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# TOWER<sup>AND</sup>TOWN

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THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



**MARLBOROUGH SPORTS FORUM**

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## July Edition Front Cover:

Marlborough Sports Forum Festival, May 2024

Credit: Marlborough News Online (Neil Goodwin)

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# TOWER<sup>AND</sup>TOWN

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## SPORTS FORUM

Studies of human health and wellbeing have always identified sport, exercise and physical activity as being immensely beneficial to good health, life expectancy and quality of life.

In recent years, this message has become even more important and vocal, given the growth of the internet and social media and the associated increase of an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Such a lifestyle is (or should be) a concern for people of all ages but it is a particular concern for children and young people. Marlborough, although maybe not as typical as many more

urban areas, is not immune to this - which is where the Sports Forum becomes relevant to life in the town.

Marlborough has always benefitted from the existence of a range of Sports Clubs, many of which have been in existence for many years. So why the need for a Sports Forum? Please read on and find out the answer to this question and others: how the Forum began, its links to sports clubs and schools, and what it does - including Sports Festivals and grants to individuals.

**Simon Wells - Editor**

Chair, Marlborough Sports Forum

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**July Edition No. 760**

Compiler: Sarah Bumphrey

Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster Kemp

Marlborough Churches  
**Together**



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# Why the Need for a Sports Forum?

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The Sports Forum exists to provide a more unified voice for all sport and physical activity than can be provided by individual clubs who (understandably) have their own parochial interests and agendas.

It is currently comprised of most of the sports clubs in the town, along with representatives from the three schools closest to the centre of the town – St Mary's, St John's and Marlborough College – as well as Marlborough Town Council, Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire and Swindon Sports Partnership.

So what is the *raison d'être* for the Forum? There are several strands:

- To encourage the involvement and participation in sport and physical activity particularly among young people.
- To support sports clubs by providing a forum for meeting and sharing expertise and information.
- To promote, support and develop sports facilities in the town, as well as

the retention of existing facilities. For example, the section on Sport in the Neighbourhood Plan owes much to the input of the Forum.

- To raise awareness of sport and physical activity generally in the Marlborough area.
- To provide financial assistance to young people who need support to become involved in sport initially.
- To provide financial support to those who need it to progress through the various sporting levels (district, county, regional or national).

Aside from enjoyment and improved physical wellbeing, the mental wellbeing benefits should never be forgotten. Nor should the opportunity sport and physical activity provides to improve social skills such as communication and team building. But most importantly, especially for younger people, it should always, whatever your preferred sport or activity, aim to be FUN!

**Simon Wells**



**Marlborough-sports-forum.co.uk**

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**Are you interested in joining or applying?**

- If you are a sports club currently not a member of Sports Forum and wish to join, please get in touch via the website.
- Anyone who wishes to apply for a grant, please contact Sports Forum via the website.

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# Marlborough Sports Forum: A Story of Passion, Community and Sporting Spirit

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What began as a casual gathering of local sports clubs—meeting occasionally to talk shop—was transformed in 2011, thanks to the enthusiasm and vision of outgoing Mayor Andy Ross.

During his Mayorship, Andy was known for his support of all sport, but especially youth sport, and when he stepped down, Andy donated his Mayor's Fund of £5,860+ to the newly inspired Marlborough Sports Forum. This funding enabled the Forum to focus on granting support to young athletes and helping local clubs create more opportunities for participation.

The response from Marlborough's sports clubs was immediate and enthusiastic. They backed the Forum and also took action—raising funds, promoting their sports, and bringing people together through a series of sporting and community-driven events, showcasing their facilities where possible.

The Bowls Club rolled out a successful evening on the green. The Cricket and Hockey Clubs teamed up for a lively quiz night, while the Football Club ran a successful darts competition. The Rugby Club donated to the growing pot and, as awareness grew, Marlborough Town Council stepped in with a generous £1,000 donation—earmarked

specifically to support young residents in sport.

From the very beginning, the committee had planned an annual Sports Forum Dinner. Not just a fundraiser, this event would be a celebration of sport in Marlborough, a coming-together of clubs, supporters, and sporting legends. The inaugural dinner in October 2012 delivered in every way.

With local auctioneer Charles Lucas leading the charge and sports icons Mike Gatting and Colin Brown headlining the evening, the Town Hall was buzzing. A staggering £6,000 was raised. Behind the scenes, the committee worked tirelessly, joined by the late Andy Nash of the Boxing Club, whose knack for ticket sales and auction prize sourcing became legendary. The Town Hall was packed and old friendships revived as sports people and guests came together. The night was elevated further by the generous sponsorship and lively participation of the Barbury Castle Estate team.

Inspired by that success, the Forum hosted follow-up dinners in 2014 (twice!) and 2016. These evolved into heartwarming evenings, featuring video messages and live talks from grant recipients. Who could forget young cricketer Zak Tunmore, barely visible behind the lectern, delivering his

Continued on page 4

earnest “thank you” speech to a room full of applause?

Sports personalities like Shelley Rudman, Stuart Pearce, Luke Harvey, Andrew Thornton (saddle in hand from his last ride of the day), Wayne Hutchinson, and Sam Parkin all lent their support, speaking not for fees, but for the love of sport.

With sponsors, local businesses and community members all pitching in, whether by donating raffle and auction prizes, selling tickets, or just showing up, the dinners became much more than fundraisers. They were a celebration of community, commitment and grassroots sport. Then came the pandemic, pausing large gatherings. But the Forum adapted, shifting its focus to accessible Sports Festivals on the Recreational Ground. With support from the Local Area Board, local clubs ran taster sessions for kids, and Marlborough College stepped in with food and logistical support—joined, in true community fashion, by a contingent from the army.

After a fundraising lull, this February marked the Forum’s return to form with the much-anticipated Curry and Quiz Night. The Town Hall was packed, the competition fierce. Quizmaster Robin Parker delivered a night of sporting trivia and wickedly tough questions. The Hockey Club reigned supreme—both finalist teams hailed from their ranks—and an anonymous donation doubled the night’s total raised to £4,800.

**The Moral of the Story?**

Raising money is best done with laughter, teamwork, and a shared passion for sport. And if you think you could’ve beaten the Hockey Club in the final tiebreaker, here is the question:

**Stadium Australia hosted many of the events at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. How far is the stadium from Marlborough Town Hall?**

*(Answer on page 16).*

**Caroline Baynes**

Secretary, Marlborough Sports Forum

**Marlborough Sports Forum Club Contacts:**

Marlborough Hockey	<a href="http://www.marlborough-hockey.org.uk">www.marlborough-hockey.org.uk</a>
Marlborough Cricket	<a href="mailto:marlboroughcc@gmail.com">marlboroughcc@gmail.com</a>
Marlborough Youth Football	<a href="mailto:PlayerEnquiries@myfc.me.uk">PlayerEnquiries@myfc.me.uk</a>
Marlborough Tennis	<a href="mailto:info@marlboroughtennis.co.uk">info@marlboroughtennis.co.uk</a>
Marlborough Rugby	<a href="mailto:youth@mrfc.co.uk">youth@mrfc.co.uk</a>
Marlborough Athletics	<a href="mailto:enquiries@marlboroughathletics.co.uk">enquiries@marlboroughathletics.co.uk</a>
Marlborough Golf	<a href="mailto:gm@marlboroughgolfclub.co.uk">gm@marlboroughgolfclub.co.uk</a>
Kennet Valley Table Tennis	<a href="mailto:Richard.Ramsden@gmail.com">Richard.Ramsden@gmail.com</a>
Marlborough Boxing	<a href="mailto:marlboroughboxing@gmail.com">marlboroughboxing@gmail.com</a>
Marlborough ParkRun	<a href="mailto:marlboroughcommon@parkrun.com">marlboroughcommon@parkrun.com</a>
Marlborough Bowls	<a href="http://www.marlboroughbc.co.uk">www.marlboroughbc.co.uk</a>





Hilda Moore (a very active & longstanding Tennis Club representative on the Sports Forum) receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteer of the Year from Sir Trevor McDonald at the Lawn Tennis Association Awards 2025.

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# Sports Forum Festival May 2024

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Last Year's Marlborough Sports Forum Festival took place on 6th May at Marlborough Recreation Ground.

Sports included golf (*top left*) , climbing (*top right*) , football (*centre*) and scooter riding (*bottom left*).

Credit for photographs:

Marlborough Sports Forum, (Dominique Oughton - Vice-chair)

Marlborough News Online (Neil Goodwin)



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# Sports Festivals

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Following Covid and the associated restrictions in social activities, the Sports Forum decided to hold a Sports Festival as a way of trying to entice and encourage young people to become involved in sport and physical activity.

It was decided that a variety of sports and activities should be provided for all the participants to sample– think speed-dating for sport! The first of these festivals was held in September 2021 and it was so successful that another was held in May 2024, with around 150 attendees at each event. On each occasion the events were held at the Recreation Ground, with all participants able to attend for free and over 12 activities being provided

Member clubs of the Forum each ran some of the sample sessions but it was felt that it was only right that we should seek the views of potential participants. Courtesy of St John's and St Mary's, surveys were completed by over 500 young people on each occasion, with the feedback informing the choice of sports and activities at the Festivals, including external non-club providers. In addition, these surveys (the first of their kind in Marlborough) provided valuable insights into young people's views of their community, which have since helped shape local youth initiatives. They also identified some of the barriers to

participation in sport and physical activity – wanting to do the same activity as friends, not wanting to go alone, cost and transport.

With the support of the member clubs and with WASP (Wiltshire and Swindon Sport) co-ordinating the event, a range of community partners generously supported the events. Marlborough Area Board and Marlborough Town Council provided great assistance with the funding, while the College and Tesco helped in providing free lunches to all. Many others provided support: Marlborough Youth centre, Youth Action Wiltshire, Marlborough Police, First Aider and a whole team of volunteers - a real team effort from all involved. Even the weather proved reasonably supportive!

The feedback afterwards was overwhelmingly very positive not only from the participants, but also from the parents, with the range of activities, the organisation and atmosphere forming the basis of the majority of comments! The activities provided by the Member Clubs were all popular and the participants seemed enthused by trying such a variety of different sports. The favourite activities varied between the two festivals, but the climbing wall and skateboarding proved consistently popular, as did dodgeball. Thoughts are already turning to holding another one.....

**Simon Wells and  
Dominique Oughton**

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# Marlborough Sports Clubs

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Marlborough is fortunate in having a wide variety of sports clubs, most of which are active participating members of the Sports Forum. They cover the full panoply of sports for all seasons, indoors and outdoors.

All the clubs have thriving junior sections, open to all, albeit ranging in size. All have suitably qualified coaches. Many sports are becoming all-year-round sports, but in traditional terms, winter sport is covered by three clubs, Marlborough Youth Football, Marlborough Rugby & Marlborough Hockey, whilst in the summer cricket, athletics, tennis and golf are catered for by their respective sports clubs, all bearing the name Marlborough. Indoor sports are provided by Marlborough Boxing Club and Kennet Valley Table Tennis Club. The Bowls Club and ParkRun are also represented. The total number of junior participants at clubs who are actively involved in the Forum exceeds an impressive 1,500.

The Sports Forum has supported these clubs with grants towards kit, equipment and coaching for their junior sections. All clubs are very keen to encourage young

people to join them, with details of membership fees or subscriptions available on their websites. Most importantly, clubs do NOT want to let cost be a deterrent to young people becoming involved. All clubs, along with the Sports Forum, try to provide appropriate support so as to try to ensure that anyone who wants to become involved faces no barrier in doing so.

A particular mention to the Tennis Club, who also have received financial support from the Forum. They have recently set a bar for all the other clubs to aspire to by being named as the national Community Club of the Year at the recent Lawn Tennis Association awards ceremony. Not only that, but Hilda Moore (who has been a very active and longstanding Tennis Club representative on the Sports Forum) received the individual national award for Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her work for the Club, which has included running their coaching programme for many years. Great recognition not only for Hilda and the Club, but also for sport in Marlborough.

**Simon Wells**

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# Sport in Schools

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Marlborough schools have had a longstanding commitment to sports and the development of physical education within the curriculum and afterschool. This has extended to the community providing a great base for local clubs along with the provision of top class sports facilities which many local clubs access.

Within the primary schools of St Mary's and Preshute, sports as diverse as orienteering and dance to football and racket sports and everything in between are offered through taster sessions and PE sessions. Local clubs often support them providing coaches and equipment. Both schools have excelled in sport festivals. St Mary's Boys and Girls football teams both achieved places in the County Championships with the boys advancing on to represent the county at regional finals. Both schools also did well at a recent New Age Kurling competition continuing the opportunity for new sports that are always being considered.

St John's Marlborough has made a huge commitment to improve its sporting facilities recently, opening a new sports hall and additional outdoor court. This has transformed the provision for the students and the community. They are looking to expand this further with a multiuse outdoor sports pitch.

Their students have achieved many accolades over the years including:

- Wiltshire long jump Champion.
- Outstanding results at English Schools National athletics events in sprinting and decathlon supported by our local club run by volunteers.
- Notable success for the netball team
- Previous students going on to represent England in hockey and sailing events as well as equestrian wins.

The grassroots training provided by our local schools allows the community to benefit as students move on to participate in local clubs, developing lifelong skills and healthy life choices.

Marlborough College has had significant success over the years across a variety of sports. Its commitment to physical education ensures that it is fully integrated into the curriculum. The College continues to provide outstanding opportunities to the local community as showcased in the Frank Knight School Triathlon where last year alone over 900 local school children ages 7 -13 competed in swimming, running and cycling events. This event provides a great opportunity for the young athletes to meet and share their love of sport while raising money for good causes. The college has a wide base of sports on offer from climbing, fencing and fishing, through lacrosse and football to tennis, rugby and athletics. A recent addition to their already top class facilities was the inclusion of indoor cricket nets.

**Hilda Moore**

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# Grants

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When the Forum was established in 2011, grants were mostly awarded based on an athlete's ability. This was broken down into three categories or standards: county, regional and national, with each standard having a monetary value.

The athlete would have to submit a grant application form detailing the club or county they represented, as well as their expenses, which could be for equipment, attire, travel or hotel costs. They would also have to provide a referee, whether that be a coach or team manager. The only other criterion they would need to meet is that they lived, went to school or played for a club in Marlborough.

The Forum also provides grants for individuals (who meet the above criteria) and clubs and schools to help with membership, kit and training. For example, the Forum has in the past provided a grant to Marlborough Rugby to purchase training tops for each player who took part in rugby sessions held at St John's school. To date the Forum has awarded grants to 70 individuals, 12 clubs and also funded two first aid courses.

Sports supported range from sailing to ice-skating, basketball and horse-riding as well as more traditional sports and although in its current guise all of the above remains true, the forum now recognises the need to support those athletes who would like to get into sport

at any level playing any sport. Although our metal has yet to be tested, we may draw the line at cheese rolling or Quidditch!!

Below are three testimonials from athletes who have been awarded grants by the Forum and gone on to outstanding achievements within their respective sports.

**Paul Warren** - Grants Secretary

## **Testimonial from Grant Recipient Jess Davis – Hockey (July 2021)**

"I was very grateful to Marlborough Sports Forum for their grant towards the expenses of my playing hockey. I started at Marlborough Hockey Club when I was seven and fell in love with it. Over the years I have played at county level and progressed to England's Regional Performance Centre in Bristol. I was then selected for a new format of England trials in October 2020.

Currently I play at Reading Hockey Club where I have really enjoyed and valued the opportunity to play at a higher level. One way I like to give back to the hockey club and to the Marlborough community is by helping with coaching the Juniors on Sundays. I really enjoy doing this and love seeing other people develop their hockey skills too.

The grant I received from the Marlborough Sports Forum enabled me to buy new equipment (a stick, astros and a glove) to match the level of performance I was playing at. It made





Championships in Romania and to try to maintain the standards I achieved this season.”

### **Testimonial from Grant Recipient Lewy Hayward – Golf (March 2025)**

“I’d like to voice my appreciation to the Marlborough Sports Forum who kindly funded me £500, which

me feel more comfortable in my transition to higher level hockey. Thank you, MSF!”

### **Testimonial from Grant Recipient Ophelia Pye – Athletics (August 2022)**

“I just want to say a massive thank you to the Marlborough Sports Forum for their generosity and financial support, helping me to pursue my passion for athletics. I’ve been lucky enough to train with Marlborough Athletics Club since the age of 11, and this season I faced a few curveballs, with things progressing in my sporting career far quicker than I could have anticipated - from not knowing whether I would even make the GB team to becoming European Champion in the 400m Hurdles, breaking the British Record twice and setting a new Championship Record. A week later, I received a phone call and discovered I would compete for GB again in Colombia for the U20 World Championships, where much to our excitement and surprise we won bronze in the 4x400m relay (even though we entered the final with one of the slowest qualifying times). My ambitions for next season are to qualify for the U20 European

has helped go towards tournament fees and travel expenses for the elite amateur events I’ve played. I am happy with the way my game is progressing and I have had some good results including narrowly missing out on the men’s Irish amateur open by losing in a playoff. Funding helps give me the opportunities I need to progress into the professional ranks, as without it would be difficult, so thank you very much”



Ophelia Pye

Photo Credit: UK Athletics website

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# Marlborough Open Studios Comes to Town

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As part of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Marlborough Open Studios (MOS) will for the first time have a preview event at the Little Gallery in the Parade from 7<sup>th</sup> June; you can catch it until 17<sup>th</sup> July.

All MOS artists were invited to show a piece of work. Commenting on the high take up, gallery representative Luke Carr said 'We're proud to support MOS by showcasing artists in the gallery. It's a great way to celebrate the area's creativity, encourage discovery and bring more people into the art community.'

So, make a note to call in and check out a remarkably wide range of art. Planning days out to meet artists that appeal has never been easier!

Five artists showing at the Little Gallery have open studios in town. Jacqui Melhuish, a long-established ceramicist, is sharing Studio 35 with decorative textile artist, Ann Smith. At Studio 36 glass and metal artist Alison Bowyer's studio and garden will simply overflow! Bronte Adam will be showing her lino cut and wood block prints alongside contemporary silverware and jewellery by Loucinda Nims.

Both shared studios are opening for a special mid-week event on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July. At Studio 35 Jacqui and Ann will be open between 10am and 4pm so that visitors can find out more about their practice. And from 11am until 5pm



'Butterfly' by Alison Bowyer

Studio 36 will be busy as artists give live demonstrations. If the weather is dire, please call one of the artists but with tea and cake on offer sunshine should be out!

The Parade Cinema, another of the town's bright spots for showing art, is also celebrating 30 years of MOS with a fascinating display including the covers of all brochures up until today's.

Further afield in villages around Marlborough and in Pewsey, Devizes and their catchments, there are studios, many shared, where you'll find the work of the 65 artists featured this year. For full details about this special celebratory event look out for a printed copy of the catalogue or go on line: [www.marlboroughopenstudios.co.uk](http://www.marlboroughopenstudios.co.uk)

**Lesley Andrews**  
**Marlborough Open Studios**

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# Francis Freeman and the Great Fire of Marlborough

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The earliest mention of Francis Freeman, an early Marlborough Quaker and tanner, is in the 1620s St Peter's parish registers where his eight children, by his wife Charity, were baptised.

Francis joined the parliamentary army at the beginning of the English Civil War, though it could be argued that his biggest battles were about his strongly held religious beliefs which he never hesitated to share! During his time in the army he was imprisoned for blasphemy. He believed that everyone had direct access to God or as Quakers would say now 'There is that of God in everyone' which, at the time, was seen as heresy. He wrote of having received an inner light from God by which he should live without religious rules or rites. You can see why an army fearful of dissent went on to dismiss him.

He arrived back at his burgage plot in Marlborough, where the Wellington

Arms now stands, to take up tanning again. On the 28th of April 1653 the Freemans were drying bark which ignited. They attempted to put the fire out but the fire took hold quickly and, fanned by strong winds, spread rapidly, stoked by the many thatched roofs. The fire consumed the whole High Street, including St Mary's Church, within four hours. You can only imagine the horror and distress of the residents and shopkeepers who lost everything. Oliver Cromwell remembered Marlborough's loyalty during the war and set up a committee to fund the rebuilding. And thatch was to be banned!

Francis Freeman lived to be a grandfather and was buried in the Quaker burial ground at Preshute in 1671. He was said to have been a literate man of merchant stock, an efficient soldier and devout Quaker who enjoyed singing, music and a pipe of tobacco.

**Sue Blacklock**  
Religious Society of Friends

**Our warmest wishes go to Mike Jackson on the occasion of his 100th birthday on 16th July. He was a proof reader for this magazine for many years.**

*Peter Noble writes:* Mike, as a proof reader was not just good, he was exemplary. His eagle-eyed grammar corrections were faultless, missing not a single one but, in addition, he checked names and facts. One couldn't get away with casual writing or research. Yet Mike himself was and still is a real gentleman, well presented, unassuming, attentive (even when he is better informed than the speaker), gently informative with a quiet sense of humour - and still walking down to the High Street for a bit of shopping. It's a privilege to know him.

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# What's On in July

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## **The White Horse Summer School**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> August**

A series of workshops and lectures. For details see [www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk](http://www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk)  
For tickets call 01672 512071 or pop into the book shop.

## **Marlborough Open Studios**

**First four weekends in July, 11.00am –**

**5.00pm** Visits are free to attend and there is no pressure to buy.

See [marlboroughopenstudios.co.uk](http://marlboroughopenstudios.co.uk) to plan your studio tour.

## **Marlborough Garden Association**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday**

Coach Outing to Bishop's Palace Gardens, Wells.

For information contact:

[marlbainfo@gmail.com](mailto:marlbainfo@gmail.com)

## **Marlborough History Society Tour of the Victorian Cemetery**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 6.30pm**

Kim Wakeham will lead the tour. Meet by the Rugby Clubhouse on the Common.

For more information see

[marlboroughhistorysociety.co.uk](http://marlboroughhistorysociety.co.uk)

To book contact John Osborne at

[jeo66@btinternet.com](mailto:jeo66@btinternet.com) or 01672 514364

## **Marlborough Floral Club**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 2.00pm**

Mildenhall Village Hall.

The Wonders of the Wye with Caroline Cooper.

£6 to attend, no pre booking necessary.

Information from Micky Graham 01672 514301.

## **The Rain or Shine Theatre Company presents The Rivals.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 7.30pm**

Maizey Lodge, Ogbourne Maizey, Marlborough SN8 1RY.

This brand new adaptation combines Richard Brinsley Sheridan's masterpiece with Rain or Shine's fast and furious comic flair. Recommended age 7+. Approx running time 2.5 hours including 15 minute interval. Gate open for picnics at 6.00pm. Bar, coffee, ice creams, WC, parking. Bring your own chairs.

Tickets in advance only. Adults £16, children (under 16) £8, family £42 (2A +2C). Tickets 01672 512125 or email [maizey50@gmail.com](mailto:maizey50@gmail.com) The performance is in aid of Marlborough AgeUK.

## **Marlborough Concert Orchestra's Summer Concert**

**5<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 7.30pm**

St Mary's Church Marlborough.

Programme: **See poster below.**

Tickets from Sound Knowledge, Hughenden Yard, [www.mco.org.uk](http://www.mco.org.uk) and on the door (cash or card) Adults £15, Students £5, under 18s free.





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# What's On in July

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## **Living history at the Merchant's House with Colonel Nicholas Devereux's Regiment of Foote**

**12<sup>th</sup> Saturday and 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 10.00am – 4.00pm** The Regiment will bring this special house to life occupying the house and garden. Last entry 3.00pm. Tickets £8 - £11 from [themerchantshouse.co.uk](http://themerchantshouse.co.uk)

## **Events at St Peter's Church**

For all events contact:  
[stpetersmarlborough.org.uk](mailto:stpetersmarlborough.org.uk)

## **Chocolate Making Demonstration by Amy Levin**

**15<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 11.00am**

Learn all about chocolate, how it is processed and made in small batches by artisan chocolatiers. Free but RSVP.

## **Sourdough Masterclass Workshop with Fresh Kitchen**

**15<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 6.30pm**

Enjoy a glass of wine while learning the history of sourdough and create two of your own family sized sourdough loaves. Full recipes to take home and optional starter to take home. Tickets £65.

## **Fermented Foods Demonstration by Amy Levin**

**17<sup>th</sup> Thursday 2.00pm**

Learn how to make simple ferments at home with no special equipment needed. Free but RSVP

## **Peter Knight's Gigspanner Big Band**

**25<sup>th</sup> Friday, 8.00pm**

Marlborough Town Hall.

Turnstone Album Launch Tour.

Gigspanner's high energy, virtuosic performances appeal equally to traditionalists and to those looking for something more experimental. Tickets £28.50 (including £1 Paypal fee) at <https://www.marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk/buy-tickets/> and £27.50 from Sound Knowledge.

## **School Dates**

Please see school websites for any updated information.

St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary term ends Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

St John's term ends Friday 18<sup>th</sup>

## **Looking Ahead**

### **Marlborough LitFest 25<sup>th</sup> – 28 September**

Susan Fletcher (Big Town Read), poet Brian Bilston and actor and author Rupert Everett will join John Suchet, Poppy Okotacha, acclaimed novelist Clare Chambers and Golding Speaker Alan Hollinghurst this year. Sign up to Friends of LitFest and get priority booking, receive a festival brochure in the post and be invited to LitFest celebrations and events throughout the year all for £30. The full programme will have been announced in late June with priority booking for Friends of LitFest from 30<sup>th</sup> June and general ticket sales from 11<sup>th</sup> July. For more information and regular 2025 festival programme updates see [www.marlboroughlitfest.org](http://www.marlboroughlitfest.org)

**Linda Illsley** - What's On Editor

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# A Good Read

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A couple of weeks ago a customer plonked a small pile of literary, narratively tricky, serious, borderline ‘challenging’ novels on the shop counter, and announced this was his holiday reading.

I can only imagine the demands of his working life if this kind of thing is his choice for fun and relaxation, poor chap. Of course, it may be that I’m just dim and lazy, but I prefer something much less taxing I’m afraid...

So I very much enjoyed **Welcome to Glorious Tuga** by Francesca Segal. It’s a Proper Holiday Read written, the author has said, simply to provide a bit of joy. Charlotte, keen to escape her London life (and her mother!) travels to Tuga, with a research grant to study tortoises. Isolated for much of the year (Island Closed season, when hurricanes make access almost impossible) the community on this remote (and sadly imaginary) tropical island is necessarily and unquestionably supportive, open and adaptable, embracing our heroine figuratively and literally. Pure escapism, just the thing for poolside reading. It’s the first of a trilogy, the second volume is out now too.

Or if sunny island escapes don’t feature in your summer plans, you may prefer a

book about a slightly tetchy elderly lady, living alone eating ready meals and avoiding company. No, it’s not autobiographical. How rude! I found **Sipsworth** by Simon van Booy quietly and unexpectedly charming and moving, about loss, loneliness and the importance of connection. I did start sucking in my breath at points, fearing it was about to become saccharine, but it avoids sentimentality and nicely subverts assumptions. All the best books teach the reader something; this one gives instructions for building an oxygen tent for small rodents. (That caught your attention, didn’t it?)

**Finding Grace** by Loretta Rothschild is a very assured debut novel that also takes the reader down unexpected paths. After the shock of the first chapter you’ll expect dark and twisty, what you get is a warm, poignant story of second chances and moral ambiguity. It’s a rom-not-quite-com, an imaginative concept and a propulsive narrative, very readable.

Finally, during quiet moments in the shop I’ve been perched behind the counter reading **Spam: a Global History** by Kelly A Spring. No, honestly, I have. It’s *fascinating*.

Debby Guest

Answer to quiz question on page 4: 10, 625 miles. How close did you get?

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# Nature Notes

Will 2025 be a good year for ‘His Imperial Majesty’ the purple emperor butterfly (*photo right*)?

Late June to early July is around the time I make my way up into Savernake Forest to spend a few hours searching for our woodland butterflies.

Savernake is a patchwork of diverse habitats featuring warm, sunny glades and sheltered spots along many of the rides. The forest is home to quite a few species, including the silver-washed fritillary – a large orange butterfly named for the streaks of silver on its underwing. In flight, it’s a graceful butterfly often seen nectaring on bramble flowers.



Credit: Helen Llewellyn

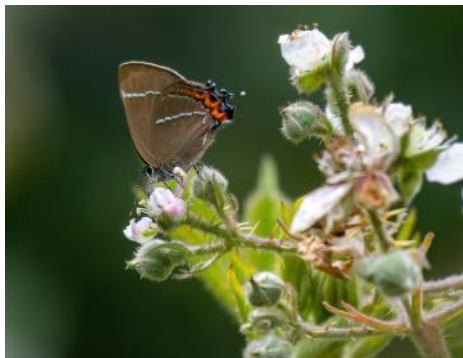
One of my favourite butterflies is the white admiral (*above*). While its black and white upper wings are not very colourful, the intricate patterns on the underside make it truly one of the most beautiful butterfly species. Watching it glide down from the tree canopy and fly gracefully over the bracken almost feels



Credit: Helen Llewellyn

like you have seen a tropical butterfly. If you’re lucky, one may come down and settle on a track to take salts and minerals from the damp soil.

Other species you might encounter include meadow brown, ringlet, large skipper, small skipper, speckled wood and marbled white to name just a few of the more common species. White-letter (*below*) and purple hairstreaks are a bit trickier to spot since they spend most of their time high in the elm and oak treetops. Occasionally, they descend to bask on bramble or bracken during warm weather.



Credit: Helen Llewellyn



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The largest and most spectacular butterfly in the forest is “His Imperial Majesty,” the purple emperor. This butterfly earns its regal nickname due to its striking, majestic appearance and elusive behaviour. Males have shimmering, iridescent purple wings that resemble a rich, royal cloak. They spend most of their time high up in the tree canopy, fighting over territories but occasionally they come down to feed on salts either from road surfaces or from animal dung.

Butterflies are only on the wing during certain times of the year, and for some species, their flight periods last just four weeks. Shifting weather patterns and heavy rainfall can significantly impact the emergence of many species. The wet spring and summer of 2024 dealt a serious blow to butterfly populations in the forest, especially the purple emperor. However, this year looks more promising, and I hope that the 2025 light period will see a strong emergence of purple emperor butterflies on the wing.

Helen Llewelyn

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## Marlborough Church Contacts

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### **Fr John Blacker**

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

### **Reuben Mann**

07894 048146  
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org  
*Minister, Emmanuel Marlborough Church*

### **Canon Sarah Musgrave**

511286 sarahmusgrave99@hotmail.com  
*Lay Minister, St John the Baptist, Minal*

### **The Revd Tim Novis**

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

### **The Revd Pete Sainsbury**

512364; revpetesainsbury@gmail.com  
*Team Vicar and Worship Director,  
St George's Preshute & The Marlborough  
Anglican Team*

### **The Revd Stephen Skinner**

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

### **The Revd Chris Smith**

514357; revcjsmith@outlook.com  
*Rector; Marlborough Anglican Team*

### **Rachel Rosedale**

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

---

### **Karolina Bull - Parish Administrator**

marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk  
Church Cottage, Silverless Street, SN8 1JQ  
01672 512357  
Mon-Fri 9am to 1pm

### **Helen Slater - PA to Rev Chris Smith**

01672 514357  
teamrectorpa@gmail.com  
Mon-Thurs 9:30am to 12pm

### **Penny Reader**

**St Mary's Children and Families Worker**  
penny.families@gmail.com

### **Methodist Office Coordinator**

07564 082092  
office@christchurchmarlborough.org.uk

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# Family News

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## Revd Dr David Maurice

*The following is an extract from the tribute given at his funeral by his son, James. The full version is available, by kind James' permission, on the website ([towerandtown.org.uk](http://towerandtown.org.uk) > Index of Searchable Articles)*

Firstly, Dad was a *faithful* man. He was a faithful husband, father and friend, and flowing out from that quality was a commitment to place and community. Dad died in Savernake Hospital, blessed by a quality of care I have rarely, if ever, seen in hospitals in which I have worked. He was born in Savernake, worked at Savernake as a GP, so it was special that he was able to die at Savernake, cared for by the people whom he had also looked after during his 29 years at the Marlborough practice, reflecting his commitment to Marlborough as the home and community he loved and in which his roots ran deep and strong.

His commitment to the community of Marlborough was evident in the many members of staff at the hospital who knew and were blessed by him over the years. But nowhere was the fruit of his faithfulness more evident than at his beloved church St Mary's.

Dad was a faithful and committed member of this wonderful church community for 47 years, where he and mum hosted countless home groups, Alpha Courses, book groups and meals. Dad had a particular gift and passion for biblical teaching. He was an avid reader of theological books leading on to his

ordination as a minister and the move to be both GP and part time non-stipendiary minister here for 5 years before retiring from medicine and continuing to serve under Andrew Studdard- Kennedy. Many have written to us about how blessed they were by Dad's preaching and teaching.

Dad was also a *peaceful* man. His peaceful countenance made him a popular colleague at the surgery, smoothing over many tensions that inevitably arose amidst the NHS re-disorganisation and chaos. It also manifested as an acceptance of what life may throw at him. He grieved deeply over Annabel's death, and there were moments of deep sorrow at the indignities and limitations of Parkinson's disease; but he never once expressed any sense of bitterness.

I wonder if it was this spirit of peaceful acceptance and almost 'go with the flow' nature that contributed to Dad's enjoyment of SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad) trips. The uncertainty and chaos seemed to spark Dad, particularly being with brothers and sisters in the international church.

Finally he was a *content* man. You might even say his contentedness in life was something akin to *joy*. But when I say Dad was a joyful man, I mean something deeper than laughter, humour and smiles. I mean he had a settled delight, appreciation and gratitude for the blessings he received and experienced in life, without feeling the need to grasp for

more, or look over his shoulder at what other people were doing.

But wonderful as they are, these qualities are not what defined him. Beneath it all he was a child of God in Christ, with an unshakable faith in Him.

**James Maurice**

## **Michael Graham Dobie**

Lifelong Marlborough resident Michael (Mickey) Graham Dobie passed away in The Great Western Hospital on 15th April after a short illness. He was the third son of seven boys of Bob and Vera Dobie, who also spent the vast majority of their lives in the town. After leaving school on The Common, Mickey worked for the RDC, in what is now T.H. White in London Road, before becoming an electrician with Eades Bros. He also worked for over thirty years for the NHS as an electrician in Princess Margaret Hospital, Swindon.

His big love outside of his family was his music, featuring in many locally based bands and travelling widely to perform in music pubs and clubs. More recently Mickey would busk for charities, catching the bus to Bath, Salisbury and even Oxford as well as in



Marlborough High Street. Mickey was pre-deceased by his wife Heather, a double kidney transplant recipient, and

leaves two adult sons, Graham and Kevin and grandson Luke. He was buried beside Heather in Marlborough Cemetery with one of his guitars.

**Trevor Dobie**

## **Michael Dain**

Some 150 people filled Preshute Church on May 15th to bid farewell to Michael Dain, and to give thanks to God for a life of devoted service. We sang some of his favourite hymns, listened to Bible passages chosen by him and heard heartfelt tributes from his three children, Sarah, Rachel and Richard.

Michael came to Marlborough in 1951, having gained a first class degree from Cambridge and done his National Service in the RAF. He had a distinguished career of 37 years at Marlborough College, teaching Maths, serving 18 years as Housemaster of three Houses and finally becoming Deputy Head. He was supported in all this by his beloved wife Ruth. He was universally respected as loyal, fair-minded, hard-working, humble, hospitable, approachable.

After his retirement in 1988 Michael was to have another 37 years, living in Manton and devoting plenty of energy to serving the community. He worked for several years for the newly formed Brandt Group; he was actively involved with Preshute Church and the wider ecumenical parish, preaching, running a Home Group, acting in Open the Book, and a lot more. All this thanks to his deep Christian faith, which was the rock on which he built his life and the inspiration for his love of his neighbour.

**Charles Graham**

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# All About Forest Gardening

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Forest gardens are relatively uncommon in a domestic setting despite chiming with current interests in lower maintenance, a relaxed style with space for Nature and a shady seat for hot summers. They also work well for children providing opportunities for den making, tree climbing, foraging and wildlife observation.

Archaeology dates forest gardens back to cultivated spots among coniferous forests where indigenous societies grew food and medicinal herbs in prehistoric times on North America's NW coast. Leap forwards to the UK in the 1970s and Robert Hart who was unable to farm traditionally for health reasons, pioneered a forest garden for temperate climates on his smallholding in Shropshire.

Robert saw that perennial plants can do well with little intervention and identified 7 potentially productive layers in deciduous woodland ranging from tall trees through climbers, shrubs and ground-cover plants to roots. He brought these ideas together in his orchard planting for fruit, nuts, berries, leaves and herbs. Bill Mollison, co-founder of the Permaculture movement, then spread his work to a wider audience. A typical forest planting might be:

- The canopy layer with fruit and nut trees (apples, plum, hazel) which determine the positions of all other plants.

- A lower tree layer on dwarfing root stocks to expand fruit and nut provision
- Intersecting vertical plants (vines, hops, honeysuckle)
- A shrub layer of fruit bushes (blackcurrants, gooseberries, raspberries)
- The herbaceous perennial layer of vegetables, herbs and wildflowers (comfrey, Sweet Cicely, Turkish rocket) which help prevent invasive species such as brambles from taking over and support soil moisture
- A ground cover layer of horizontal spreaders (mushrooms, sorrel, viola)
- An underground layer providing roots and tubers (perennial onions, horseradish, earth chestnuts)

Forest gardens can be scaled up or down to suit the space, conditions and any plants already available but should reflect a natural woodland ecosystem and be productive. They can be as small as a couple of trees plus layers and work well alongside boundaries to enhance privacy. Once established they can tolerate periods of neglect with the main tasks being harvesting, annual pruning and the editing of anything that is getting out of hand.

**Deborah Schofield**

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 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.

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Weddings - We congratulate:

17/05/25 Anna Jones and Fionnlagh Copland St George’s, Preshute

31/05/25 Henrietta Scholes and Patrick Hazard St John the Baptist, Minal

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

13/05/25 Helen Kennedy (56), High Street, Manton

St Mary’s, Marlborough

19/05/25 Rob Munson (96), Wootton Bassett St George’s, Preshute

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# News from the Churches

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**Marlborough Churches  
Together**  
Fraternal: Tuesday 1st July

## **Choral Evensong at St John the Baptist Church**

**Sunday 13th July at 7pm.**

**Do you enjoy singing? Would you like to join our 'pop-up' choir? All are very welcome, however much or little experience you have.**

Rehearsals:

Thursday 10 July, 6.00-7.00pm

Saturday 12 July: 6.00-7.00pm

Sunday 13 July : 5.00-6.00pm -

rehearsal in SJB followed by tea and cake before the service starts at 7pm

Do contact Rebecca Spicer to find out more: [minalwoodlands@icloud.com](mailto:minalwoodlands@icloud.com)

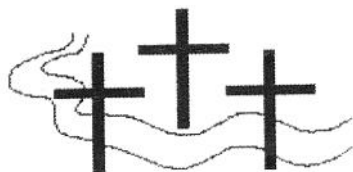
## **Emmanuel Church**

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 and Friday Nights.**



We also hold **Home Groups** on Thursdays during term time in **Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George**, as well as community groups and **Ladies' Bible Study**. For more information and updates on our events, please visit our website: [emmanuelmarlborough.org](http://emmanuelmarlborough.org) or email [office@emmanuelmarlborough.org](mailto:office@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: 6th July, 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: 1st, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month.

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# News from the Churches

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**The Ark Parent/Carer and Toddler Group - Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless St**

Please contact Caroline Philps 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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## Looking Ahead

### Ride and Stride

Do consider cycling, walking or riding on **Saturday 13th Sept '25 (between 10.00am and 6.00pm)** to raise money towards our historic churches.

This is an annual national sponsored event, organised locally by County Historic Churches Trusts. 50% of the money raised goes to the participant's chosen church and the other half to the County Historic Churches Trust.



Participants may be cyclists, walkers, horse-riders or drivers of mobility scooters. They can be of any age, but under-13s must be accompanied by an adult. All denominations are welcome. Visit as many churches as you like, planning your own route. Seek sponsorship from friends, relations and colleagues. For more information visit: [www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/ride-stride/](http://www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/ride-stride/)

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# On a Planet Near Us

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So, we hear, astronomers believe they have identified an atmosphere suggestive of life on a planet near us. What are the chances of seeing such life or communicating? Well 'near us' means 5 light years away, meaning it would take 5 years for a radio message to get there, and even if there were highly intelligent life able to receive, decipher 'Earth language', and respond, it would take another 5 years to receive it. The briefest conversation would be somewhat problematic and exceptionally

prolonged by decades. So let's consider flying there to avoid that time lapse. Five light years? Small number, but in miles that's around 30 trillion (that's 30 plus 12 zeros). Now our very fastest rocket, with it's astounding speed of 430,000 mph, would take 6.8 million years to get there! I guess, to all intents and purposes, we *are* alone in the Universe. And we should forbid astronomers the use of the word 'near'!

**Peter Noble**

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# Tower and Town Staff

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<b>Chairman</b>	Sarah Bumphrey	chairman@towerandtown.org.uk	516862
	16 George Lane, SN8 4BX		
<b>Advertising</b>	Matt Gow	advertising@towerandtown.org.uk	
<b>Distribution</b>	Sue Tulloh	distribution@towerandtown.org.uk	288912
<b>Subscriptions</b>	Peter Astle	4 Laurel Drive, SN8 2SH	515395
<b>Treasurer</b>	Peter Astle	treasurer@towerandtown.org.uk	515395

## Production Teams

### *August*

Editor	Lauren Sankey	aug.editor@towerandtown.org.uk	
Compiler	Hugh de Saram	aug.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk	516830

### *September*

Editor	Genevieve Clarke	sep.editor@towerandtown.org.uk	
Compiler	Hugh de Saram	sep.compiler@towerandtown.org.uk	516830

## Every Month

<i>What's On</i>	Linda Illsley	whats.on@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>News from the Churches</i>	Karina Bull	church.news@towerandtown.org.uk	512357
<i>Family News</i>	Naomi Painter	family.news@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>Arts</i>	Gabriella Venus	arts.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	
<i>Books</i>	Debby Guest	books.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	
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<i>Gardening</i>	Wendy Jackson	gardening.correspondent@towerandtown.org.uk	

## Website, searchable article archive

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other notices or announcements to the compiler.

All items for the August issue by Tuesday 8th July please.

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