Sue Elks. 01672 511612. susanelks@rocketmail.com

Debate with Danny Kruger MP

An opportunity to discuss local, national and international issues with Danny Kruger, MP for the Devizes Constituency. Co-ordinated by Marlborough Churches Together at St Mary's Church, Marlborough. Thursday 5th March at 7.30pm.

Women's World Day of Prayer

A service for the Women's World Day of Prayer will be held at Holy Family Church, Pewsey at 2.00 pm on Friday 6th March. The service is always good at linking us with Christians worldwide. We welcome parishioners from the Marlborough side of our parish. All welcome.

Come & See

Rev Stephen Skinner is leading a morning of prayerful painting/drawing/etching inspired by Psalm 23 on Saturday 7th March, 10am to 12.30pm, at St John's Church, Pewsey. No need to book, just turn up!

Women's Fellowship in March

All meetings start at 2.45pm and are in Christchurch.

10th Tea and chat

24th Ruth Richards

April 7th Rev Stephen Skinner



Special Day of Prayer

Please join us any time during the day on Wednesday 18th March at St George's, Preshute when we will be praying for the recruitment of a new Team Vicar. The Evening Prayer (5pm preceded by tea, as usual) will focus particularly on prayer for the Team Vicar recruitment.

Mothering Sunday – 22nd March

Services, suitable for all ages, with posies of flowers available, will be held at:
9.30am at St John the Baptist, Minal
10.00am at St Mary's, Marlborough and St George's, Preshute
10.30am at Christchurch, Marlborough

Sunday Lunch Club

Sunday Lunch at Christchurch takes place on March 22nd and April 26th at 12.30pm. Please reserve a place by 9am on the Friday before by ringing Christchurch Office: 513701 or Kate Trowbridge: 515347.



Kids' Event: Easter Eggstravaganza

Friday 27th March from 5.30 to 7pm at St John's School, Marlborough. Games, craft, food, Bible story. For primary age children: Some activities together, others split into older & younger groups. £1 for food. RSVP by Fri 20 March: office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Book Group

will meet Monday 30th March 7.30pm at Mustard Seed and will discuss *A Map of the Sky* by Claire Wong, a portrayal of the adult world through the eyes of a curious, lovable eleven-year-old boy. It tackles adult issues but without the over-analysis that comes with adulthood.



Norman Thelwell
(1923 – 2004)
Celebrated cartoonist and artist

An illustrated talk by **Tim Craven**
featuring plump ponies, idyllic landscapes and social satire

Tuesday 17th March 2020 at 7:30pm
in The Assembly Room, Marlborough Town Hall, SN8 1AA
A one hour talk. Doors open 6:45pm. Cash bar.



Tim Craven is Curator of Southampton City Art Gallery. His hour long illustrated talks traces the life, passions and artistic development of Norman Thelwell from his early years and formative wartime experiences to his subsequent rise to become one of the nation's best known and loved cartoonists of his era. Full details are available at www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events or scan the QR code below.

Tickets **£10 each** (£7 for Friends of The Merchant's House)
Available in person at **The Merchant's House Shop** or
online at: www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events



All profits in aid of the Merchant's House (Marlborough) Trust. Charity No. 1010902

Music in Art

presented by sophie matthews



Saturday 28th March 2020 at 7:30pm
in The Merchant's House, Marlborough SN8 1HN
A one hour presentation. Doors open 6:45pm. Cash bar.

Drawing on the works of great painters including *Braugel, Hogarth and Rigaud*, Sophie presents a feast of images featuring historical woodwind instruments in their original social context interspersed with live performances of historical music using authentic instruments. Full details via the web link below.

Tickets **£15 each** (£12 for Friends of The Merchant's House)
Available in person at **The Merchant's House Shop** or
online at: www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events



All profits in aid of the Merchant's House (Marlborough) Trust. Charity No. 1010902

Tower and Town staff

Chairman	Hugh de Saram	chairman@towerandtown.org.uk 18 Kelham Gardens SN8 1PW	516830
Advertising	Andrew Unwin	advertising@towerandtown.org.uk	01380860120
Distribution	Sue Tulloh	distribution@towerandtown.org.uk	288912
Subscriptions	Peter Astle	4 Laurel Drive, SN8 2SH	515395
Treasurer	Peter Astle	treasurer@towerandtown.org.uk	515395

Production Teams

April

Editor	Marlborough Coll.	apr.editor@towerandtown.org.uk	516830
Compiler	Peter Noble	apr.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk	519034

May

Editor	Raik Jarjis	may.editor@towerandtown.org.uk	511725
Compiler	Peter Noble	may.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk	519034

June

Editor	David Du Croz	jun.editor@towerandtown.org.uk	511725
Compiler	Peter Noble	jun.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk	519034

Every Month

<i>What's On</i>	Karen Osborne	whats.on@towerandtown.org.uk	514364
<i>News from the Churches</i>	Alison Selby	church.news@towerandtown.org.uk Crossmead, Kingsbury St, SN8 1HU	511128
<i>Family News</i>	Jessy Pomfret	family.news@towerandtown.org.uk	

Website, online edition www.towerandtown.org.uk; info@towerandtown.org.uk

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 April issue by Tuesday 10th March please.

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