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# TOWER AND TOWN

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Marlborough  
in  
Lockdown

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# TOWER AND TOWN

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## Marlborough in Lockdown

Under the shadow of lockdown, with teenagers across the country confined to virtual learning, a 'Form' class of Marlborough College pupils spent part of this Lent term studying the History of Marlborough. This was somewhat ironic, considering they were learning about their school and town while they were, in most cases, at home far away.

'Form' is taught to the first year Shell (Year 9 pupils, aged 13-14) at the College. The broad focus is on three combined humanities subjects: English, History and Religious Studies. It aims to develop creativity, curiosity and independent learning. It is the basis for intellectual growth and sharing of ideas.

While studying the history of Marlborough, pupils explored and researched areas such as the town's Neolithic beginnings, Merlin's Mound, the Medieval Castle, the Royal Charter (1204), the Statutes of Marlborough (1267), the Ordination of Thomas Wolsey (1498 in St Peter's Church), the Battle of Marlborough (1642), the Great Fire of Marlborough (1653), the Seymour Family and the Castle Inn. They have also studied the history of the College, its Masters, buildings, landmarks and distinguished alumni.

This edition of Tower and Town focuses however on the Shell Year's perceptions of Covid.

**Mike Bush**  
(Form & History Teacher  
Marlborough College)

Cover picture: 'Shell' students on the restored Mound, Marlborough College

# Arriving at the College in Lockdown

## 100 Years on from John Betjeman

Mike Bush

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One of the College's most famous literary former pupils is the late Poet Laureate John Betjeman (B2 1920-25). Unlike the majority of Old Marlburians, Betjeman loathed his five years at school - "Thank God I'll never have to go through them again" he wrote in Chapter VII of his autobiographical works 'Summoned by Bells'. His wealth of evocative verse and prose refers to his miserable time that included "casual beatings", meals that featured cakes "harder than rocks" and tea "made from stewed up socks", and, perhaps most of all, the dread of games while "shivering in exiguous shorts".

It wasn't all bad. He liked the town and felt an affinity with the surrounding countryside. He enjoyed cycling to Silbury Hill and "sepulchral Avebury", as well as recalling "the smell of trodden leaves beside the Kennet on Sunday walks". However, such was the trauma that when filming a documentary of his life in the 1960s, Betjeman took considerable persuading to even enter the school gates. It was his first return visit to Marlborough for over 40 years.

Arriving at Marlborough exactly 100 years after Betjeman, the Shell intake of 2020 perhaps have more reason not to enjoy their inauspicious beginnings. Starting at boarding school in the midst of a global pandemic, their experience will have been very different to that of the ordinary Marlburian. Face masks, one-way systems, house & year group bubbles, regular Covid tests, eating in solitude, classrooms set up in soulless exam-style alignment of desks and Saturday nights socials a thing of the past, were just some of the features of 'Covid College'. During the year that marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day, the British people were experiencing the most comprehensive upheaval to normal everyday lives since the dark days of World War II. The residents of Marlborough, both College and Town, were no exception.

In spite of these unique, unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances, the achievements of all who work at the College have been remarkable in providing an environment that is as safe, productive and enjoyable as possible. The intake of 2020 will never forget their first year at the College. Inspired by the former Poet Laureate, this group of Shell pupils, 100 years his junior, have written poems on 'Marlborough in Lockdown', reflecting their experiences of the Michaelmas and Lent terms in the style of John Betjeman's poetry.

We arrived at Marlborough with a very big task  
No contact, no coughing, 'Oh please wear a mask!'  
Within days of arriving, we set to the Mound  
Socially distanced (of course), we spiralled around.

*Ready 4 Rugby* changed the game a lot:  
No rucking, no team talks, tackling (definitely not!)  
We practised Cricket, and then came a match,  
But Bradfield won, as we were not up to scratch.

Lessons were allowed in our own little bubble,  
But face coverings and '2 metres' meant they were trouble  
We ventured to Mem Hall for the weekly Assembly  
Only to find that the place was half empty.

No mixing of years at Summerfield house meals  
This really was one of the biggest deals  
We scoffed it down in 15 minutes  
Then in came Remove and made us off limits!

Oh! What a bore to have to school at home!  
This made me annoyed and all I could do was moan  
Sitting at a desk and staring at a screen  
Is not my idea of how to start school at 13.

Betjeman's poems were negative and sad,  
But things at Marlborough really aren't that bad.  
We have many wonderful things, including Court  
And, most importantly, we play lots of sport!

In Marlborough town during the time of Covid  
Everyone *must* ensure to wear masks  
Causing minds to become eroded.  
Students of the college forbidden from usual tasks  
Everyone's brains being re-encoded  
Everyone asks, 'Why can't we unmask?'

Not long ago everything was fine  
People getting on with life as normal  
The future of a person's life would shine  
But now everything's abnormal!  
The town once had a great castle  
With mighty kings controlling this place  
Where once stood lots of grazing cattle  
Now a virus causing all this hassle!

Marlborough town is mighty!  
So, everyone must power on  
Bearing loved ones tightly  
Money may start to be gone  
But make sure to look ahead brightly  
Soon this will be all over  
There will be a big celebration  
The citizens of Marlborough will take back over  
Soon everything will be splendid  
And hopefully all will be mended!

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It's over a year since the first case  
Now there are hundreds in each place  
Marlborough is not like the old time  
When Betjeman thought being there was a crime.

Betjeman recalled his hatred of this school  
Although we know that they were cruel  
The Mound and town are still here  
Though the community is lacking this year.

The injection is working for many  
To try to stop what happened in 2020  
Though through the year and a half like this  
We've all have something that we miss.

All the helpers working long hours  
Everybody thinking they have the powers  
Through the unknown and the fear  
Though we still can't come anywhere near.

With cases dropping and a cure being found  
We might finally start to get around  
Open the schools and all the places  
So, we can once more enjoy open spaces.

However, until that cure is given to all  
We've got to stop this once and for all  
No one wants to be in this crisis  
We have to stop the coronavirus!

In the middle of a pandemic,  
I came to Marlborough College with much relish.  
New rules were enforced due to the epidemic,  
Tuck boxes stocked and replenished.

All these rules are a normality to me,  
Shell have never known anything different you see.  
'You have to stay at home!!' the government plea,  
With Covid around, we are not free.

Masks are almost part of our identity,  
Wearing them all the time.  
The NHS work with intensity,  
On the charts, the cases endlessly climb.

We have now been social distancing for so long,  
The rules are just being neglected.  
Covid has taken over and we are no longer strong,  
People see the world from a different perspective.

Constant Covid tests are seen as normality,  
Jabs on their way, but people jeer.  
We have all lost loved ones and we hit reality,  
This needs to stop, because we shouldn't live in fear.

Corona has caused the world to stop,  
Sending all the children home,  
But only for a minute did the cases drop.  
The only way to communicate is now by phone.

Second round of online school,  
Teachers, parents and children waiting for the word.  
'You are now allowed back. Isn't that cool!'  
But the question is: will there be a third?

**Can't we just go back to the old days,  
When we could meet with more than one?  
Let's just make this time a 'phase',  
But it feels like this pandemic has just begun.**

**Every lesson is sent via a link,  
Cameras on, mike on and the lessons begin.  
With all this time online it can be hard to think,  
Stay at home and follow the rules! This way we'll win.**

## **LINK under Lockdown**

**Hugh de Saram**

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The Marlborough and District LINK Scheme has continued to operate throughout these past tumultuous months. Changes there have been, of course, but imagination and verve have meant that we have been able to serve the Marlborough community better than we thought was possible.

To begin with, all volunteer drivers in the age ranges deemed most vulnerable to the virus stepped back and were 'rested'. Younger drivers carried on and new ones stepped in gallantly. Of course, there were far fewer trips to the surgery and the hospital, but there was a great deal of shopping needed by folk sheltering and housebound.

The question of paying for the shopping was quickly solved with the purchase of a number of iZettle card-readers. The LINK volunteer would receive a shopping list - perhaps several shopping lists - from a coordinator. With Waitrose duly warned of the LINK operation, the volunteer would steam round the aisles, piling their trolley with goodies, and check out using their own credit card.

Next stop: the client's front door. Out with mobile phone and the card-reader; the card-reader connects via Bluetooth to the mobile, then a wave of the client's credit card and the appropriate payment wings its way to the LINK bank account. Back home again, the volunteer logs the Waitrose bill as an expense on the LINK computer system and they are electronically reimbursed by LINK for their Waitrose payments.

With access to and use of ready cash increasingly problematic, this fully auditable system quickly gained the confidence of both clients and volunteers, even though in some locations the transaction had to be done by walking out to the front gate in order to get a decent mobile phone signal. Three cheers for technology!

There is a disease  
Called Covid-19  
It spreads when you sneeze  
But there is a vaccine.

It's affecting everyone  
And we must stay inside  
To protect a loved one  
As many have died.

Friends are on our screens  
During online school  
As we can't get vaccines  
And we can't overrule.

Suffocated by masks  
Washing our hands  
Overwhelmed by school tasks  
Ruined summer plans.

Waitrose is packed  
Full of panicked people  
Toilet roll not lacked  
It could reach up the church steeple!

The high street's deserted  
Feels like a ghost town  
Everyone's diverted  
Most shops are closed down.

Stuck behind our screen  
Nothing to do  
Messed up routines  
It's devastatingly true.

We dream of seeing friends  
Inside our home  
Instead, they're through a camera lens  
Using Google Chrome.

There is a disease  
Called COVID-19  
Sadly, no one's at ease  
While COVID'S on the scene.

The College's new  
'Shell' students  
pictured socially  
distanced on The  
Mound and wear-  
ing House  
'Swipes'  
Sep 2020



(Alumni & Engagement Manager, Marlborough College)

During the strange and uncertain times of early 2020 the Marlburian Club (Marlborough College Development & Alumni Association) looked at ways it could continue to communicate and bring the Marlburian Community together. Monday 6th April 2020 marked the launch of Marlburian Mondays, a new series of Zoom talks by Old Marlburians, held at 8pm every other Monday evening. In the autumn, Lockdown over, the talks continued on a monthly basis but as we went into a second and then third lockdown more talks were scheduled along with virtual events that the whole Marlburian Community could join. As we slowly come out of Lockdown, the Club will continue to run these talks as they have proved to be very popular.

The inaugural Marlburian Monday talk was given by Jake Meyer (C3 1997–2002) mountaineer, adventurer and inspirational speaker. Jake shared stories and photos from his early climbing days and the lessons learnt whilst at Marlborough and from his many adventures conquering the highest peaks in the world. In particular he spoke about his ascent of K2 in 2018 on his third and successful attempt to reach the summit. Known as the Savage Mountain, it has claimed the lives of one in four of the climbers who have attempted this challenge. What came across clearly was the tenacity and determination of climbers; the eldest to have conquered K2 being aged 82! One of the images Jake showed was of a Sherpa aged 52 who had climbed K2 19 times.

This was followed by a talk from Richard Villar (PR 1966-71), an emergency response surgeon. Richard served as SAS Medical Officer, operating in the field on soldiers and civilians alike. He is now a leading orthopaedic surgeon and a member of the Disaster Emergency Response Team.

Since then, further Marlburian Monday talks have been given by:  
Harriet Baldwin (LI 1975-77) Monday 4th May 2020:

“Life of an MP and the impact of COVID-19 on Parliament”

Frank Gardner (LI 1974-79) Monday 18th May 2020:

“Rediscovering Nature: From Savernake Forest to Papua New Guinea”

Dr Amanda Foreman, Current Parent, Monday 1st June 2020:

“And Then the Murders Began: A Theory of Consequences in History”

Louis Devereux (B1 2004-09), Monday 15th June 2020:

“The Making of Documentary Film ‘The Rift’”

Edward Gorman (C3 1974-79) Monday 29th June 2020:

“Untold Stories from The Battle of Britain”

Charlie Cannon (C2 1990-95) Monday 15th September 2020:

“Building Resilience in Uncertain Times”

Hugh Pym (C1 1973-77) & Chris Hopson (B1 1976-81) Monday 9th November:

“Covid-19; Lessons Learned So Far”

Anthony Inglis (C3 1966-69) Monday 7th December:

“My Life, so far, in Music”

Jonny Oates (PR 1982-87) and Tom Newton Dunn (C2 1986-91)

In conversation about Oates book I Never Promised You A Rose Garden,

Simon Mordant AO (B1 1973-77) Monday 8th February 2021:

“Building a Bank & a Museum for Contemporary Art; My Journey to Philanthropy”

Julia de Boinville (TU 2006-08) Monday 8th March 2021:

“The Fight Against Modern Slavery”

All talks are available to be viewed on the Marlburian Club website:

<https://www.marlburianclub.org/marlburian-mondays/>



A Covid Quartet perhaps

Music is not masked thank goodness

Well, no, at this stage of their development I don't want to own an electric vehicle (EV) but I do very much enjoy driving one. They have super acceleration, equalling the best petrol-engined models. They pump out no exhaust. They have far fewer moving parts, need much less maintenance and should last much longer. They're cheaper to insure. And of course their makers, being keen to sell them, pack them with the latest innovations. It all adds up to a noticeably different driving experience.

So if I don't own one but I do drive one, what's the trick? Answer: the PCP – Personal Contract Purchase. It's a bit like leasing, but more flexible. We bought our first Nissan Leaf about two years ago, negotiating a monthly payment with which we felt comfortable and putting down a reasonable deposit. The contract runs for three years, after which you have a choice: you can pay off the rest of the purchase with a hefty lump sum payment; you can hand the car back and wave goodbye; or you can trade the vehicle in for a newer model.

It's that last option which is the deal-maker in the current stage of EV development. At the end of the three-year contract we didn't want to pay out a big final sum for a machine that had been superseded by significant advances in technology. If we were still comfortable with the monthly payment of the previous three years, why not simply switch the old machine for a new one and carry on as before?

In the event, we were contacted by Nissan two years into our three-year contract. Their line was that there was a significant second-hand market opening up for EVs among first-time buyers and please would we trade in our current Leaf for a new one? This was a year earlier than we had expected, but we didn't have to think too hard to realise we were being offered a seriously good deal. We now have a third-generation Leaf with a bigger battery, a considerable increase in range (about 230 miles), and other enhancements. The Kia e-Niro and Hyundai Kona now offer something very close to 300 miles range, with Tesla claiming to cap that and a slew of new models coming down the track very shortly.

So much for the buying experience. What about the driving?

We started out very nervously, afraid even to turn on the heating in case we ran out of power and found ourselves stranded. But confidence grew steadily as we realised that 90% of our driving took us no further than about 30 or 40 miles from home, with no likelihood of the battery going flat during such trips.

continued over...

...continued

We became more adventurous. Could we make it to London and back? How about a trip to see a Shakespeare play in Stratford? Both trips turned out to be easy. Nissan had from the very start subsidised our own charge point installed on the front of the garage. But public charge points are comprehensively mapped on plenty of web sites and phone apps, and indeed within the car itself with its touch-screen console. For London, we stopped at Heston services on the way up for a 40 -minute coffee and charge, giving us plenty of power for the rest of the round trip. For Stratford, we saw that there were several public car parks with charge points, and that's what we plugged into while Macbeth murdered Duncan.

Charging is an area that needed some homework. We discovered that there is a number of charge-point networks (Ecotricity's Electric Highway for motorway services, Source London for London, BP Pulse and others for country-wide), and that you need to sign up to these networks and in particular download their apps onto your phone, preferably before you leave home. For our first away-from-home charge at Chieveley services, returning from Heathrow in the dark one evening, we got into a terrible tiz trying to download the app on to our phones, join the necessary network and gain access to power. But we muddled through and made it home, and since then we're cool, sorted, no problem. It remains to be seen how we fare across the Channel, assuming we are ever allowed off this island, but I'm told there is a whole EV world out there, ready and waiting to welcome us. Chance would be a fine thing!

<https://www.zap-map.com/>

<https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-news/electric-highway>

<https://www.sourcelondon.net/>

<https://network.bppulse.co.uk/>

So, here's the thing, like, basically, at the end of the day, does it annoy you when interviewees on radio or TV begin their answers with superfluous words? And then, again and again, they tautologically and repeatedly duplicate their answer, except, on the other hand, and all considered, if they are politicians, when they rarely answer the question anyway!

“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding!”

When the words of the Elizabethan madrigal “It was a lover and his lass” were written the seasons were sharply defined, and so they were I reckon in my childhood too-it snowed in the winter, birds returned on regular dates in spring and fat conkers appeared in September. Now seasonal changes are more unpredictable and confusing and with global warming strange things are confounding tradition: some of our summer visitors have been overwintering in recent decades, turning up in our gardens and on bird feeders.

Our birds start singing well before spring arrives: the dunnock, robin, mistle thrush and song thrush can be heard in January, even an early blackbird on warm days. The green woodpecker “yaffles” in February and both great and lesser spotted woodpeckers have begun their drumming in Savernake Forest, the latter now a rarity.

In March things begin to accelerate with the arrival of the first chiffchaffs and blackcaps, their gentle warblings drowned out by the explosive song of the Cetti’s warbler. First recorded in the 1960’s in the U.K. this skulker it is now a local resident in tangled waterside vegetation along the River Kennet. The skylark, as Meredith’s poem puts it, “rises and begins to round, he drops the silver chain of sound” beautifully evoked in Vaughan Williams’s “Lark Ascending.” In April the warblers arrive and establish their territories: willow and garden warblers, whitethroats and lesser whitethroats, sedge and reed warblers.

The dawn chorus is best heard in late April to the end of May: this year “Dawn Chorus Day” falls on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. One Suffolk birder listed, from 4.00 - 6.00 a.m., his “Cast in order of Appearance”, a total of 25 species starting up minute by minute: robin, song thrush, dunnock, blackbird, woodpigeon, wren, blackcap, great tit, cuckoo, chaffinch.....

We all have our favourites: the robin, for example, that sings all year round, even at night, fooled by the artificial light from street lamps. As a musician I like the way the song thrush repeats his pretty patterns, like an industrious chorister. Then there’s the wren, punching above his weight with deafening roulades of sound. The grasshopper warbler is a late evening performer, with its eerie, insect-like reeling song. That’s the time when the nightingale, now much reduced in numbers in Wiltshire, starts up his beautiful, chortling strains.

The old Saxon name for our local forest was Saofernoc which does actually mean 'seven oaks'. Perhaps there were seven significant oaks or oak copses, but a quaint coincidence is that the current Ordnance Survey map shows seven oaks! But enough of circumspection. Savernake, over its known 1100 years' history has seen many changes in both size and management. Seized from the Saxons by the Normans in 1067, it covered an area south of the Kennet from Manton to Chisbury, Burbage and Wootton Rivers and became a private estate of King William (the Conqueror). William then gave hereditary wardenship to his faithful knight Richard Esturmy whose duty was to provide the king with 'verne and verdure', which is understood to imply meat and timber. As *meat* implied hunting, an extensive dense woodland with heavy undergrowth as nowadays was of no use; the forest would have been an area of several small copses of specially grown trees scattered on open heathland. The word 'forest' therefore did not mean a large wood. It referred to areas set apart from the common land (where commoners lived) and owned by the king, and in which his rather harsh 'forest law' applied as opposed to 'common law' in the rest of the country.

Savernake obviously flourished, as Henry II saw fit to steal land from his vassals and add it to his forest. It thus expanded to East Kennet, Inkpen, Ramsbury and Collingbourne Kingston making an estate of 150 square miles. There was great complaint throughout Henry II's reign as well as his sons' Richard I and John. The Magna Carta required the old boundaries to be re-established but as John especially enjoyed the hunting and his successors weren't interested in justice, it wasn't until Edward III that action was taken. A commission of gentlemen rode and redefined the 'remembered' boundary with the oddity of a significant wedge of land that penetrated to the very middle of the current forest being allocated to another owner. One wonders about exchanges of money bags or threats! From lack of an Esturmy male heir, the wardenship passed by marriage to the Seymour family and it was Jane Seymour's son the young King Edward VI who rewarded his guardian and uncle, Edward Seymour, by giving him the estate. Savernake at some ten times its current size remained largely unchanged in area until the 20th century when much was sold leaving just the wooded area we now know and passing by marriage to the Bruce and then the Brudenell families. It was Mr Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who, in the 1790s, designed much of the current forest layout with the beech-lined Grand Avenue and the 90 foot column and its Ride. He also designed Eight Walks as a visual maze that still catches out people relying on the OS map which doesn't differentiate between the eight radiating tracks.

Though Savernake changed much, the same family was custodian for well over 900 years but through necessity, ownership is now shared with the land consultants Strutt and Parker. There is however nothing in the forest to mark its history, and so, with the approval of David Brudenell-Bruce (Lord Cardigan), four ancient oaks will shortly bear the family names: Esturmy, Seymour, Brudenell and Bruce.

War-time Savernake is another story.

## A Good Read

Debbie Guest

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Two very different books this month, but I absolutely loved them both. **The Mermaid of Black Conch** by Monique Roffey is one of the best books I've read for a while. There are only a handful of potential plots in literature, and one of them is the arrival of a disruptive outsider. In this novel a mermaid – yes, an actual half-woman half-fish mermaid - is the stranger whose presence permanently alters the lives of the characters and their community. It's hard to describe without giving too much away, but the narrative and dialogue are fabulously energetic, textured and fluid, and the author creates a situation which is both supernatural and convincingly realistic. The mermaid is real, but of course she's also a metaphor for migration and displacement, colonialism and exploitation. This is a book which deals compellingly with issues of history, of power and hatred and jealousy and love. Sounds 'clever' and 'literary'? It is, and it won the Costa Book Award last year. It's also immensely readable, original, varied and evocative.

Do you know what Sigmund Freud was doing in Trieste in 1876? Studying eels, looking for their testicles, to understand how they reproduce. (He failed.). Yes, folks, it's that time of year again. I'm working my way through the shortlisted books for the Richard Jefferies Society/White Horse Bookshop Prize, and quietly seething with enthusiasm for **The Gospel of the Eels** by Patrick Svensson. It's a combination of natural science and literary memoir, about the most enigmatic of creatures. The author considers the intangible cultural heritage of eel-fishing communities all around Europe and how he bonded with his father through catching eels in rural Sweden. Despite years of research and study, what we know about eels remains hazy and speculative. We all know, don't we, that they reproduce in the Sargasso Sea? And yet, no-one has ever seen a breeding eel there, and the Sargasso Sea itself remains an elusive place, with no clearly defined limits. We do know that eels appear to be dying out, their numbers diminishing, yet we don't know why. Patrick Svensson draws together science, myth and anthropology in a book that evokes the hypnotic appeal of this mysterious, and to some faintly repulsive animal. There's a strange metaphysical quality to eels, and to this book. I finished reading it genuinely half-wondering if they are visiting us from another dimension.

# Marlborough Churches Together

## Welcome to Easter Services 2021

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*NB Services correct at time of print, please check individual websites for changes.*

### **Palm Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> March**

- 9am Zoom Communion (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6726727777>)
- 10.30am Morning Worship (St Mary's)
- 10.30am Communion (St George's)
- 10.30am Zoom Worship (visit: [christchurchmarlborough.org.uk](http://christchurchmarlborough.org.uk))
- 11am Mass (St Thomas More)
- 3.30pm Emmanuel Service (Christchurch)
- 5.00pm Mass (St Thomas More)

### **Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March**

- 10am Mass (St Thomas More)
- 7.30pm Compline (St John the Baptist)

### **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> March**

- 10.00am Mass (St Thomas More)
- 7.30pm Compline (St George's)

### **Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March**

- 7.30pm Compline (St Mary's)

### **Maundy Thursday - 1<sup>st</sup> April**

- 7.30pm Mass of the Last Supper (St Thomas More)
- 7.30pm Communion (St Mary's) *followed by The Watch until midnight*

### **Good Friday - 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

- 10am Emmanuel Service outside at St John the Baptist, Minal
- 10.30am Worshipping at the Foot of the Cross (St Mary's)
- 10.30pm Zoom Reflective Worship (visit: [christchurchmarlborough.org.uk](http://christchurchmarlborough.org.uk))
- 12.30pm Stations of The Cross (St Thomas More)
- 2pm The Last Hour before the Cross (St George's)
- 3pm Commemoration of the Lord's Passion (St Thomas More)

### **Saturday - 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

- 9pm The Easter Vigil Mass (St Thomas More)

### **Easter Sunday - 4<sup>th</sup> April**

- 9am Zoom Communion (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6726727777>)
- 9am Family Communion (St John the Baptist)
- 9am & 10.30am Family Communion (St Mary's)
- 9am & 11am Family Communion (St George's)

10.30am Communion Service (Christchurch)  
10.30am Quaker Meeting for Worship  
11am Mass (St Thomas More)  
3.30pm Emmanuel Service (Christchurch)  
5.00pm Mass (St Thomas More)

## A Message for Writers and Readers

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### **The second national ‘Love Books’ competition**

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

[lovebookscompetition.org](http://lovebookscompetition.org)

Returning for 2021, the Marlborough LitFest and English Literature at Bath Spa University are excited to launch this year’s competition, to celebrate a love of reading amongst all ages. With almost 100 entries in 2020 across three age groups, we were delighted with the breadth of interest and talent and hope to recreate this enthusiasm once again. Winners in each age category will receive prize money of £300; runners-up £100.

The competition, which runs until 30 June, invites participants to explain their choice of a favourite book, poem or play by either a written (up to 750 words) or video (no more than four minutes) response. The emphasis needs to be on what entrants love about their chosen read and why they think others should try it.

The competition will be managed by Bath Spa students studying English Literature as part of their degree course. Open to three age groups: 13-16, 17-19 and 20+, judges will be looking for creative, passionate and engaging responses. Judges for 2021 will be Ian Gadd, Professor in English Literature at Bath Spa University, Judy Carver (daughter of William Golding), writer and CEO of William Golding Ltd, and Jan Williamson (ex-Chair of Marlborough LitFest).

Nicola Presley, Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University, said: “For the 2020 competition, we were delighted to receive such creative and passionate responses on such a diverse range of texts. We look forward to more in 2021.”

Genevieve Clarke, Chair of the Marlborough LitFest, said: “Our partnership with English Literature at Bath Spa University for the Love Books Competition feels like a really creative way of celebrating reading. We were delighted with the response to its first year and hope that even more adults and young people from around the country will share with us their enthusiasm for books in 2021.”

Claire Markwell writes:



**Christopher Lawrence RICS** was hugely valued by the local community of local estate agents; a kind and gentle man, he was renowned as a reliable and safe pair of hands. He was the first person to be recommended when a buyer asked for a top notch surveyor. His twinkling eyes missed nothing as he performed his building inspections, his gimlet gaze falling on each crack and crevice in houses both large and small. Whilst his reports were comprehensive and utterly reliable, he always took the time to explain to his clients that what sometimes sounded horrific was often not nearly as bad as it looked, reassuring nervous buyers in a calm and practical manner. Chris took on huge projects, acting as the imaginative and innovative conduit between planning authorities and clients. He held the hands of first time buyers and acted time after time for returning clients who were serial house movers. After thirty years he was seldom surprised yet approached each job with fresh enthusiasm. He leaves a massive gap in the estate agency armoury and it will be a very long time before we remember to stop suggesting him as the surveyor to go-to. Chris was a man we will miss for his charm, personality and conversation as much as we will for his professionalism.

Many thanks to Henry Pearson for his help with the following paragraph:

**Ernie Newell** was born in Savernake Hospital in 1939. He was a choirboy, a scout and a keen lover of sports who played golf from the age of 10. When he left school he was taken on by the Marlborough Times as an apprentice, a learning experience that he valued and appreciated throughout his life. He became a golf journalist and wrote regular columns for the MT and Wiltshire Gazette and Herald as well as for golf magazines and sports columns for the national press.

In the 1970s Ernie was one of a small group of people who fought to develop the municipally owned golf course of nine holes which had two redundant GWR coaches for a clubhouse. Their legacy can be seen on top of The Common today in the challenging full sized eighteen -hole golf course which uses the natural slopes of the downland and is one of the top courses in the region. For the occasion of the Marlborough club's centenary in 1988, Ernie wrote a book in which he set out the

history of the club and recounted some of the many anecdotes that he recalled. Sadly, many years ago he was diagnosed with neuromyotonia which robbed him of much of his independence and mobility.

Ernie's other main passion was writing and reading poetry. He produced many folders of work during his lifetime and whilst in hospital said that the one thing he wanted most to help him pass the time was a pair of reading glasses and a book of poetry. He declared that he was going to write some more when he felt better. Ernie, who died on February 10th 2021, will be remembered by those who knew him for his fantastic brain, his dry sense of humour and, above all, his kindness.

## Love Marlborough Kids Meals Kymee Cleasby

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Do you know about LMKM? - 'Love Marlborough Kids Meals'?

Throughout Lockdown our willing team of volunteers continues to cook and deliver delicious hot meals twice a week to the homes of over 40 local families who are struggling to provide food for their children in these difficult times.

Many local families who have not previously asked for help are now caught up in the cycle of unemployment and hardship caused by this unprecedented pandemic. So if you, or anyone you know, needs help, please do not hesitate to get in touch through our website. [www.lovemarlbroughkidsmeals.org](http://www.lovemarlbroughkidsmeals.org). It's completely confidential, no fuss, no forms, no referrals necessary. This economic crisis could affect any one of us.

Now for some good news of our future plans! From mid April, we are starting our Cookery and Budgeting Workshops to encourage families to transition into confident independence, and enjoy cooking in their own homes. This programme will equip families with real skills and provide a support network for the future.

Our funding challenge is to continue providing for immediate and necessary need, whilst expanding into our self supporting workshop programme. LMKM depends entirely on all our volunteer staff and we are grateful for the kind generosity of many local people and businesses for our financial support.

We need your continued help Marlborough!

You can donate, volunteer, or ask for our confidential help through our website [www.lovemarlbroughkidsmeals.org](http://www.lovemarlbroughkidsmeals.org) Thank you.

Lent, amongst other things, is a gift of simplification. Life can be so full in different ways, even in lockdown. Full of concern, full of hope, full of longing, full of dreams of sunny days or holidays... The list goes on, of course and no personal inventory of our preoccupations will ever be quite the same as someone else's. We are unique!

But in great love, the Lord invites us to come before him and spend time reflecting on what we do, what we give our time and attention and money to, the dreams we dream and the things that 'trip us up'. Many of us will be quite a bit fed up with the personal space that life has afforded us recently but others of us will be greatly anticipating some more personal space, like parents seeing their children returning to school on the day that I write...

In Lent, we are presented with the gift of time to come before God, to pray and listen to his Word and to ask Him: what have you shown me recently? Has lockdown afforded me insight into how I want my life to be different? What in my life is good and that I want more of? How will I help make that happen? What is not good and needs to decrease or be ruthlessly written out of my life? How brave am I about this?

The Psalmist writes:

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers. (Psalm 1.1-3)

Learning yet again to be people who are in the world but not of it is a very Lenten thing. Take these verses as part of your inspiration to do this, and may God bless you.

In Christ with you, in Marlborough



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# Marlborough Church Contacts

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## **The Revd Tim Novis**

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*Senior Chaplain, Marlborough College*

## **The Revd Pete Sainsbury**

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*Team Vicar and Worship Director,  
St George's Preshute & The Marlborough  
Anglican Team*

## **The Revd Chris Smith**

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*Rector; Marlborough Anglican Team*

## **The Revd Stephen Skinner**

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*Minister, Christchurch Methodist*

## **Rachel Rosedale**

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

---

## **Laura Willis**

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## **David Wylie**

513701; office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk  
Christchurch Office, New Road, SN8 1AH  
(Fridays, 14:30 to 16:30)

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## FROM THE REGISTERS

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### **Funerals - we pray for the families of:**

5 February: Lavona 'Vonnie' Elizabeth Dickens (86) of St Andrews Close,  
Wootton Rivers *Cadley Churchyard*

10 February: Ernest 'Ernie' Newell (82) of Gales Ground, Marlborough  
*North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett*

23 February: Greta Mary Hatch (89) of Savernake View Care Home, Marlborough  
*North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett*

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## St Non's Retreat

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The annual visit to this delightful, quiet retreat centre, with its wonderful views of the lovely Pembrokeshire coast, will be from September 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. As planned for last year, Lynne Busfield will lead our contemplations and there will be ample time to meditate and explore the fascinating coastline and the St David's locality. Those who booked for that Covid-cancelled retreat will have priority this year but should confirm their booking in good time. Details from Barney on 512205.

# News From The Churches

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*For Easter Service times please see page 18. Details are correct at time of print, please check individual websites for any changes to Easter Services.*

## **Good Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** (for details please see page 18)

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Due to COVID restrictions we will not be offering the Walk of Witness this year. We welcome you to:

All Age Worship in the morning at St Mary's, Devotional Services in St George's and St Thomas More in the afternoon and on Saturday (3<sup>rd</sup>) evening service at St Thomas More.

Emmanuel invite you to join a Good Friday service, by kind permission, in the grounds of St John the Baptist Church in Mildenhall, at 10am on Good Friday. Bring your own picnic rug or deck-chairs and hot cross buns; Please sit 2m from the next rug.

## **Easter Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

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We welcome you to worship Easter with the Marlborough Churches Together and look forward to celebrating with hope and prayers. For Easter Sunday Service dates please see page 18.

## **Circle of Hopes and Dreams at St Mary's Church**

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Leave messages with your hopes, dreams, and prayers for the future at the Circle of Hope just outside St Mary's Church Marlborough during Easter and April. More information at [www.marlboroughanglican.org.uk](http://www.marlboroughanglican.org.uk)

## **Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group**

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(MAPAG) meets via Zoom at 5pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April. All welcome to join the meeting please contact Betty Dobson:

## **Marlborough Churches Together Fraternal**

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meets via Zoom on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 12.30pm. Please send any suggestions for discussion to Rachel Rosedale: [rachelrosed1@gmail.com](mailto:rachelrosed1@gmail.com)

## **Marlborough Churches Together AGM Update**

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The AGM of MCT was held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Chris Smith was elected the new Chairman, Rachel Rosedale Acting Secretary and Martin Hamer Treasurer. The excellent Annual Report can be found on the MCT website: [www.marlboroughchurchestogether.uk](http://www.marlboroughchurchestogether.uk)

## **St Thomas More**

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[marlboroughandpewseycatholics.org.uk](http://marlboroughandpewseycatholics.org.uk)

Worship services continue at St Thomas More with live services.

Although not currently holding services Christchurch has been meeting via Zoom on a Sunday morning and distributing hard copies of the services to those not on the internet.

Christchurch has hosted Love Marlborough Kids Meals and continues to provide storage for the Foodbank.

Holy Week Services: a Good Friday service will be held via Zoom at 10:30am and we are hoping to celebrate Easter Sunday with a physical service in the church! From Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April for 5 weeks Rev Stephen Skinner will host Pete Greig: Prayer Course II entitled Unanswered Prayer from his book 'God on mute'. This will be via Zoom at 7:30pm. Contact David Wylie at: [office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk](mailto:office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk) for details of how to join.

**Emmanuel**[emmanuelmarlborough.org](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org)

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Emmanuel has restarted weekly gathered Sunday services with children's activities at Christchurch, Marlborough at 3.30pm. Our short services will be socially distanced to protect against coronavirus. Please bring a face-covering (unless under the age of 11). Join our trail of Hope, over Easter weekend, around Marlborough. More info at [www.facebook.com/EmmanuelMarlborough](https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelMarlborough)

**Marlborough Anglican Team**[marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk](http://marlboroughanglicanteam.org.uk)

---

Social distancing, extra cleaning and our Zoom service all remain in place for the foreseeable future; we will keep our interim pattern of worship until the end of Step 2 on 16<sup>th</sup> May:

9am Weekly Zoom Service

9am Fortnightly Service at Minal (1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month)

10.30am Weekly Services at St Mary's and St George's

5.30pm Fortnightly Informal Service at St Mary's (2nd and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month)

All three churches remain open for private prayer daily:

St Mary's 9am-4pm

St George's 9am-4pm

St John the Baptist 9.30am-4pm

**Marlborough Quakers**[marlboroughquakers.org.uk](http://marlboroughquakers.org.uk)

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Continue to hold Meetings for Worship using Zoom. Please contact Rachel Rosedale (512205) for more details.

**30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World (April 13<sup>th</sup> to May 12<sup>th</sup>)**

This is an opportunity for the church to make a deliberate but respectful effort to learn about, pray for and reach out to our world's Muslim neighbours. It coincides annually with the important Islamic month of religious observation — Ramadan, a worldwide month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community.

A prayer guide booklet is available from <https://30daysprayer.org.uk/order/>

# Tower and Town staff

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**Website, searchable article archive**

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**Contributions and comments** from readers are welcome. Please send articles and letters to the Monthly Editor or the Editorial Coordinator, other notices or announcements to the compiler. All items for the May issue by Tuesday 13th April please.

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