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# TOWER<sub>AND</sub>TOWN

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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



**MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE EDITION**

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# TOWER<sup>AND</sup>TOWN

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## Existence and Change

This year Marlburians have turned to ideas of existence and of change: for the former, through what makes us who we are; for the latter, through discovery and learning.

The poems and first essay are connected both thematically and chronologically, stemming from events of the 1990s. In that decade the butterfly effect and chaos theory more broadly were popular areas of research and culture. The 'butterfly effect' was defined by E. N. Lorenz in *The Essence of Chaos* (1993) as 'The phenomenon that a small alteration in the state of a dynamical system will cause subsequent states to differ greatly from the states that would have followed without the alteration.' If that has confused rather than clarified, 'The Fluttering of a Butterfly' on page 2 may help. Two years after Lorenz's book came the novel 'Wicked' by Maguire, with its messages of staying true to one's values and being comfortable in one's own skin. Read 'Witch!' for a punchy poem inspired by the musical,

which was adapted for the stage in 2003, the same year that the Human Genome Project was completed. The essay on pages 3-4 discusses the project and assesses its usefulness.

The project was also one of discovery, which connects to the second collection of works. One essay celebrates 'The Greatest Invention', which I shall not reveal here – turn to pages 7-8 if you are curious. The second was written as part of a publication marking the centenary of television. The author considers the impact medical dramas such as 'Gray's Anatomy' have on real-life expectations. The artworks were similarly inspired by discovery: a child learning to read while on its mother's knee; an Apollo capsule taking exploration beyond Mother Earth.

And the cover image of seals? Their eyes wide with wonder, their inquisitiveness and sense of play are qualities we share. It is also a very fine painting in its own right.

**Richard Sandall - Editor**

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**April Edition No. 757**

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Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster Kemp

Marlborough Churches  
Together



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# Two Poems

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## The Fluttering of a Butterfly

A wisp of a thread that twines through  
the future,  
My actions are a growing vine through a  
tree.

If I could see what I cause  
And cause what I see.

When my life results in the change of  
another,  
The wither of a friend,  
The bloom of a lover,  
The questions of a child and the laugh of  
another.

Like a scream that rings forever,  
But its echoes alter each time.  
How do I know the impacts of my  
choices?  
Do I care for the aftermath of my life?

The pressing of a button  
Could match a dream pair.  
But if it hurts instead  
Should we care?

The fluttering of a butterfly,  
Could cause great storms.  
My words alone,  
Could change it all.

**Sophie O.**

## Witch!

*Inspired by a trip to 'Wicked'*

blithe smile, lithe limb,  
i sit here with green skin  
but envy is not my colour.

gold hair, gently curled,  
i sit here with darker locks  
and my stomach starts to twirl  
when i am seen. their faces drop.

i've stopped wishing. i never dream.  
roses and pearls? more like cherries and  
cream.

your green is my black  
my black is my pride.

**Millie A.**

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# Was the Human Genome Project Useful?

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The Human Genome Project was an international scientific collaboration that set out to sequence all the base pairs in the genome. It also aimed to improve the speed of sequencing, but despite advancements, it took over 12 years to complete.

It was hoped that sequencing the genome would allow scientists to better target diseases using methods such as gene therapy. However, they soon realised that genetic diseases were far more complex than initially predicted. Overall, despite the initial promise of the project, it has not been as useful as once claimed.

One reason the Human Genome Project was useful was due to the medical advancements it facilitated. One of the greatest discoveries from the project was the ability to sequence and better understand breast cancer genes (BRCA). These genes help suppress breast cancer, and if there are any mutations, scientists can predict and prevent breast cancer in patients who are more likely to develop the disease. Not only has the Human Genome Project allowed us to recognize potential gene mutations and their effects, but it has also enabled the development of replacement genes. Another medical advancement was the creation of a replacement gene for spinal muscular atrophy. In patients with this genetic disorder, replacing the mutated SMN1

gene helped prevent further complications. Additionally, faster DNA sequencing meant that medicine could be personalized to each person's genetic profile, reducing the overall risk of treatment failure and improving success rates. It also allowed scientists to trial new medicines on people with specific genotypes, facilitating the development of targeted treatments such as antibiotics for patients with genetic idiosyncrasies.

Another reason the Human Genome Project was important was its contribution to understanding human evolution. Mapping our genome allowed scientists to compare different ethnic groups across countries and trace human migration back to our earliest ancestors. It also provided insight into genetic similarities between humans, revealing that all humans share 99.9% of their DNA. The small genetic variations could be analysed in individuals and populations, promoting more personalized medicine and addressing racial disparities in healthcare.

On the other hand, the Human Genome Project raised ethical concerns. If human DNA could be mapped and traced to diseases and genetic deformities, it could lead to genetic discrimination. This could enable eugenics and genetic manipulation, potentially being exploited by employers or insurers to discriminate

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# Was the Human Genome Project Useful?

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against individuals with perceived genetic weaknesses. For example, if someone had a higher likelihood of developing Parkinson's disease, an employer might be less likely to hire them. Additionally, the project was extremely costly: \$2.7 billion over 12 years. Although it contributed to scientific progress, the time and resources could have been directed toward more immediately applicable medical research with greater impact.

The project was also criticized for being self-indulgent, as some viewed it as an attempt to explore the "superior" nature of human DNA. Furthermore, its focus changed midway through the research. In scientific research, altering objectives is generally discouraged as it can lead to manipulated conclusions rather than an increased understanding of the topic. This happened when researchers began sequencing the DNA of plants and fungi after realizing that 95% of human DNA was "junk DNA," meaning it did not code for proteins. This shift in focus raised questions about whether the project was as valuable as initially intended.

The Human Genome Project also began with limited knowledge of genetics. Initially, researchers believed the genome played a more direct role in health outcomes than it actually does. However, genetic diseases are not always caused by a single gene but rather by a combination of genetic mutations and environmental factors. For example, people who were

genetically predisposed to lung cancer were found to have lower-than-expected rates of the disease because environmental influences, such as smoking, played a larger role. This initial lack of understanding should have been taken into account before dedicating such significant funding to the project. The original goal was to map human DNA rather than pinpoint the exact causes of genetic diseases, despite how important the research was made out to be.

In conclusion, the Human Genome Project was an important scientific advancement that ultimately had to be completed. It would be impossible for us to fully understand genetic illnesses without this foundational research. However, the major issue with the project was the substantial time and funding allocated to it, despite the knowledge that there were likely more effective ways to invest in medical advancements, such as drug development. With our newfound understanding of the genome, we can predict when individuals have a higher likelihood of developing genetic diseases. However, there is still little we can do to prevent these diseases from manifesting. Overall, while the Human Genome Project has expanded our knowledge of genetics, it has also shifted the focus away from merely sequencing DNA and towards finding ways to treat genetic diseases more effectively.

**Eleanor D (L6)**

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# The Mother and Child

Clemmie Cayzer

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# The Greatest Invention

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The BIC Cristal pen can be considered as one of the most successful products ever made in history, since its production in the 1950s over 100 billion units were sold.

The pen's simple but incredibly efficient design allowed it to become an everyday item found almost everywhere globally. This makes it almost certain that at any point in your life you have come across this pen at least once. The creative design and the thoughtful engineering behind it have majorly influenced the writing accessibility globally, which contributed to the pen's popularity.

A French entrepreneur called Marcel Bich is the foundation to the pen's success. After he discovered the potential in the 1930s ballpoint pen design made by Lazlo Biro, he purchased the patent rights for about \$2 million and started the journey of creating a cheap version for the public. By using advanced Swiss watchmaking machinery, Bich developed a method to produce stainless steel balls with high precision—which was a crucial part in making the pen long-lasting. He also chose to make the barrels out of plastic, which no one had done at the time. This made the pen both light and durable while reducing production costs.

The final BIC Cristal pen design is both extremely functional and incredibly simple. It includes a hexagon-shaped barrel inspired by pencil shapes. This

barrel prevents the pen from rolling off flat surfaces like tables and improves grip. The barrel is made from polystyrene, which makes it durable, cheap, and transparent, allowing users to see the ink level.

Additionally, the pen's design uses these features:

- **Air Release Hole:** A small hole on the barrel which allows air to replace ink as it's used; this maintains a smooth ink flow.
- **Special Ink Formula:** The ink is specially made so that it maintains high-quality lines and prevents smudging.
- **Stainless Steel Ball Tip:** The ball is carefully manufactured so that it can rotate to release ink smoothly and evenly, as well as preventing leakage when the pen is not in use.
- **Lid and Clip:** This serves as a protective layer that absorbs shock on impact and prevents cracks, increasing the pen's durability and lifespan. The clip allows the pen to be carried anywhere.

## The Evolution of Writing Tools

In the past, writing was a luxury and was only available to the wealthy due to the high cost of writing tools and their scarcity. Traditional quills needed constant dipping, which made them very messy. With the invention of the fountain pen, the situation improved as they contained an ink reservoir.

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# The Greatest Invention

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However, they still had drawbacks, including scratchy tips and inconsistent ink flow. In addition, these pens were also expensive, costing about \$150 in today's currency.

A breakthrough appeared at the end of the 19th century when an American inventor, John Loud, designed the first ballpoint pen, which had a small rotating ball to distribute ink. However, the pen was too rough for paper, so it never achieved success.

Decades later, Laszlo Biro made significant improvements to the ballpoint pen. He realized that using thicker, oil-based ink instead of the typical thin, water-based ink could improve reliability. His idea allowed the ink to sit on the paper without leaking through, creating a cleaner and more consistent writing experience.

Biro's design used capillary action (when liquid moves through narrow spaces without needing any external force) allowing ink to flow continuously to the ball tip. This mechanism was crucial to the pen's functionality, ensuring it was always ready for use. Although his design was successful in South America, the high production cost kept it out of reach for most people, as a single pen cost about \$190 today.

In 1950, the BIC Cristal launched at an affordable price of \$2, quickly gaining popularity. In France alone, it sold around 10,000 units daily in its first year. Bich expanded production worldwide, setting up factories in multiple countries, and by 1953, BIC was selling an impressive 40 million pens annually.

The availability and affordability of the BIC Cristal transformed writing into an activity accessible to everyone. It allowed millions of people worldwide to write and draw easily, driving up literacy rates significantly—from 35% to nearly 90% over the following decades. With over 100 billion pens sold, it's clear that BIC Cristal's impact on global literacy and education is very significant.

The BIC Cristal has become a symbol of effective design, with a structure that has remained nearly unchanged for over 70 years, showing the success of its original engineering. Today, the BIC Cristal pen represents more than just a writing instrument; it's a symbol of the democratisation of writing and a testament to how thoughtful design can make everyday life simpler and more accessible.

**Matthew C (L6)**

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# Effects of Medical Dramas

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How do medical dramas affect doctor and patient expectations in real life situations?

*City Hospital*, which aired in 1951, is often considered to be the first televised medical drama. Even after all this time, this specific genre of television is still hugely popular among a wide range of people. A few famous medical dramas include: *House*, *Scrubs*, *ER*, *Casualty*, with the most notable being *Grey's Anatomy*, a series which first aired in 2005 and which is still going. What makes this genre so popular, and does it affect real life health-care expectations in a positive or negative way?

On the surface, medical dramas do not seem all that appealing. They feature a location and topic which to most people should seem mundane and relatively familiar. Furthermore, upsetting, gory scenes do not sound particularly great for daytime watching. One reason for their appeal is that they are largely relatable. The shows feature a high level of suspense and drama while remaining tangible to the viewers. This, in a way, makes them all the more tense and the situations are plausible to those watching. Scientifically, our brains find it hard to look away from disaster.

While being unarguably popular, medical dramas do not always affect patients and doctors in positive ways. The so-called 'Grey's Anatomy Effect' is defined by The National Library of Medicine as unrealistic expectations, like those

caused by misleading and unrealistically optimistic medical stories, which often lead to worse health outcomes; as a result, mortality rates increase. Shows such as *Grey's Anatomy* and *ER* do strive for accuracy by having physician consultants; however, inaccuracies are still common. CPR, a vital part of first aid, has been found to be performed highly inadequately on TV, while resuscitation is successful a lot more than in real life.

As well as this, a 2018 study was conducted screening 269 *Grey's Anatomy* episodes versus 4,812 patients from the National Trauma Data Bank National Program Sample. The results showed that in *Grey's Anatomy*, mortality after injury was notably higher than in real life, with 22% of patients dying in the show compared to just 7% in real life. This makes viewers more anxious about hospital visits, and makes the doctors appear far less competent. The study also found that after arrival to the ER, a massive 71% of TV patients were taken directly to the operating room, compared with a relative minority of 25% in the NTDB sample. This can cause frustration in real life patients when they are not taken to the operating room as quickly as they believe they should be.

It is fair to say that these factors do add to the drama and watchability of the series, however because so many people get health information from television

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# Effects of Medical Dramas

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(for example a survey of geriatric patients demonstrated that 42% of older adults named television as their primary source of health information), inconsistencies such as these can have a negative effect on both the patients and the medical professionals involved.

Opposingly, medical dramas can provide awareness to people who otherwise would have incredibly limited medical knowledge. A study has found that 17% of viewers were inspired to speak to their doctors about an issue they had seen on *Grey's Anatomy*. The show can also help to discourage prejudices which are caused by ignorance of medical facts. This is demonstrated in an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* in which a young HIV-positive woman who is pregnant asks for an abortion, before learning that with proper treatment she has a 98 percent chance of delivering a baby who is HIV-free. A study surveyed a random group of viewers before the watching of the episode, a week after watching the episode, and then six weeks after watching the episode. One of the

questions asked in the survey was '*Is it irresponsible for a woman who knows she is HIV positive to have a baby?*'. Before watching the show, 61 percent answered yes, a week after watching the show, only 34 percent said it was irresponsible and six weeks after the show aired, 47 percent of viewers said it was irresponsible. Lack of knowledge leads to unfair judgement and prejudices, and shows such as *Grey's Anatomy* have helped to tackle this issue in the past, proving that they can have positive effects on watchers.

In conclusion, it is important for viewers to remember that the shows are not documentaries, and that this should be taken into account when medical 'facts' are mentioned. At the same time, viewers should make sure that they talk to doctors or other medical professionals about any issues discussed within the series which concern them. As a species, we love drama so I am sure shows such as these will remain popular into the future.

**Matilda B (Re)**

## **Marlborough Choral Society Spring Concert Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm in St Mary's Church, Marlborough**

The lovely programme includes anthems and songs by well-known English composers: Wesley, Elgar, Vaughan Williams ("Five Mystical Songs"), Mendelssohn ("Hear my Prayer") and Handel (movements from "Messiah" appropriate for the Easter period including the Hallelujah chorus). The two German composers were closely associated with the country .

Tickets £12 (£4 for students, Under 16s free), available online at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/marlborough-choral-society>, from Sound Knowledge, choir members or on the door.

There will be a retiring collection for The Prospect Hospice.

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# The Space Capsule

Rhea S (EL Re)

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April is a spectacular month in the wildlife calendar – you never quite know what you might encounter, whether you're exploring the Downs, wandering through the forest, or down by the river.

Once the warmer weather and southerly winds set in, the spring migration is in full swing. Migrants are drawn up from the far south and use the winds to guide them back to their breeding locations. Some travel thousands of miles from where they have spent the winter months in warmer climes. I have always wondered how they manage to find their way back to exactly the same tree, bush, or nesting site year after year. Do they follow the direction of the sun or stars or specific physical landmarks in the

landscape like the river valley or ancient Roman byways?

I believe the ancient landscape around us here in Marlborough is certainly a signpost for migrating birds. We are very lucky to see a good number of species return to breed or pass through: Ring Ouzels, Spotted flycatchers, Yellow wagtails, Willow warblers, Whinchats, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Swallows and Whitethroats are just a few. One particularly special arrival is the Cuckoo, whose distinctive call you can hear echoing along the river valley near Minal. For me, his call (only the male calls 'cuckoo') marks the true arrival of spring.

One of my favourite bird species that arrives back in April and breeds locally in the forest and up on the downs is the Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*).

About the size of a Robin, it can be easily identified by its bright orange tail, which flashes as it flies. If you miss that flash of colour, look out for its tail quivering constantly when it's settled. Around the middle of April, usually about the same date every year, I can be sure to spot the same breeding male marking his arrival by singing his scratchy, fluted song, sat on the top of his favourite Hawthorn.

Credit: Helen Llewelyn



Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

West Woods towards the end of April is also a magical place to see wildlife. A breath-taking sea of bluebells blankets the forest floor beneath the bright lime-green canopy of Beech trees. Orange Tip butterflies flutter along the hedgerows, their delicate wings catching the sunlight as they seek out Garlic Mustard and Cuckooflower plants to lay their eggs.

With the warmer weather, down by the river, another fascinating creature emerges – the Water Vole. Often heard before it is seen, with a characteristic ‘plop’ as it dives into the water, it feeds on the lush vegetation in the river like Stream Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus*). Water Voles need to eat up to 80% of their own body weight every day. With their populations under pressure in recent years from predation, it’s always a delight to spot one in the Kennet or Og.

April is a time of new beginnings. Whether it’s the return of a long-



Credit: Helen Llewelyn

Orange Tip Butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

distance migrant, the scent of flowering bluebells filling the air, or the quiet presence of a Water Vole along the riverbank, this time of year is a reminder of nature’s resilience and beauty.

**Helen Llewelyn**



Credit: Helen Llewelyn

**SPECIES TO SPOT:**

- Orange Tip butterflies** - Along the hedgerows
- Cuckoo** - Along the river Kennet towards Minal
- Willow Warbler** - Savernake Forest or Marlborough Downs
- Water Vole** - Bay Meadows Nature Reserve
- Bluebells** - West Woods or Savernake Forest

Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) eating Stream Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus*)

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# What's On in April

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## **Spring Study Series 'Painting in the Age of Elizabeth I' with David Evans.** **1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 10.30 – 12.30pm**

The Merchant's House.  
The Protestant Reformation dealt a serious blow to the visual arts in England. Henceforth, artists in England could make a living only from painting portraits. Tickets £16 - £19.  
To book: [themerchantshouse.co.uk](http://themerchantshouse.co.uk)

## **The Arts Society Pewsey Vale: The Art of the Cartoon.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 2.30pm**  
Bouverie Hall, Pewsey.  
Harry Venning will speak on the History of cartoons from Cruikshank and Hogarth to Giles and Schultz, with cartoons drawn on the spot. Non-members welcome. £7 cash or card on the door.

## **Marlborough Floral Club** **3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 2.00pm**

Mildenhall Village Hall.  
**A Few of my Favourite Things** with Stephanie Cornell. £6 to attend, no pre booking necessary. Information from Micky Graham 01672514301.

## **Rally for the Palestinians.**

**4<sup>th</sup> Friday 11.00am – 11.45am**  
Meet at The Bulge on the High Street by the White Horse Bookshop.

## **Marlborough Choral Society Spring Concert. 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 7.30pm**

St Mary's Church, Marlborough.  
**See p 10 for details.**

## **Spring Study Series: 'Stately Eminences' with Chris Rogers.** **8<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 10.30 – 12.30pm**

Elizabethan England is associated with a period of political stability and economic growth. Meanwhile the impact of the European Renaissance was influencing taste. Nowhere could this combination be better seen than in the creation of spectacular country houses and their contents. Tickets £16 - £19.  
To book: [themerchantshouse.co.uk](http://themerchantshouse.co.uk)

## **Marlborough History Society: The history of Tottenham House.**

**10<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 7.30pm**  
St Peter's Church.  
Speaker, Graham Bathe was professionally engaged in countryside management and wildlife conservation for 40 years. He has made a 20 year study on the history of Savernake, and its principal houses of Wolf Hall, The Brails and Tottenham.  
Entry £5. Guests very welcome.

## **Dodecantus Chamber Choir with Quattro Saxes (saxophone quartet).**

**11<sup>th</sup> Friday, 7.30pm**  
St Peter's Church. An eclectic mix of choral and sax music including the Requiem by John Rutter. Tickets available from St Peter's or on the door.

## **Marlborough Gardening Association** **12<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 6.45pm for 7.30pm**

Marlborough Town Hall.  
**Talk: Pruning Trees and Shrubs** with



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# What's On in April

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Richard Cripps.

Display table: Early Spring Flowers.

Information on talks and events at [marlbga.org.uk](http://marlbga.org.uk)

## **Crofton Beam Engines – Great Easter Steam Up.**

**20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday and Monday site open 10.00am, station open 10.30am**

Marvel at the historic engines, join in the Easter Egg Trail and Duck Race, make an Easter Bonnet or bring your own. Prizes for completing the trail, first and last duck and the best bonnet. Bring a picnic or refreshments from the Smithy.

[www.Croftonbeamengine.org](http://www.Croftonbeamengine.org)

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday, site 10.00, station 10.30.**

### **Crofton in Steam for Drive It Day**

supporting NSPCC's Childline. See the engines in steam as well as some classic cars on display.

See the website for more information

## **Lifeboat Concert in aid of RNLI.**

**25<sup>th</sup> Friday, 7.30pm**

St Peter's Church.

Featuring **The Magnificent AKs**, the uniquely hilarious, award-winning, all-male singing machine from Ashton Keynes. An evening of stunning a cappella harmonies and laugh-out-loud fun. Licensed bar from 7.00pm.

Tickets £15 from The White Horse

Bookshop or see <https://>

[stpetersmarlborough.org.uk/event/the-rnli-lifeboat-concert-2025](http://stpetersmarlborough.org.uk/event/the-rnli-lifeboat-concert-2025)

## **Brilliant International Musicians**

**Series: Johanna Rodrigo (violin) and Aleksandra Myslek (piano).**

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 7.00pm**

St Peter's Church, High Street, Marlborough. Tickets £15 (£10 for St Peter's members). See

[www.stpetersmarlborough.org.uk/events](http://www.stpetersmarlborough.org.uk/events)

## **School Dates**

**Please see school websites for any updated information.**

**St John's Marlborough, St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary**

Term ends Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

Summer Term begins Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

**Marlborough College**

Summer Term begins 6.00 to 9.00pm

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

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## **Coming Up in May**

**The Marlborough Singers present a Spring Concert.**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 7.30pm.**

Holy Cross Church, Ramsbury. From Mozart to 'Les Miserables'. All proceeds to the Prospect Hospice. Dedicated to the memory of Max Brockman-More. Doors open 7.00pm. Tickets £10 from Ramsbury Post Office or on the door. Bar and raffle.

**Linda Illsley**

What's On Editor

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# A Good Read

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I've had quite a tiring reading month, juggling a high-octane thriller, a slightly lower-octane black comedy and a lengthy trek across Europe with a wolf. Never a dull moment I tell you.

Abir Mukherjee's *Hunted* is a twisty tale full of red herrings, wrong garden paths and are-they-or-aren't-they heroes and villains. It's a chase, a rescue mission and a redemption story, with multiple storylines. Binary politics, family divisions, bomb-makers and the exploitation of idealism all feature. I'm writing short sharp sentences because it's that kind of novel, fast moving, bang bang bang! It probably wouldn't do to think about it too closely or your credulity might be stretched slightly too far, but it's gripping and entertaining and I enjoyed it a lot. I say 'enjoy'. It's slightly alarming.

Oh, the Big House in literature. It's the topic that never grows old. *The Kellerby Code* by Jonny Sweet is the familiar story of social climbing, social insecurity and the (to some) irresistible glamour of The Posh with their impenetrable codes, their ancestral piles, their terrifying, rackets, entitled carelessness. Middle-class Edward has been in love with Stanza and her country house since their University days. Stanza is in love with Robert, both of them exploit Edward's sweetly eager and humiliating

subservience. As the book progresses Edward becomes more aware of his own seething resentment, and is trapped in his own thoughts and embroiled in secrets – his own, and those of his 'friends'. It's a comedy of manners, funny in a 'read-it-through-your-fingers' way, poignant but also black and tensely murderous. (One reviewer described it as 'Brideshead Gothic'. Wish I'd thought of that.)

Talking of Gothic - Adam Weymouth's *Lone Wolf* describes some chillingly imaginative mediaeval methods for killing the animal most feared and mythologised down the centuries. Weymouth (previously short-listed for the Richard Jefferies prize for *Kings of the Yukon*) explores the complex relationship between humans and wolves in a corner of Europe struggling with cultural and political as well as environmental change. Following the path of a wolf (Slavc) tracked by GPS on a thousand-mile trek from the Slovenian Alps to northern Italy, the book examines conservation and ecological issues along with cultural perspectives on the protection or reintroduction of apex predators. (Much as I love a wolf, in all fairness I'm not a sheep farmer.) It's a beautifully descriptive, thoughtful book, and an engaging and immersive read.

**Debby Guest**

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07802 596868**

**[george.gordon@lkl-  
services.co.uk](mailto:george.gordon@lkl-services.co.uk)**

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# Life Exhibition

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Last February Robert de Berry emailed the local clergy saying that Pewsey Church was holding a ‘Life Exhibition’ and inviting us to go and have a look one lunchtime.

I was interested but suspected I would be busy. However, having finished writing my sermon on the relevant Thursday, I had what I can only describe as a sharp prompt and so off I set to Pewsey.

In the church were many huge brightly coloured tented canopies with excited children with headphones on holding ipads. I was shown around the different zones whereby children in years 5 and 6 could look at Jesus’ fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, his words, his miracles and finally his death and resurrection. The children were then offered drinks and a snack while engaging in an interactive hi tech vote. The thing that surprised me most was that I had never heard of Counties Life, the charity, nor the Life Exhibition. It was the best presentation of the Christian faith to young people I had seen in years.

So, the church council met and we decided to book in the Life Exhibition for Marlborough. Our primary school was the anchor booking, and so we went with dates in January that worked well for them. Members of St Mary’s and Christchurch were duly recruited and trained and then one Sunday night the van arrived. The organisers have run this exhibition umpteen times before and so everything was very slick and ran like



Credit: Chris Smith

clockwork. Bit by bit St Mary's was transformed into a vibrant, modern, exhibition space. Over the week 268 children came along from 9 schools, spending about 70 minutes going on a pathway through all the zones. I'm very grateful to the 32 volunteers who gave of their time and talents to keep the show on the road. We also opened our doors to adults on Friday morning and welcomed 21 people. And all this was calmly and warmly overseen by Penny Reader who seemed in her element.

Overall, the week was a huge success and we thank God for that. Somehow

Counties Life have trodden the line between presenting the facts of the Christian faith without putting anyone under pressure to believe. The sensitivity of their approach enabled the schools to bring children with confidence and anticipation. Perhaps the last word should go to a teacher from Oare, 'What a fantastic interactive experience! Really immersive and captured the children's imagination.' We hope to welcome the Life Exhibition again in early 2027.

**Revd Chris Smith**

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## Marlborough Church Contacts

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---

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#### **Anglican Team secretary**

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# Wiltshire Council Social Services

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Representing the residents of Marlborough and nearby villages at Wiltshire Council over the past eight years has been an honour. Ensuring positive outcomes for local residents is of utmost importance to me.

Besides addressing everyday concerns like roads and waste management, Wiltshire Council also has the legal duty to provide social care for those in need. In addition to being your local representative, I serve at County Hall as the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

In my role, we've recently received fantastic news: Adult Social Care Services were awarded a 'Good' rating during a major Care Quality Commission inspection. The inspectors praised our efforts, stating: "People told us staff went above and beyond when working with them and their carers in Wiltshire." This follows the highly successful Ofsted inspection of SEND in December 2024, where we again received top marks, with the report concluding that "Children and young people with SEND are valued and prioritised in Wiltshire." Additionally, our Children's Services received an

'Outstanding' judgment from Ofsted in December 2023, with the report highlighting that "Children living in Wiltshire benefit from high-quality services that make a positive difference to their lives."

Amid the challenges faced by local authorities nationwide, I am immensely proud of the success our preventative approach is yielding in Wiltshire. By containing costs for taxpayers and still providing effective services, we're proving that a thoughtful strategy works. Many vulnerable individuals rely on these services, including residents of Marlborough, and it's crucial we continue to provide targeted early support. Prudent and well-managed spending means we can invest more in our roads, libraries, and leisure centres. For instance, Marlborough Leisure Centre is undergoing a £2 million-plus upgrade, and local support through the Area Board has resulted in over £165,000 invested in community projects.

**Jane Davies**

Promoted by Jane Davies of EWCA,  
23-24 The Parade,  
Marlborough, SN8 1NE

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# Clergy Letter

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I hope by the time you read this that we shall be basking in the warm sunny uplands of spring. After an unusually grey and wet winter, the warmer weather will be most welcome.

I used to live in Vermont in America and snow used to lie on the ground for most of January, February and March. It was extremely cold. When the thaw finally came the whole world seemed to burst into life. All the growth that appears here gently over a few months happens there in a few weeks. Nature literally springs into action.

Our souls can have seasons as well. Sometimes autumn storms break up on us with great fury and knock us for six;

sometimes everything just seems to be still and dead like a December afternoon. But all things pass, corners turn and new life can appear. New friendships and pastimes; new books and experiences; new ways of seeing things and new hope.

At Easter time Christians remember and celebrate Jesus' new life. We believe he died on Good Friday in our place and was brought back to life on Easter Day. I hope and pray this Easter that there will be new life in our world, and also new life in our souls.

Please do join us at church over Easter.

**Revd Chris Smith**  
Team Rector of Marlborough

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# Family News Request

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We value all news for Family News.

Why not let us know if you have any news you would be happy to share more widely?

A short article about a family member or circumstance is always welcome and news about a past Marlborough resident

would also be appreciated.

We look forward to receiving your family news for our future editions.

**Naomi Painter**  
Family News Editor

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# It's SOW Easy!

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The weather is warmer, the days are getting longer and it's time to think about summer flowers and vegetables and you don't need a garden or expensive equipment to grow them.

Your local garden centre is a treasure trove of seeds ready to sow now and there are masses of varieties that will give you flowers and vegetables all season without buying expensive plants. If you prefer to sow seeds and plant out the seedlings, instead of buying seed trays supermarket containers that fruit comes in are brilliant for sowing seeds.

So, you have chosen your seeds and bought a bag of multi-purpose compost and are ready to get started. You can grow plants in absolutely anything provided you make sure that you have drainage holes at the bottom of the container and you keep it watered. So be as creative as you like with your choice. I must admit that a lot of mine are great car boot finds!

I absolutely love dark, nearly black flowers and there is a new variety of Scabious called Black Night. It's around 2' tall and will flower all summer with gorgeous pom-pom flowers and I am

going to grow it in a pot with a pale pink Dahlia. Cosmos are a must-have flower for your outdoor space with tall upright plants that flower all summer in lots of colours.

My favourite for hanging baskets is Nasturtium Purple Emperor; the flowers start off burgundy and gradually change to dusky pink and they can trail up to 6ft - just six seeds in a basket will flower all summer. And a favourite for pots is Sweet Pea Cupid, a compact variety only 12" tall.

If you would prefer vegetables why not try carrots, beetroot, dwarf beans, salad crops, tomatoes, cucumbers, baby sweetcorn or perhaps baby salad potatoes. The list is endless with brilliant new varieties

all cultivated specially for containers and growing in small spaces.

If you don't want a pot but have a neglected patch of bare soil, a packet of Wild Flower seeds dispersed over it now will give you an interesting wildlife haven in a few weeks. There are seeds for everything!



**Carolyn Stimpson**

Marlborough Gardening Association

Photo credit: Carolyn Stimpson



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# Marlborough Churches Together

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## Usual Sunday Services Times

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### **Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade**

10.30am Meeting for worship

### **St George's Preshute (Anglican)**

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

10.30am Worship

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

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

10.30am Worship

5.00pm Informal Worship

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

### **St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)**

9.00 am Worship

### **St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)**

11.00 am Mass

### **Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)**

4.00pm Worship (every Sunday)

### **Marlborough College Services are shown at the college chapel**

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

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## FROM THE REGISTERS

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### **Baptised** - We welcome:

02/03/25 Kit Harrison to Harry and Victoria Harrison  
St George's, Preshute

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

11/02/25 Katharine 'Kay' Cripps (94), Irving Way, Marlborough  
St George's, Preshute

12/02/25 Paul Lefever (87), Bath Road, Marlborough  
St George's, Preshute

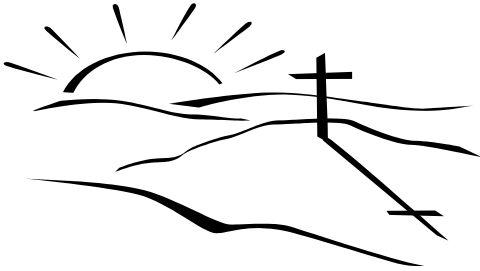
17/02/25 Penelope Scott-Barrett (74), High Street, Marlborough  
St George's, Preshute

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# News from the Churches

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## Easter Services



### Emmanuel Church

#### Good Friday

11am Service followed by lunch (bring and share).

#### Easter Sunday

**Family Trail** at 10am to tell the Easter story, meeting back at Emmanuel Church at 10.30am for a short service.

**Easter Day Service** at 4pm with children's groups during the service and refreshments served afterwards.

### Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

#### Palm Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> April

Dramatised readings of the last week of Jesus' life.

9am, St John the Baptist Minal

10.30am, St George's, Preshute

10.30am, St Mary's, Marlborough

#### Compline (Night Prayer)

##### Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April

7.30pm, St John the Baptist

##### Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April

7.30pm, St Mary's

##### Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April

7.30pm, St George's

#### Maundy Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> April

7pm, Fellowship Meal followed by

Maundy Thursday service, St Mary's

9pm – Midnight, The Watch, St Mary's

#### Good Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> April

10.30am, Informal Worship, St Mary's

2pm, 'The Last Hour' St George's

#### Easter Day Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April

5.30am, Sunrise service, Martinsell Hill

8am, Holy Communion, St Mary's

9am, Family Communion, Minal

10.30am, Family Communion, St Mary's

10.30am, Family Communion, St

George's

#### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April

10.30am, Team Communion, St

George's

5pm, Informal Worship, St Mary's

### Wholehearted Monthly

#### On the second Tuesday of the month,

**7pm-9pm.** 'Wholehearted Monthly' is a

free, online mission series starting

hosted by The Methodist Church in

Britain and open to all. Get your seat at

the online table here:

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wholehearted-monthly-tickets-1082365166349?aff=evangelismgrowth)

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# News from the Churches

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## What is wholehearted monthly?

Think community organising rally meets immersive spiritual laboratory. It's for anyone committed to a vibrant friendship between "Church" and "World" — and a desire for both to flourish.

**The second gathering is on Tuesday 8th April with speaker Rowan Williams**, theologian, poet and former Archbishop of Canterbury, author of fifty books on literature, politics, and being Christian.

## Emmanuel Church

All are welcome to join us every Sunday at 4 pm for our weekly church service on New Road. This includes crèche and Sunday School groups, followed by refreshments (for adults) and a sandwich tea for the children.

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

We also hold **Home Groups in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George**, as well as **Ladies' Bible Study** and **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 information and updates on our events, please visit our website at [emmanuelmarlborough.org](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org).



## Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

### St Mary's 5pm Informal Worship

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.

### All age worship: Palm Sunday 13th April, 5pm (Children's tea 4.30pm)

We would be delighted to welcome you. Please join us for a children's tea beforehand then for our service with songs, prayer and craft.

Energize, our young people's group, will be taking a break for the Easter Holidays.

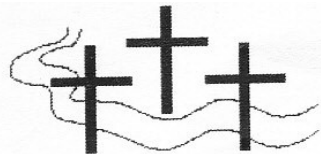
**The Ark Parent/Carer and Toddler Group - Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless St**  
Please contact Caroline Philips for more information: [cphilps2@gmail.com](mailto:cphilps2@gmail.com)

### Welcome Wednesdays

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

### St Mary's Women's Group

Thursdays, 10am to 11am.  
Upstairs in Church Cottage.



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# Tower and Town Staff

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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 May issue by Tuesday 8th April please.

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