
TOWER^{AND}TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



A MARLBOROUGH FAMILY

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October Edition Front Cover:

Robert and Selina Dobie and seven of their thirteen children

Credit: Louis Thatcher

TOWER^{AND}TOWN

The Dobies of Marlborough

When I moved here almost 40 years ago, the first Marlborough people I met were Karen Dobie and her daughter, Grace, who welcomed us as neighbours in George Lane.

Later, as a teacher at St John's, I was always aware of a sprinkling of Dobies throughout the school including Grace and her sister Lydia. And there is much Dobie involvement in Tower and Town.

So my question is 'Why are there so many Dobies in Marlborough?' Meeting Kim Wakeham through The Merchant's House and Helen Llewelyn through the History Society and discovering that they were both members of the Dobie family (or should it be 'clan' with their Scottish roots?) I asked if they would like to do an edition of the magazine about their family. They very kindly agreed.

My job was simply to ask the question. All the hard work of talking to family, gathering stories and photographs and doing research has been done by Kim and Helen and I am very grateful to them. As Helen says 'We have merely scratched the surface'.

Kim agrees that there is so much more to say; for example, the history of the Wyatt family, who used to make ropes and sacks at the Old Rope Factory in The Parade, is worthy of an article on its own.

In these pages a story emerges of hardworking people with a strong sense of family and community, welcoming and inclusive – plus a good measure of fun. There is also a remarkable ability to have large, healthy families such as that of Robert and Selina (part of which is shown on the front cover). The inevitably male surname does not hide, however, the important role of women like Selina (Drew) Dobie, Jenny (Bailey) Dobie, Vera (Riches) Dobie and Lorraine (Dobie) Thatcher to name but a few.

This is just a start but a very good foundation. Other members of the Dobie family or indeed members of other Marlborough families may wish to contribute to a future edition. You are very welcome to get in touch with me – we would love to hear from you.

Sarah Bumphrey - Editor

chairman@towerandtown.org.uk

October Edition No. 763

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Marlborough Churches
Together



Robert John Dobie (1859-1937):

Where it All Began

Several years ago I was having a conversation with Michael Gray about the Marlborough families and he said ‘the Dobie family are Marlborough Royalty’.

But why are there so many members of the Dobie family in Marlborough?

It starts with Robert John Dobie (also known as ‘Spivver’) who was born in Islington, London, in October 1859. His parents were David Black Dobie (1795 – 1865) and Ann Beckham (also recorded as Blackham) (1835 – 1902).

David Black Dobie was a Ship’s Surgeon and was born in Dysart, Fife. He is buried in Highgate Cemetery, London. Ann Beckham was born in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk and is buried in Brompton Cemetery, London.

It is not known when Robert John Dobie came to live in Marlborough, but it would have probably been between 1877 – 1885. He may have come to Marlborough to work on the north-south railway which was being built between the town and Swindon, which opened in 1881. Robert Dobie married Selina Drew from Lockeridge in July 1885, at Preshute Church.

The 1891 census lists the family including 4 children living in Hammond’s

Yard (a group of houses which were demolished in 1929, located between 45 – 46 High Street. The houses were accessed by an alleyway between Deacons and the Wellington Arms). Robert was working as a groom (no employer stated). The 1901 census records that Robert was still working as a groom and living in Hammonds Yard, but there are now 5 children.

The 1911 census records that Robert is working at Kings Cross as a Coachman Jobmaster. This was likely a relatively well paid role which would have involved driving private horse drawn coaches for families. This role was becoming obsolete due to the arrival of motor cars. The family are still living in Hammonds Yard, but there are now 6 children. My Great-grandfather Sidney Dobie is 14 and is working as a Grocer’s errand boy

In the 1921 census; Robert is recorded as a groom working for James Duck. The Duck family kept their horses in what is now the housing estate in Ducks Meadow. There are 4 children living with them at this time. Sidney had returned from fighting in WW1 but sadly Henry Thomas Dobie died in July 1916 fighting on the Somme. He is buried at Warloy-Baillon and commemorated on the war memorial near Majestic Wine.

Robert and Selina had 13 children, some of whom are in the photograph on

the opposite page.

Selina died in 1933 and Robert in 1937. They are both buried in the cemetery by the common.

It is estimated that within three generations of Robert 'Spivver' and

Selina Dobie, there were 100 descendants. Work is on-going to fill in the gaps of the family tree to record the names of the next three generations of descendants.

Kim Wakeham



Robert and Selina Dobie and eight of their thirteen children

Left to right:

- 1) Edward 'Frank'
- 2) Albert Reginald 'Bert'
- 3) Annie Maud 'Ciss'
- 4) Frederick Walter
- 5) Florence Selina 'Floss'

- 6) Sidney Arthur (Kim's great grandfather)
- 7) Robert John 'Jack'
- 8) Lilian Agnes
- 9) Robert 'Spivver'
- 10) Selina

Date of photograph unknown.

Photograph credit: Louis Thatcher.

Sidney Dobie (1896-1956)

What is the connection between Dobie and Wyatt, and how is it linked to Dobie Family? The answer is Sidney Arthur Dobie, my great grandfather – second from the right in the back row of the photograph on page 3.

Sidney Dobie was born in 1896 and lived with his parents in Hammond's Yard. The 1911 census records that at the age of 14, he had left school and was working as an errand boy.

Between 1914 – 1920, Sidney served in both The Wiltshire Regiment and in the Machine Gun Corps. He was also awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal in 1920.



The 1921 census details that Sidney had returned to Marlborough to live with his parents in Hammonds Yard. He was working as a grocer's cartman for Stratton and Sons on Marlborough High Street. The photograph may show

Sidney in his smart work uniform when he worked for Stratton and Sons.



Sidney and Jenny Dobie

Sidney married Jenny Bailey in 1922 and they went on to have 10 children. The 1939 census records that they had moved into 7, Cherry Orchard where they lived with possibly 7 of their children.

Sidney was known as 'Brusher' and was also a retained fireman in Marlborough. When the fire siren sounded on the Town Hall, Sidney would run to Ducks Meadow where the horses were kept. He would open the gate and the horses would automatically go to the Fire Station on the High Street, where Waitrose is now. By 1926, the Fire Engines were mechanised.

Credit: Louis Thatcher

Credit: Louis Thatcher



Marlborough Fire Brigade (date unknown)

Sidney is in the middle of the back row.

Continued on next page

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Sidney Dobie (1896-1956) continued

Sidney and Jenny had ten children:

Joyce Kathleen 1923-1996.

The number in brackets after each name denotes the number of children they had.

Robert Thomas 1924-1976 - Bob Dobie, the mace-bearer (5).

Grace Agnes 1926-2006 - Grace was the lady who had the big pram with all the children in it. (6).

Gordon John 1928-2004 - my grandfather known as Johnny (5).

Esther 1931-? (2).

David 'Dan' Edward 1934-2025 (1).

Lucille Pauline 1938-1984 - married to Willis Dean who used to work for David Chandler in London Road (2).

Spencer Louis 1939 - joint founder of Dobie Wyatt (2).

Jenny Gertrude 1940-2018 - very sadly Jenny's twin died at birth and their mother died in childbirth.



Credit: Bob Dobie

The photograph above shows the family at Cherry Orchard in around 1934/5.

They are:

Back row: Jenny, David 'Dan' (baby), Sidney.

Middle row: Joyce (in the hat), Robert (with the large shirt lapels).

Front row: Gordon 'Johnny', Grace, Esther

Spencer, Lucy and Jenny haven't been born yet.

My grandfather, Johnny Dobie, married my grandmother Alice Dobson in 1949 at Preshute Church (*photo right*). They had 5 children; John, Andrew, Jane (my mum), Nicholas and Elizabeth

The fourth person in from the right is Sidney, then in his 50s.

Sidney died in 1956 and is buried, along with his wife Jenny, in the cemetery by the common.



Kim Wakeham

Dobie Wyatt – A Small Family Business

Dobie Wyatt is a small family-run business based in Cadley on the A346 on the way through the forest to Burbage. Small they may be, but for the haulage industry around Marlborough and a pretty wide, almost national, radius they are indispensable.

They create the tarpaulins and covers that keep trucks and their important cargos dry and undamaged. In addition Dobie Wyatt will create a waterproof cover, made to any specific shape or design, so that garden furniture, cars or whatever can be kept protected from the elements when not in use .

In their sixty years, they have created their own niche. Now in the fourth generation of family ownership and management, they have expanded steadily, adapting to the needs of the industries served and are looking to embrace new advancements wanted by their long term regular customers such as automatic sheeting systems.

In 1964 Dobie Wyatt Ltd was founded by Fred and Molly Wyatt, along with Joyce (née Wyatt) and her husband Spencer Dobie. Remarkably, Spencer, who has just retired at the age of 85, continues to remain involved, offering his invaluable experience and wisdom when needed. In the early days, their product range included hay nets, climbing nets, coconut matting mattresses for athletics, and small tarpaulins.

Today, the business is run by Graham and Sue Dobie and Nigel and Lorraine Thatcher, with their son Tom as Managing Director. Together with his wife, Katie, Tom is committed to continuing the family tradition of excellence, and in the future the family are hopeful that the next generation, Max, Ellie and Molly will one day join the team, carrying the family legacy into the future.

But as in many other family owned and managed businesses, the 'family' extends beyond the bloodlines. Their dedicated staff are part of that wider 'family' as well. The small team at Cadley includes four skilled employees who uphold the values of quality and service that Dobie Wyatt have built their reputation on. They would like to note the contributions of Carolyn Sheppard and Michael Maguire, who, although no longer on staff, remain close friends of the company and continue to visit regularly.

As to the future, the best way to succeed is to provide customers with what they want, with first class service and in a way that those customers value, whilst also understanding what they might want just down the road but everything at competitive prices.

Lorraine (Dobie) Thatcher
daughter of Spencer

The Dobie Brothers: Stories of a Marlborough Family and the Bonds that Shaped a Legacy

In 1910, Florence Selina, known to the family as 'Auntie Floss,' gave birth to Robert F. Dobie. He was raised by his grandparents, Robert 'Spivver' and Selina Dobie.

Robert (Bob) and Vera Riches were married in 1938, and later that same year they welcomed their first son, Laurie. Over the following 17 years their family grew to include six more boys, Bobby, Mickey, Anthony (Tony), Colin, Keith and Trevor, each bringing his own laughter and mischief into the household.

The tales that follow are just a few of the warm and memorable stories of their childhoods, of the adventures they

shared and the lively times they spent growing up in Marlborough. The stories also give an indication to how much life has changed in the past 90 years.

All of the boys, except for the youngest, Trevor, were born at 44 Cherry Orchard. It was a three-bedroom house where the boys shared two of the rooms — the two eldest together in one, and the four younger brothers in the other. As they grew up, the older boys always looked out for the younger ones, stepping in whenever there was trouble.

Today, all of the brothers still live in or around Marlborough with their wives. The wives are close too, becoming not just family but best friends. Over time this branch of the Dobie family tree has grown to include children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren.

When Mum (Vera) was alive and less able to get out, the boys began gathering on Sunday mornings to spend time with her. After she passed, they decided to carry on the tradition, and to this day they still meet every Sunday morning, gathering at one another's houses in turn, to share memories and have a catch-up over a cup of tea and maybe a biscuit or two.

This year, we sadly lost Mickey, but his memory and legacy remain very much alive.



The Dobies outside 44 Cherry Orchard with Grampy Riches

Helen Llewelyn

The Year the Snow Stayed Till Easter

In 1947 the really bad wet weather started at Christmas and went right through. I can remember mother and us being in The Parade, and she had to pick me and Mickey up and put us both on the pram with Colin, who was a baby, because the water had come over the top of our little wellies.

We were walking down through The Parade with mother after going shopping, with a big heavy brown pram, pushing it through all the water. The water had come up so high it flooded across into the New Road and along London Road.

In 1963 it had snowed from Boxing Day and it went right on till Easter. Trevor had a new bike at Christmas and couldn't ride it outside. The main road was just a little narrow lane and on the side of the road were great big mounds of snow. It just stayed forever, lots of snow and ice. Properties along the London Road had a duckboard bridge to cross so you could get inside.

With no school for three months, we would go out looking for snow drifts. We would walk through metre-high snow

drifts right up to old Pantawick; we got soaking wet and cold walking through them. Of course, we were looking for the big snow drifts to go inside to make igloos and little dens. Up on Forest Hill there were all these dips so you could build a tunnel inside the snow.

During that time, we also spent a lot of time sledging down the hills especially from the top of Postern Hill down to the lodge at the bottom. In those days there were no trees on the bank; it was just a grassy bank like a meadow. We did end up coming out into the road as at the bottom of the lodge there were huge drifts that we needed to avoid. We didn't have to worry about the traffic because nobody had a car in those days and anyway the road was closed due to the snow. It was great fun.

Another great sledging spot was the Cresta Run (aptly named after the Cresta Run in St Moritz) otherwise locally known as Butterfly Alley at Treacle Bolley. We would start at the top of Granham Hill and end up nearly in the river Kennet by the washpool. It was so fast but also great fun.

The stories on pages 9-12 were all told by Laurie, Bobby, Tony, Colin, Keith and Trevor Dobie at a couple of Sunday morning meetings.

Building the Biggest Bonfire

Every year, each area in the town had their own bonfire for Bonfire Night, and they all competed for the biggest one. It was a community event in which all the children clubbed together in finding bonfire material and on the evening the adults would then come out and light the bonfire.

Cherry Orchard held their bonfire on the grass area on the side of the Ark (see p.11 bottom). We as boys used to go off collecting as much bonfire material as possible. We used to get some of the older boys

to find a tree with just a long straight pole that would be the middle. Some of us used to carry it back. I used to put my hands up, but I was too small. The older boys would put the pole up and then they would build it out with other material around it. One year, as the door of the Ark was left open, we got into the roof and found big chests of GWR timetables and put them all on the bonfire.

We all saved our pocket money to pay for fireworks. Each family in the area would have their own small amount of fireworks which they would share by letting them off around the bonfire.



The Dobie brothers a few years ago on a Sunday morning.
From left to right: Trevor, Keith, Colin, Tony, Laurie, Bobby and Mickey

The Sheep Fair and Other Wonders

The Marlborough Sheep Fair was held every year and a lot of the sheep came by rail. They used to build pens up at Cherry Orchard. As they opened the carriages (each belonged to a certain farmer), they would get them out into the pens all together in a flock.

Once all out, they would then drive the flock down Cherry Orchard onto Salisbury Road, along London Road, up Herd Street and onto the common where they had the Sheep Fair.

Each farmer had to be let out at a certain time and keep his sheep separate so that he knew his sheep. I remember the sheep were sick all over the place. Some of the sheep were yellow; they were all different types and we used to go and try and look at the different types of sheep because some were bold and had different coloured wools.

It was a big occasion. We used to get sticks, then tap the sheep to make them 'come on'. We thought we were helping the blokes do what they were supposed to do. They were able to drive the sheep in this way as it was so quiet. I mean, if

you saw a car, it was ever so rare. At that time nobody in Cherry Orchard had a car.

Tony can remember cattle also coming by train as well and they took the cows off the carriage and put them in the cattle pen. I used to help because they had to inject the cows, and I helped the vet hold all the things because I wanted to be a vet when I grew up. I used to hold all the needles and that; they'd get the cow up against the edge and inject it and then let it go. And this very young cow tried to jump out and it landed right on the top bar and went down into the water trough.

When the circus came to town, they would come by train. When the train arrived on the GWR line, it would stop by the signal box. There was a little siding in there that the animals and circus could come out onto and then go down the track that comes out by where Tesco is now on their route up to the common. I remember one day that we were so excited as the elephants came by as we stood on the bridge (that is no longer there) over what is now the A436 and watched them go under the bridge. They would walk along, trunk to tail, up to the common.

The Ark - Kieren Dobie writes: The Ark was signal box at Marlborough's High Level station near the top of Cherry Orchard. The old station was turned into accommodation for ganger Noah Trotman, so the signal box became Noah's Ark. Kieren's father recalls a stone plaque above the door that read 'The Ark'.

Family Adventures by the Sea

Now, one of the holidays that is most memorable to me is when we went down to Ilfracombe in about 1950. All the family went together in an old Hillman Estate.

Mum had two long boxes; she put all the food in one and the clothes in the other. She put cushions on the top and two of the older boys would sit in the back. The three younger boys would sit in the middle seats and the youngest would sit in the middle at the front between mum and dad on the bench seat.

We had ex-army tents with proper beds like an army camp. We slept in these beds and also had a washroom where we could go and have a wash and freshen up when we got up in the morning,

Anyway, we went rock climbing one day. We all started clambering over these rocks and trying to see if we could outdo each other. They were slippery and we pulled on the grass. We were climbing up because right at the top there was something flapping in the wind. We thought it was a kite and maybe we could free it as it was stuck in the bushes.

So, we climbed up and I'm racing Bobby. Three quarters of the way up I pulled on this grass and it came away in my hand. Bobby was just below climbing up. He tried to catch me as I went by; he could have been killed trying to save me.

I must have spun round and finished up halfway down the rock on a ledge with my feet hanging over. My shoe went on down and hit the rocks at the bottom. I was just sat there and had a couple of grazes. Bobby came down and got me and everybody helped me down. So anyway, we had had a sort of rescue, and we all met at the bottom after that and told our stories that Colin had been rescued.

When we were much older and able to drive, we would go in convoy in our cars or on motorbikes down to Highcliffe for the day. This also included other members of the wider family. Our mother always took a proper dinner for everyone. She would put the kettle on and make cups of tea when we arrived.

We spent most of the day at the coast then, at about 3 or 4 o'clock, we'd head back to Nomansland in the New Forest, stop by the pond, have our tea and a game of cricket. We then all headed back with a stop-off at the Dog and Gun in Netheravon for a pint and a packet of crisps. Even as the years pass, we still share holidays together, this time with our wives and children alongside us.

Clergy Letter from Rev. Pete Sainsbury

"Imagine all the people living life in peace... You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one." (John Lennon)

Peace is so much more than the absence of war (and the absence of war of course, is no small thing). But peace as an idea can sound rather abstract or conceptual and therefore be somewhat difficult to pursue. But I think we know peace when we've found it because we *feel* it as well as make it or know it – with others or with ourselves.

I am inspired by the Coventry Cross of Nails. The original version was made from three large medieval nails salvaged from Coventry Cathedral after the building was severely damaged by German bombs on 14 November 1940, during the Second World War. In the following decades, several hundred crosses have been given as gifts to various organisations, including churches, prisons and schools. Coventry Cathedral has since become a centre for significant international peace-making and reconciliation.

See the Cross of Nails and find out more about it at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coventry_Cross_of_Nails

I'm drawn to this cross because it recognises both the wasteful horror of war and the miraculous possibility of reconciliation; but ultimately it speaks of a "peace that passes all understanding". The earthly life of Jesus was foretold (or

prophesied) some 800 years before. The prophet Isaiah asserted that He would be Immanuel ("God with us"), the Prince of Peace. The greatness of His peace would know no limits.

This prophetic promise is partially fulfilled for us now. In terms of civic or national and international peace, we still live with the effects of power and imperialism. But in this age, there is no threshold to the peace that an individual may know with God. This yearning for peace is at the heart of any spiritual search.

I opened this piece with a quote from John Lennon's beautiful but rather unworldly solo hit, *Imagine*. You may remember that Lennon famously claimed that the Beatles were bigger than Jesus. I'm a musician and music fan, the Beatles included - but clearly, John Lennon 'believed his own press'! I can't imagine wanting to imitate his life in order to gain inner peace.

Imitating Jesus though, is a very different thing.

Jesus said that He came to bring life, and life in abundance. (John's gospel, chapter ten, verse ten). In other words, good life. Rich and fulfilling life. A life worth living. I am convinced that this abundant life is the fullest possible antidote to a lack of peace.

May you know it.

With you in Christ in Marlborough,

What's On in October

Marlborough Floral Club

2nd Thursday, 2.00pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Flowers in Rhyme with Jennifer Thompson. £6 to attend, no pre booking necessary. Information from Micky Graham on 01672 514301.

Echoes & Apparitions. True Ghost Stories

3rd Friday, 7.00pm – 9.00pm The Merchant's House. Some houses whisper. This one speaks. Step into the shadows of Marlborough's most storied home, where real encounters echo through centuries. From the lady in green on the staircase, to the flicker of a lifeless candle each room holds a tale. Staff, visitors and volunteers bear witness to those who never truly left. Tickets £16 and £19 at themERCHANTShouse.co.uk

Barn Dance

3rd Friday 6.00 - 8.00pm

Minal Village Hall
(advert p. 20)

Mop Fairs

4th Saturday Little Mop Fair. **18th Saturday** Big Mop Fair.

Brilliant International Musicians at St Peter's Church

5th Sunday at 7.00pm. The 14th series gets underway with the return of Russian-born pianist Elena Topogonova accompanying Italian cellist Ricardo Pes.

26th Sunday at 7.00pm you can hear the remarkable young pianist Amiri Harewood. Ticket purchase and more information stpetersmarlborough.org.uk. Tickets can also be bought on the door on the night.

The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale

7th Tuesday, 2.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. Andy Warhol – So Much More Than Just The Prince of Pop Art. Illustrator, printer, filmmaker, manager of a rock band, founder of a magazine, author of several books, creator of iconic pop images, designer of fabrics and wallpaper and coiner of the expression 'fifteen minutes of fame'. Speaker Lucrezia Walker. Doors open at 2.00pm for refreshments Visitors very welcome - £7 on the door, cash or card. For more information www.taspv.org.uk

Marlborough Gardening Association

8th Wednesday 7.30pm

Town Hall, Marlborough . A Winter Tale with Andrew Tolman. Display table Dahlias. For more information: marlbgainfo@gmail.com

Marlborough History Society – Ramsbury, the Town That Never Quite Was

16 Thursday 7.30pm (doors open at 7.00pm) St Peter's Church. The 1100-year story of Marlborough's Kennet Valley Neighbour. Speaker Rowan Whimster, author of

What's On in October

Ramsbury: A Place and its People.
Entry £5. Guests very welcome.
Information at
marlboroughhistorysociety.co.uk

Marlborough LitFest Plus Event

21st Tuesday, 7.00pm at Marlborough Town Hall. Sir Tony Robinson, iconic Baldrick actor, author and Time Team Presenter will talk about his career and his debut novel, *The House of Wolf*. His debut for adults the novel is the first in a new historical series (*The House of Aethelwolf*) spanning the Anglo-Saxons, Alfred the Great and the making of England. Published in September, this book is said to be perfect for fans of Ken Follett and Bernard Cornwell and has been praised by historian Dan Jones as 'A page-turner full of historical intelligence, wit and heart'. Tickets www.marlboroughlitfest.org or from The White Horse Book Shop.

Jon Wilks with support from Andrew Rumsey

25th Saturday, 8.00pm at St Mary's Church Hall. Jon Wilks is a prominent fingerpicking guitarist and singer who performs traditional English folk songs and broadside ballads. During his shows he mixes folk song performances with fascinating tidbits about the original singers and collectors that he has unearthed during his extensive research on traditional folk music in the UK. Andrew Rumsey is a musician, writer and Bishop of Ramsbury whose recent albums

'Evensongs' and *Collodian* have received great reviews. Tickets £21 at marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk

Spooky Tours

28th Tuesday to 1st November, Saturday from 10.00am – 3.00pm at The Merchant's House. Soak up the atmosphere during half-term week, with a Spooky Tour around The Merchant's House. Visit the witches kitchen, look out for low flying bats and see if you can find pumpkins hidden in unexpected places. Tickets adults £11, under 18's free, from themerchantshouse.co.uk

School Dates

Please see school websites for any updated information.

Marlborough St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary half term begins Thursday 23rd and ends Friday 31st October.

Marlborough College half term begins 12 noon Friday 17th October and ends 9.00pm Sunday 2nd November.

Linda Illsley - What's On Editor

A Good Read

Writing for *Tower and Town* is not unlike being an elite athlete. No, stop sniggering. It's simply that after a break, because of injury or being benched for the September LitFest issue, one's fitness suffers. Picture me in the starting blocks, gazing up the track, wondering whether my writing muscles are up to the challenge. Can I stage a comeback? My training has suffered and I can't remember anything I've read.

Well, obviously I *have* read a couple of books. I was delighted and smug to be given an advance copy of the latest Wyndham and Banerjee crime novel by Abir Mukherjee. (If you don't know this series, start with *A Rising Man*.) ***The Burning Grounds*** deals with a murder (duh!) and with the re-establishment of the strained relationship between Sam and Suren – out of favour with the Imperial Police Force, and back from self-imposed exile in Europe respectively. I really like this series, and they get better with each book. I was very pleased with myself for working out not whodunnit, but *why*. I got it because I know something about the Golden Age of Hollywood – and that's *all* I'm saying.

I've also been dipping into ***Craftland*** by James Fox, in which the author journeys around Britain meeting people who are keeping alive old skills and making the things that

were once part of all our lives. It's very readable, very informative (did you know there are thirty-four trades involved in watch-making?) and faintly melancholy – verging in fact on slightly panicky as he lists a selection of occupations, most of which are almost or entirely extinct. Breeze-riddlers, Calender-girls, Flashers and Flirters, Lurers, Mufflemen and Tingle-makers (I *know*, oo-er missis!) – all, or mostly, gone. He tells of one man, who looked like being the last practitioner of the art of withy pot-making, until – phew – he found an apprentice and achieved his goal of passing on his knowledge and craft before it was too late.

And coming down the track are lots of books I'm looking forward to reading. The latest Robert Galbraith 'Strike' novel ***The Hallmarked Man*** (crime, not an endangered trade) is on my list, also ***Quantum of Menace*** by Vaseem Khan. I'm eyeing up ***Deadwood*** by Peter Cozzens ("Gold, Guns and Greed in the American West"; how can I resist?). I may dedicate a large chunk of the autumn to re-reading Mary Renault. With a rigorous training regime like that I'll be back in the running for medals in no time. Oh ha ha.

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Nature Notes: Fergus, the feisty Firecrest

The Goldcrest and the Firecrest are UK's smallest birds and we're fortunate to have healthy populations of both in our area. I find the Firecrest the more striking, with its vivid colours and neat appearance. It has a blue-green back, a bright yellow collar and a bold black-and-white eye-stripe. The Goldcrest, by contrast, is less showy, with a softer greenish-grey plumage and no eye-stripe.

in ivy which seems to provide the insects they need to survive.

So let me introduce you to Fergus, the feisty Firecrest. He was first caught by a bird ringer two years ago and the small ring on his right leg has made him much easier to identify ever since. Firecrests are tiny, fast-moving birds that flit restlessly through the branches, and spotting them can be a real challenge.

This spring I had the chance to watch Fergus in the thick of territorial battles with the male Goldcrests whose territories bordered his on either side. These skirmishes were dramatic affairs - birds launching themselves at one another, tumbling out of the trees in a furious tangle, only to break apart at the last moment before hitting the ground. There was also plenty of wing-flapping, moving together in quick, jerky movements and loud, scolding calls. For such small birds, their voices

Credit: Helen Llewelyn



Firecrest

For the past two years, I've also been keeping an eye on a pair of Firecrests. What has been fascinating is that, although Firecrests usually migrate to warmer regions for the winter and return in the spring to breed, this pair has remained on their territory throughout the colder months. Recent winters have been relatively mild, and their chosen territory offers good shelter from the weather. The trees nearby are covered



Goldcrest

Credit: Helen Llewelyn



reach an impressive volume.

After several weeks of these noisy disputes, things eventually settled down. I later spotted Fergus along with a female Firecrest, busily collecting insects, and not long after, I was delighted to hear and spot a recently fledged Firecrest. That leads me to believe Fergus enjoyed a successful breeding season. I hope they continue to stay nearby – such cracking little birds.

Helen Llewelyn

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Family News

Former Marlborough resident, **Lawrence Oliver**, died peacefully in hospital on June 24th in Scotland. Lawrence lived in the town between 1981 and 1999, along with his wife Heather MacMillan, having first moved to Wiltshire after his work as a Civil Engineer for Halcrow took him to their Burderop Park office near Swindon.

Native Glaswegian, Lawrence, and Heather, attended Christchurch for many years, along with sons Will and Douglas – another son James died in 1985, and they remained appreciative of the Marlborough community's support at that very difficult time.

The family were involved in various community projects. In particular in the 1980s and 1990s Lawrence was an active member of the local Liberal Party and Liberal Democrats, working from the then "Thrifty Orange" shop and office on the High Street. Between 1989-1992, the family lived at The Priory, where Heather served as warden.

After stints working for Halcrow in the Middle East and particularly Hong Kong - where he led on projects including the construction of transport links for the new airport - Lawrence began his retirement in Marlborough by leading a team of volunteers who compiled the Tower and Town in Christchurch Church Hall for a few

years.

Despite an active life in Hertfordshire - including stints as a local authority Councillor - Lawrence and the family maintained close links to Marlborough and he retained a particular fondness for the commerce and history of its High Street, the beauty of the Downs, and the deep peace of Savernake Forest.

Grandparents Wendy and David Stevens, lifelong Marlburians, are extremely proud of their grandson **Max Stevens**, former pupil of St Johns School Marlborough, who lives in Aldbourne. On Friday 8th August Max passed out of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as a Lieutenant in the British Army.

During his 44-week intensive training course, among various awards, he won his platoon the honour of carrying the Sovereign's Banner which was trooped to the whole parade.

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Audrey Peck a T&T tribute

Audrey Peck, who died recently at the age of 91, was given the warmest of tributes by her daughters in the September edition of Tower and Town. The article mentioned that she compiled the Family News for the magazine. This she did for several years, as well as being one of over fifty volunteers who distribute copies around the town.

She took on Family News from Caroline Loveday in August 2012 and passed it on to Jessy Pomfret at the end of 2018. With her strong roots in the community, she seemingly had no difficulty in attracting 'copy' or digging it out, calling herself unfairly and inaccurately a 'busybody': she just knew people and they knew her. Her first article for Tower and Town in the autumn of 2012 contained five items of Family News and the last under her name nearly 8 years later in February 2019 six items. What

commitment, what service!

Sue Tulloh writes: Audrey was supporting Tower and Town for many years before I became responsible for distribution. After she moved to Castle Court, having lived on The Green for many years, she took on distributing the magazine there when the gentleman who had done it before gave up. She was always so helpful and looked for new subscribers as new residents arrived. She also found someone to replace her when she found it too much. She will, I know, be much missed by many.

Audrey was a stalwart of the magazine and we miss her cheerful commitment. We all at Tower and Town send our warmest wishes and condolences to Audrey's daughters and the rest of her family.

John Osborne



Leafmould

If you are a gardener and have access to fallen leaves, then why not make leafmould. Leaves left to decompose in a bin or bag will reward you with a mass of crumbly organic matter in 1-2 years. It is not full of nutrients, but is a huge asset on chalky soils acting as a sponge and holding water, while on heavier soil it helps to create air pockets and



improve drainage. Leafmould, if very fine can be used for planting large seeds, as a mulch, or when mixed with equal parts of sharp sand and garden compost for a potting compost.

I find it easier to rake up leaves when dry, but they do take up space, whereas when collected after rain, are more compact and the moisture starts the rotting process. A pair of leaf boards are helpful to pick up leaves and can be made from rectangles of thin board or plastic. On a lawn collect using a lawnmower, but be aware the box will need emptying regularly, while a shredder is good for tougher leaves. Any chopping will speed decay.

I store leaves in a wire bin, which can be made from winding chicken wire (or something similar) around some sturdy posts, making sure there is

a 'door' to access the leafmould once made. Leave the bin open to the elements as rain helps the decaying process, but on a windy site cover with a sack or old compost bag slashed to let the rain in and weighted down by bricks. Instead of a bin you can use old compost bags or hessian sacks to store leaves, which should be kept damp and stored in inconspicuous

parts of the garden. Store conifer and pine needles separately to make acid mulch for ericaceous plants.



If you only have a few leaves, simply rake into flower beds for the worms to take down to enrich the soil, but be careful not to smother delicate plants or bulbs with large leathery leaves which take a long time to rot.

Miranda Gilmour

Marlborough Gardening Association

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Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Services Times

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

10.30am Meeting for worship

St George’s Preshute (Anglican)

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

10.30am 1st Sunday All age, 2nd & 4th Communion, 3rd Worship

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

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

10.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays Communion, 2nd & 4th Worship

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

5.00pm Informal Worship (with Energize children’s church)

St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)

9.00 am 1st & 3rd Sundays Worship, 2nd & 4th Communion

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

11.00 am Mass

Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)

10.00am Worship

4.00pm Worship

Marlborough College Services are shown at the college chapel

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms - We welcome:

31/08/25 Alfred Christopher Meeson St John the Baptist church

Departed - We pray for the parents and family of:

Sienna Blay aged just 5 months Cherry Orchard, Marlborough

News from the Churches

Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

If you're new to the area or thinking about the faith, please consider joining us at 5pm on Sundays at St Mary's. We are friendly, informal and open to God's Spirit. On the 5th we will be celebrating Harvest Festival.

Energize

Our young people's group will meet on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month during term time.

Children/Family Activities

The Ark Parent/Carer and Toddler Group. Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless Street. Please contact Caroline Philps for more information cphilps2@gmail.com

St Mary's Autumn Energize

From 10am to 12pm on Tuesday 28th October, we'll be welcoming children from Reception to Year 6 to join us for a morning of fun, crafts, music and games in St Mary's Church. £2 per head, booking essential as places are limited.

For more information or to book a place, email Penny Reader penny.families@gmail.com

Welcome Wednesdays

A reflection, coffee and doughnuts every Wednesday, 10.30 am in St Mary's. (Poster p.21)

St Mary's Women's Group

Thursdays 10 am to 11 am. Join for coffee, chat, Lectio and prayer. All welcome - for more details and dates, email

marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk

Emmanuel Church Marlborough

Join us every Sunday morning at 10 am for our weekly morning church service located on New Road in Marlborough, SN8 1AH. Our service includes a group for children from age 3 to school Year 4, followed by refreshments.

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

We also offer various activities throughout the week, including home groups in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George, as well as community groups. For more information and updates on our events, please visit our website at emmanuelmarlborough.org or email office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

All are welcome to join us!

Little Friends Toddler Group,

Thursdays during term time, 10-11.30 am at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street,

News from the Churches

Marlborough, SN8 1AP. Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers.

Explorers

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

Rooted

A discipleship group for Y7-9 and Y10 -13: Friday, 10 October, 6-7.15 pm at the Priest's home. Through Bible study, training and discussion, we want to grow in love for each other and for Jesus. Held fortnightly with food, before Friday Nights youth group. We'd love to see you there!

Friday Nights

Fridays during term time, 7.30-9 pm. Our youth club for school years 7-11 at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. Friends, fun & faith – everyone is welcome!

Sparklers

Monday, 13 October, 3.45-4.45 pm (Doors open at 3.30 pm) at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. A monthly kids club for school years Reception to Year 2. Games, Snacks and Bible Stories!

Emmanuel Church Homegroups

Thursdays during term time, Pewsey – 7.30 pm, Marlborough – 7.45 pm, Ogbourne St George – 7.45 pm. Bible

study, prayer and fellowship.

Emmanuel Ladies Bible Study

Every other Friday during term time (10 October), 10 am- 11.30 am. Friends discovering God's truth in the Bible (All women are welcome - onsite crèche available).

St John the Baptist Mildenhall

Harvest Barn Dance and Bring and Share Supper. Dust off your dancing shoes and join us for an evening of fun, music, and laughter at our Harvest Barn Dance (see advert below)

St John the Baptist Church, Minal
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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 November issue by Tuesday 14th October please.

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