
TOWER AND TOWN



u3a
in Kennet

Making friends, learning and enjoying life

DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022 50P

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TOWER AND TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

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Making friends, learning and enjoying life



As we approach another Christmas after 20 months of the Covid-19 pandemic, we can all look forward to a more normal time of celebration and the opportunity to be with loved ones again. We can also be immensely proud of the work done by our members who have found the support and friendship of each other to be a lifeline in difficult times.

This issue of Tower and Town features the activities of u3a – a nationwide movement formed to support people to make the most of life when full-time work is over. Here in Marlborough and the surrounding villages, u3a in Kennet has been active throughout the pandemic allowing members to meet when permitted, to learn, to exercise, to be creative, and to socialise. Some of our groups actually grew in numbers, such as the Monday Walking Group, and the History Groups even though they couldn't meet face-to-face – such was the strength people gained from each other's company. We have learned to use Zoom and it is likely that 'hybrid' meetings - combining face-to-face activities with on-line access for some – will continue for some time.

A highlight of the last year was our u3a Day in June when we mounted an exhibition of our activities in the Marlborough Town Hall. As well as being an introduction for those interested in joining us, it was also the first opportunity for many members to meet face-to-face in many months.

Another highlight was our Special Interest Day on Climate Change and Sustainable Futures which was held in September at Marlborough College. A distinguished panel of speakers considered the scientific and social implications and possibilities. The event was also attended by Marlborough College students.

You can read about these and more activities in the following pages including what u3a means to some of our members. There is more information about u3a on the national website: u3a.org.uk or on our local site at u3ainkennet.org.uk

David Hammond, Chairman u3a in Kennet, Editor

Cover photo: Climate Change event in Marlborough College

What is u3a?

Formed to support people who want to make the most of life when full time working is over, u3a is a UK wide and international movement which brings people together to explore new ideas, interests and activities in a friendly and informal environment.

u3a is a self-help organisation which provides educational, creative and leisure opportunities through a series of Interest Groups. Members draw on their knowledge and experience to learn from each other.

Formed nearly 40 years ago, there are now over 1000 u3as across the UK with thousands of interest groups between them and more than 400,000 members nationally. The national body, the Third Age Trust, looks after all the u3as in the UK and provides educational and administrative support and advice.

u3a in Kennet was formed in 1992. We have about 60 interest groups, and we currently have around 575 members.

Group leaders are volunteers who organise and support their groups. They don't have to be experts and most rely on their group's members to support them and contribute to their group in many different ways.

Any member with enthusiasm and basic organisational skills can start a group at any time if there is sufficient support. Meeting venues can be fixed or shared around members' homes.



Petanque Group

Our Interest Groups form the basic structure of u3a and we have sixty-five of them. These extend from outdoor activities to indoor ones such as art, history, sports and games, books, scientific and discussion, theatre and travel, wine and languages. Interest groups are self-creating and self-run by their members who each have a group leader. Whilst the majority of the interest groups flourish as they have for many years, some go because they are no longer required and new ones on varying subjects are formed. That is the proper way of things because these groups provide what their members want.

An example of this principle is the Petanque Group which was created when outdoor and indoor bowls had to stop because of the pandemic. This game could be played within the Covid rules. The group was suggested by one member and after a search for a site, an existing Petanque Terrain was found at a local pub. Very little negotiation was needed with the landlord as after a few games there is usually a thirst to be quenched and lunch to be enjoyed in a social environment. It did not take long for enough members to show an interest and within a few months new skills were learned and enjoyed. A husband and wife took on the job of group leader and all the u3a principles resulted: learn, laugh and live of which there is plenty, plus applause at some point for every player.

The groups are formed for the benefit of their members and run by them, A new group for learning basic German started because there was a need whilst Music Appreciation is to be reorganised. Groups evolve. Local History is changing and the changes will be advertised in our monthly newsletter and at our Coffee Exchange talks.

Most groups meet in halls like the Wesley Hall or the Friends Meeting House, whilst smaller groups such as embroidery meet in members' homes. The walking groups, Flora and Fauna and Birdwatching are outside activities. Meetings vary from weekly to monthly as agreed by the members and their leaders. Many u3a members belong to more than one group. Research shows that meeting up 'face to face' as socialising, is an important factor in u3a membership.



Interest Groups List

u3a in Kennet has a wide variety of Interest Groups. If you are reading this online, clicking on a group links you to the subject page. Groups include:

American History	History 2 (European)
Art & Art History	Human Science
Art Group	Italian
Backgammon	Jazz Appreciation
Birdwatching	Mahjong 1
Book Circle	Mahjong 3
Book Group – Short Stories	Online Bridge
Book Group	Patchwork & Quilting
Bowls (Short Mat)	Petanque
Bridge 2	Philosophy
Build your own Website	Poetry Appreciation
Classic Cars	Quiz
Controversial Discussion 1	Really Usefuls
Controversial Current Affairs Discussion	Science Technology Engineering &
Controversial Discussion 3	Mathematics (STEM)
Controversial Discussion 4	Scrabble
Current Affairs	Spanish 1
Cycling	Spanish 2
Day Trips	Spanish for Self Starters
Digital Photography	Table Talk Luncheon
Dog Walking	Table Tennis (Advanced)
Embroidery	Table Tennis 1
Exploring English	Table Tennis 2
Flora & Fauna	Theatre
French Language & Current Affairs	Travel
German (Advanced)	Walking 1 (Monday)
German Beginners	Walking 2 (Thursday)
German Conversation	Walking 3 (Strollers)
History (Local)	Walking 4 (Striders)
History 1 (English)	Wine Appreciation

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What are you doing on the last Thursday of the month at 10.30? Come along and be part of our Coffee Exchange, at Wesley Hall in Oxford Street behind the Town Hall, or on Zoom.

There is coffee, good company, lots of friends, and an interesting talk every last Thursday of the month. It is also an opportunity to come and find out about u3a and its groups.

The talks are 20 to 30 minutes, short and punchy. Coffee at 10.30, talk at 11, out by 11.45. For example, in September we had a talk from Belinda Richardson, Tourism Officer for Marlborough Town Council, which aroused a lot of interest on how she was working to promote Marlborough. We hope to have a talk on how St Peter's Church is going to be developed. So these are talks about local issues which are important to us, good to know about when we vote in Council Elections.

Also there are talks giving information about the local area. enriching our experience of the town and surrounding countryside. We will be having a talk on the archaeology hiding in Savernake Forest and the West Woods. There is a talk about Larkhill Airfield, a first world war airfield which is beside Woodhenge. We hope the walking groups can visit the area and maybe have a guided tour of what was perhaps a precursor to Stonehenge.

Then there are talks about topical issues. So there is a talk on the Biology of Extinction and Evolution to follow on from the magnificent day we had on Climate Change. We hope to have a talk on the F35 aeroplane which will be on the two new aircraft carriers. A highlight of the year will be the talk by Michael Hart on the 'Structural Issues in Education'. This is something which will be dear to the heart of anyone with children and grandchildren.

There are also talks from the groups, sometimes the leaders, sometimes one or two members of the groups. We may hear what others find interesting, and perhaps branch out and join another group. Even later in life, it is good to develop skill and knowledge.

The audience plays a key part in these talks. Yes, the talks are prepared, but they can become quite dramatic when the questioning starts. A lady giving a recent talk on strokes was saying how she wanted to start a local group for Stroke Rehabilitation in the area, and a questioner asked for times and dates, and you could see, happening right in the room, the very beginning of this crucial group in Marlborough.

Asking questions is an art, it requires practice, but it can make a good talk into a great one. Come and join in. You will be most welcome.

What u3a Members Say

I was looking for something to do, I thought I had better get to know this place we had moved to, and u3a looked like it had plenty of interesting things going on: and it does.

We are all learners, even the leader of the group.

There is here no pressure on anybody, you are just part of a group of friends sharing their knowledge.

I think the concept of university is about general expansion of the personality, that is why you do anything really, that is why you should choose to do things. I do hope I am still expanding as a person, I do hope so. You shouldn't stop. Just because you have stopped working doesn't mean you have to stop anything. I have learnt so many new things since I retired. Just yesterday, in the American History group, we learnt all about the Americans in the First World War. That was absolutely fascinating, and it tied in with at least three things that I already knew about, that I had never connected up. It was really strengthening because you have a base of facts in your life and every time you add something to that you are strengthening your knowledge.

And so it was to get to know people and to get to know the countryside. I feel it is really good. It was with that in mind that I joined, I wanted to be part of something, friendly, and a network of people really.

My mother was Italian. I went to Italy and I realised I could not speak to my cousins, I learnt a lot through DuoLingo, the free app, but eventually you feel isolated, just, you know, on the screen, but I wanted something more, and we read a book together, we talk about it, we meet every fortnight. We are mixed ability but we all get something out of it.

I moved here in the middle of winter, last January, when it was really dark and everything, in lockdown, we couldn't talk to anybody, go anywhere, so I decided very soon, I joined u3a because I felt it was up to me to connect with people here. It has been invaluable.

In a way, u3a gives you the power to go on growing and living, yes, that is a good way to put it.

Between us we belong to about 10 groups. It was a great way to meet people when we moved to the area, and acquaintances soon became friends.

I did think twice about joining u3a because I did not go to university, I am a nurse, and now, yes, you have to go university, but when I trained you did not need a degree. This is what irritated me at school, if you failed your 11+ you went off to secondary school, it was almost as if you were not considered to be academic, and you went to a school where there were lots of practical subjects, which was good, but it did not feed me in the way that I am now being fed.

Anne aged 82, setting off on a 4 mile walk with the Monday Walking Group. What I really like is table-tennis on Wednesday mornings at the Leisure Centre. Because we have been playing together for quite a long time, we have got used to each other, and we have a coffee and a natter. The best bit is the table-tennis. For a time we could not play because we could not use the Leisure Centre and that wasn't very nice, not at all. You get used to doing things on particular days.

It is nice, when you retire to have some sort of structure, and so Monday morning walk sets the pattern at the beginning of the week.

My involvement with u3a in Kennet remains strong and the friendship, meeting people and co-operating with others is important to me. Whenever I am in Marlborough High Street I am sure of meeting someone I know through my connection with u3a. My Needlework Group is really 'sewing and a chat' and during the pandemic it was very reassuring to be able to phone other people even if we could not meet up together.

u3a means friendship; having no relatives living near, it makes all the difference to know that I can ring and meet other people.

Climate Change and Sustainable Future

Special Interest Day

u3a in Kennet held a Special Interest Day with generous support from Marlborough College on 20th September 2021. The topic of climate change was the main focus being an issue of wide application to all age groups and one of increasing global concern.

The day was the first to be organised within the Bath and Wiltshire u3a Network and members from the other u3a's were invited along with more than 40 students from the College studying subjects such as physics and geography. 121 u3a members registered to attend the event with nearly half coming from a wide range of u3a's beyond Kennet; Bath, Bradford on Avon, Cirencester, Devizes, Gloucester, Malvern, Newbury, North Wiltshire, Pewsey, Salisbury, Sarum, Trowbridge, Warminster, Westbury and West Wiltshire.

The chosen date was in close proximity to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26), 31st October to 12th November 2021 in Glasgow thereby enhancing the topicality of the subject.

The event was held in the Memorial Hall at the College and attendees were welcomed by the Master, Louise Moelwyn-Hughes and u3a in Kennet Chairman, David Hammond.



Coffee break outside the Memorial Hall

The speakers were:

- Penny Tranter from the Meteorological Office, who discussed the realities of climate change setting the context for the remainder of the Day. She explained that climate events (floods, droughts) are becoming more frequent and many

researchers have attributed them to human action.

- Chris Warrick from the Culham Science Centre described the potential to generate carbon free electricity from nuclear fusion. He outlined the challenges of replicating on earth the fusion process created by the sun noting that it does not create long lived nuclear waste and has little or no environmental impact. He emphasised that ‘all the science is done, it just a matter of engineering’.
- Professor Peter Edwards from Oxford University talked about the Circular Carbon Economy starting with an outline of possible approaches to decarbonisation such as carbon capture, reducing the global population and the use of renewable energy sources and increasing the efficiency of fossil fuel. Citing numerous technical papers and research he examined several techniques including the decarbonisation of fossil fuels and the development of a catalyst heated by microwaves to produce enough fuel from atmospheric CO₂ to fly a Jumbo jet across the Atlantic once a week without increasing the amount of carbon in the atmosphere.



Chris Warrick

- Dr Katherine Steentjes from Cardiff University explored society’s perceptions of climate change and support for low carbon lifestyles. She said that without change in global lifestyles, the global warming level will reach 5 degrees C despite the COP 21 agreement (Paris 2015) to a limit of 1.5 degrees. Consequently fundamental changes in attitudes are required affecting all aspects of daily life.

Feedback from the event was very positive with delegates rating it at 3.8 out of a possible 4.0 in a survey returned by nearly half the attendees. Comments included “Outstanding”; “Brilliant – a subject which is so important to us all ... the information was very enlightening”; “an outstanding presentation from a speaker thoroughly on top of this complex subject”.

Plans for another event in 2022 are currently being considered.

Jill Turner, Vice Chair, u3a in Kennet

Dear friend,

At the time of writing, we at St George's have finalised preparations for our Choral Evensong for Advent, and for 'Falling Leaves & Early Snow', a concert of seasonal but not Christmas material. Why Advent? Why not Christmas yet?

Advent, the season of 'watching and waiting' is a great part of the historic Christian tradition, and part of a call to prayer and renewed holiness (being better imitators of Jesus). But in our 'clickbait'* generation, we find it hard to slow down and to enjoy the preparation for the event as well as the event itself. We seem constantly drawn to move on to whatever's next.

Several years ago, during the breakfast radio programme on Heart FM Birmingham, listeners were invited to vote 'Ho, ho, ho!' or 'No, no, no!' to the playing of Christmas songs in early November. So, I called in and got through to Ed and Rachel, the presenters and gave my 'No, no, no!'

When asked why, I began to explain that I was a vicar, and that much as I love Christmas (and I really do), early November was surely too early for Christmas songs and spoils the effect when we actually get to Christmas. Before I finished though, the presenters were laughing loudly and I was cheerily and rudely interrupted by Ed who compared my attitude to that of an accountant in March, which really made me laugh. (March is financial year end and typically an accountant's busiest time).

I really wanted the opportunity to get back on their morning show for a quick 'God-slot' and explain my thinking, but I never did.

As I get older, I live for the summer and enjoy the winter less. I sometimes fantasise about being invited to be the Rector of Holy Trinity, San Diego if such church exists! But actually, being a north European, I realise that the summer wouldn't be the summer without the winter, and the seasons in between. And we need the winter, in all sorts of important ecological ways. Similarly, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the preparation, the anticipation, the living in and enjoying the 'now' rather than the 'not yet' that comes before.

I fully understand that Christmas is going to be particularly important for us all this year: hopefully, Christmas activity of every kind will be happening without restrictions, and our enjoyment of family and friends and church will be especially meaningful. But if we treat November and December as one long Christmas, as our culture sometimes pressures us to do, we rob ourselves of the opportunity to live intentionally: to enjoy without rush, to know that the anticipation of a good thing is a good thing in itself - not to be sidestepped but savoured.

Don't cheat yourself! Avoid the Christmas traditions too early. Create some new traditions with friends and family for the time of watching and waiting. And when Christmas comes, have a really terrific one and don't forget to come to church. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing the Glory of the season with you.

In Christ, with you in Marlborough, this Christmas and New Year,

Revd Pete Sainsbury, St George's Preshute

**Clickbait: a text or a thumbnail link that is designed to attract attention and to entice users to follow that link and read, view, or listen to the linked piece of online content, being typically deceptive, sensationalized, or otherwise misleading (from Wikipedia.org)*

u3a Day in Marlborough

The Mayor of Marlborough (Cllr Mark Cooper) and the Town Crier (Mike Tupman) joined members of u3a in Kennet to celebrate u3a Day on Wednesday 2nd June.

u3a Day was celebrated up and down the country during National Volunteers' Week and was designed to increase the profile of u3a by generating a wider awareness and understanding of u3a in the general public.

In Marlborough, the Mayor introduced the event by praising the work of u3a in providing support and activities for people when full-time working is over. The Town Crier announced the event with his customary Oyez Oyez call and a bell. With David Hammond, Chairman of u3a in Kennet and Jeff Hide, the organiser of the event, they led a parade around the High Street where they were joined by other u3a members – including the Dog Walking Group. Outside there was an information point on the Market together with a rolling display of Classic Cars from the Classic Car Group. The Cycling Group rode around the High Street with advertising sashes. Many of the 60 interest groups were represented in a Covid-secure exhibition in the Town Hall which was open all day to visitors with refreshments served.



What's On

December calendar

1st to 21st *daily except Sundays*

10am-3.30pm St Peter's Church. Charity Christmas card shop - Cards For Good Causes provides a huge variety of Christmas cards for a whole range of local and national charities.

1st (*Wednesday*)

7pm-9pm St Peter's Church. Merchant's House event. The Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey, will share songs and readings from his new book 'English Grounds: A Pastoral Journal'. Erica Wagner, describes this as "a marvellous book, lit by faith, love and imagination". Tickets £20 (£17 for Friends of the Merchant's House) available from www.themerchantshouse.co.uk/events

2nd (*Thursday*)

2pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Marlborough Floral Club, Christmas tea and AGM, plus Alanna Marie will demonstrate ideas for Christmas (there will be a good selection of floral sundries available to use at home). First Thursday of each month, arrangements are raffled at the end of the demonstration. Tea and biscuits are served afterwards. For more information, please call Micky Graham 01672 514301.

4th (*Saturday*)

7.30pm St Mary's Church. Marlborough Concert Orchestra: Mozart overture, Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Beethoven 7th Symphony. *See next page.*

6th (*Monday*)

3.30pm-4.45pm Wesley Hall, Oxford Street. 'A December to Remember'. A Christmas Advent event for children in Reception, Y1 and Y2, organised by Emmanuel Marlborough. Christmas games, crafts and snacks. Admission is free but spaces are limited – book now at <https://tinyurl.com/KidsAdvent2021>

11th (*Saturday*)

7.30pm St Mary's Church. The Marlborough Choral Society traditional Christmas concert. Tickets available from Sound Knowledge, from choir members or on the door (£10 for adults, £2 for students and children free). *See next page.*

12th (*Sunday*)

4.30pm Tesco Marlborough car park. 'Car Park Carols', back by popular demand. A drive-in Christmas carol service, organised by Emmanuel Marlborough. Prizes for the best- dressed car. Admission is free – reserve your tickets via our website www.emmanuelmarlborough.org . *See page 26*

15th (*Wednesday*)

Marlborough College: Michaelmas Term ends (to Tuesday 4th January)

17th (Friday)

St John's Academy: Term 2 ends (to Tuesday 4th January)

19th (Sunday)

4pm Christchurch, New Road. Carols by Candlelight. A traditional Christmas carol service organised by Emmanuel Marlborough, with crèche and children's activities. All welcome to stay for refreshments and a sandwich tea for children.

January calendar

20th (Thursday)

7.30pm St Peter's Church. Marlborough History Society. 'Rediscovering the Old Palace of Westminster in the 16th century' by Dr Elizabeth Biggs. Guests £5.

Marlborough Concert Orchestra

Saturday 4 December at 7:30 pm St Mary's Church

Conductor Roselise Gentile

Leader Karen Sancto

Soloist Verena Chen

Mozart Overture 'The Impresario'

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

Beethoven Symphony No.7



Tickets £10 adults, £2 students, from Sound Knowledge or on the door. Please take a lateral flow test before coming and wear a mask when moving around.



Marlborough Choral Society

Christmas Concert

Saturday 11th December at 7.30 pm - St Mary's Church

The first half of sacred music includes such old favourites as 'Panis Anglicus', 'Locus Iste' and 'Ave Verum Corpus'. We also introduce a Mass by Louis Vierne, a French composer of the early 20th Century. The second half is full of traditional Christmas carols.

Tickets (£10 for adults, £2 for students and children free) from Sound Knowledge or at the door. The retiring collection will be in aid of a local charity.

As I work in the bookshop no-one thinks to give me a book for Christmas; it's sad, if understandable. I suppose it could be worse, if I worked for Cartier it wouldn't occur to anyone to buy me a diamond bracelet. Heigh ho.

Anyway, as we all know, books are the best presents, and at Christmas a particular kind of book comes into its own. I mean the little compilations of essays, collections of newspaper columns, or anthologies. Usually attractively produced they are good stocking fillers, last minute emergency or dinner party gifts, or guest-room bedside table books. They usually manage to be both undemanding and mildly stimulating, ideal for this time of year.

The Joy of Small Things by Hannah Jane Parkinson, a collection of her Guardian columns is funny, honest, warm and mildly cynical. Deceptively light, it's one of those 'companion books' to be dipped into regularly. Parkinson says she was inspired by J B Priestley's 1949 book *Delight*, and from about ten years earlier than that comes *Personal Pleasures* by Rose Macauley (published by Handheld Press). Subtitled *Essays on Enjoying Life*, it was reviewed on first publication as demonstrating 'wit made subtle with learning, and learning dissipated with wit'. Couldn't have put it better myself, and for those less learned than Macauley, there's a useful 'Notes on the text' appendix just in case your memory needs refreshing on the Photinians, or who was Jack Hulbert? From roughly the same period comes *Happy Half Hours* by A A Milne, in some ways very much a period piece and in some of the pieces coming perilously close to (aargh!) 'whimsy'. But there are many more serious sections, criticisms and self-examination. His essays on his pacifism are heart-felt, strongly and clearly argued and, as with the rest of book – and as one would expect – immensely readable.

Back to the 21st century, and I'm enjoying the late Jan Morris's last collection, *Allegorizings* which looks back over her long life and travels, both physical and emotional. A kind and thoughtful book. And if you don't want too many words, do look at *Nests* by Susan Ogilvy, it's absolutely beautiful.

I'm closing with a shameless plug for the White Horse Bookshop's own effort *Platzgen, Pineapple & Peas*, our 'newsletter' collection of reminiscences and recipes, which we're selling to raise money for the Marlborough Christmas Lunch, held in the Town Hall for anyone who might otherwise be alone at Christmas. It's awfully good. (The book, I mean. And the lunch.)

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(Fridays, 14:30 to 16:30)

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals - we pray for the families of:

- 12 October Robert 'Bob' William Barnett (80) of Thicketts Road, Minal
St John the Baptist Minal and Minal graveyard
- 12 October Eunice Stevenson (90) of Leaf Close, Marlborough
North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett
- 17 October Amanda Jane Smith (55) of Gales Ground, Marlborough
North Wiltshire Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett

WANTED!

Room to rent, midweek four nights per week
for someone working in Marlborough but living out of town.
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Many thanks to Sarah Wilson for this tribute to her mother:

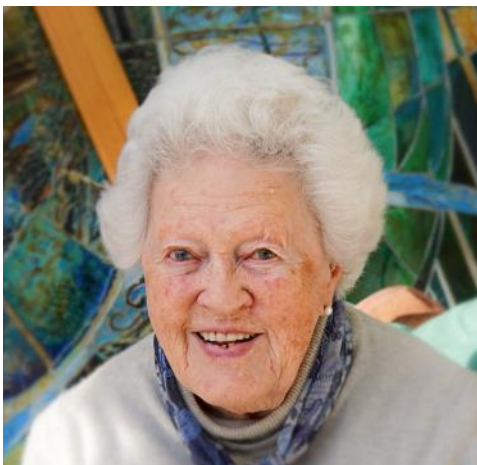
Diana Hony (née Hoare), a moonraker through and through, was born at home in Westbury, Wiltshire in 1925. She described her childhood as idyllic, playing in the woods and walking the nearby downs. Aged five, her formal education began with a governess, before prep school in Seaton and then on to Sherborne Girls' School.

In 1943, Diana obtained a place to read English at St Hugh's College, Oxford. Two other women to go to Oxford in 1943 were her great friend Monica Sims who went on to become Director of Programmes for BBC Radio and Margaret Hilda Roberts, later to become better known as one Mrs Thatcher.

Unlike her illustrious counterparts, Diana got sent down from Oxford, not for any titillating misdemeanours, but for failing Anglo-Saxon! However, she was able to join the WRNS and 'do her bit'. She spent most of her time on the Isle of Man as a plotter, becoming a Leading Wren in the process.

She married John Hony in Feb 1953 and was whisked off to live in the remote bush of Western Nigeria where John had been posted by his company, British American Tobacco. The nearest shopping centre was one hundred miles away. Fortunately there was an American Baptist Mission Hospital about 15 miles away where her first child, Carol, was born on Christmas Eve 1953.

For the birth of her other two children, Guy and Sarah, Diana returned to Savernake Hospital in Marlborough but after christenings at Preshute Church, she would go back to Nigeria. Her daughter Sarah's birthday parties in Zaria resembled a mini United Nations, with Nigerian, Indian, Dutch and Danish friends. Diana was still corresponding by email with a Nigerian friend only weeks before she died.



Despite a colonial lifestyle of servants, parties and polo, it was not necessarily an easy existence: pets catching rabies; dogs dying from snake bites; children getting malaria; intermittent or non-existent electricity; tap water undrinkable unless boiled. There was also the unstable political scene with *coups d'état* and curfews being a common feature of life. When John retired in 1978, they went to live in Ibiza where they spent a happy and very social 25 years. Diana was able to indulge in her

passion for painting watercolours of the beautiful Ibizan countryside.

Returning to Marlborough in 2002, after all the years of outdoor, sporty life, Diana was finally able to indulge in cultural activities such as the u3a, Marlborough Gardening Association and the Theatre & Concert Clubs. Her intellectual curiosity remained undimmed – in 2016 at the age of 91 she gave a lecture to the u3a Art & Art History group.

She was devastated by the tragic death of her son Guy on 3rd July. Her last hope was to be able to attend his funeral, but sadly it was not to be; on 27th July she walked into Great Western A&E and died less than a week later.

Throughout her life Diana had a quiet but strong faith. She set an example of kindness and love to her children and grand-children.

The full tribute can be seen on line at www.towerandtown.org.uk.

Love Marlborough Kid's Meals



Love Marlborough Kid's Meals was one of many new projects that were started to support people who needed it in our town and surrounding villages. Through the lockdowns and afterwards in 2020-21, we delivered around 60 hot family meals each week to families and children who were struggling.

We continue to feed a number of families each week. Some no longer need our support. Sadly, other families have experienced a crisis and have joined our list. We anticipate that the change to universal credit and fuel prices will inevitably have an impact on those who already have challenges to their budget, or who unexpectedly experience health challenges.

Christmas is an opportunity to think about supporting those in need. We'd love you to consider donating to this local organisation which directly makes a difference to local families. Put simply, we provide hot meals for children in need in the Marlborough area. £10 will feed a family with a nutritious hot meal and some store cupboard extras. You can make a one-off or regular donation here: Or follow the link at: www.lovemarlboroughkidsmeals.org/home. For more information, contact: deliveries@lovemarlboroughkidsmeals.org



CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2021

All the churches of Marlborough wish you every blessing for a peaceful and happy Christmas

Sunday, 5 December

9.00am Christingle (St John the Baptist, Minal)

Sunday, 12 December

10.30am Christingle (St Mary's, Marlborough)
4.00pm Carol Service (St John the Baptist, Minal)
4.30pm Car Park Carols (Tesco, Marlborough)

Wednesday 15 December

11.00am Carol Service for those shielding (St Mary's Marlborough)

Sunday, 19 December

10.30am Carol Service (Christchurch)
4.00pm Carols by Candlelight (Emmanuel @ Christchurch)
5.00pm Carol Service (St Mary's, Marlborough)
6.00pm Carol Service (St George's, Preshute)

Thursday 23 December

3.00pm Teddy Prayers Nativity (St George's, Preshute)

Christmas Eve – Friday 24 December

3.00pm Crib Service (St George's, Preshute)
4.00pm Family Mass, Carols and Blessing of Crib (St Thomas More)
5.00pm Minal Village Nativity (start at The Horseshoe Pub)
9.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass - Carols from 8.30pm (St Thomas More, Marlborough)
9.00pm Midnight at Bethlehem - Pewsey Methodist Church
10.00pm First Communion of Christmas (St George's, Preshute)
11.15pm Midnight Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough)

Christmas Day – Saturday 25 December

8.00am Holy Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough)
9.00am Christmas Mass (St John the Baptist, Minal)
10.30am Family Communion (St George's, Preshute)
10.30am Family Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough)
10.30am All Age Worship for Christmas (Christchurch, Marlborough)
11.00am Christmas Mass (St Thomas More, Marlborough)

Boxing Day - Sunday 26 December

10.30am Quakers Meeting for Worship
10.30am Team Holy Communion (St Mary's, Marlborough)
11.00am Sunday Mass (St Thomas More, Marlborough)

Sunday 2 January 2022

10.30am Covenant Service (Christchurch)
10.30am Christingle (St George's, Preshute)

It's Panto season! (Oh no it's not...!)

Love it or loathe it, the Festive season is, by and large, all about Panto. I love pantomimes! Oh what joy there is in settling down into the red velvet stalls, and to have before you a huge, twinkling set that spells out *Cinderella*, *Dick Whittington*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* or whichever fairy tale hasn't yet been exhausted before your feasting eyes.

Normally, I'm a stickler for auditorium manners, and if I do find myself sitting near someone who insists on opening a packet of sweets during a performance, they will receive a stern look and a tap on the shoulder. But, panto is so loud and joyous that even the Ebenezer Scrooge in me allows for a little more crinkling, crackling and hooting from the audience if it feeds off the show itself – which it always does. Panto's are for laughing, being silly – audience participation... much like the music halls of yester year!

Have you even been to a panto if you don't come home with a large foam thumb and a light-up wand?

There is, generally speaking, always a pretty blonde who plays the down-and-out maidservant, and a cheeky-chappy Buttons who doesn't have a hope in hell, but still merrily duets with said girl to *Especiallly for You* by Kylie and Jason.

But, *there is nothing like a Dame...* and so on, the wardrobe departments always pull out the stops when it comes to costumes, wigs, hair and make-up - particularly with Widow Twanky's ensemble.

Oh what more should be said than, if you can, I suggest getting yourself and the family off to see a pantomime this Christmas. They're fun, it's good for you, and there's plenty of it about!

Some suggestions:

Cinderella at The Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

Jack and the Beanstalk at The Wyvern Theatre, Swindon

Cinderella at Theatre Royal, Bath

Snow White at The Bristol Hippodrome

Aladdin at Theatre Royal, Winchester

Pantoland at the Palladium, The London Palladium

Nature Notes: Special Moments

Robin Nelson

It is at the end of December that Radio and TV programmes look back over the year's highlights, so I have leafed through my nature logbook to pick out a few special moments:

On a freezing day in **January** at Castle Eaton I was lucky enough to see four whooper swans on flood water by the Thames. Those wintering in Britain are from the Icelandic breeding population: most are seen in Lowland Scotland and Northern England, but in Wiltshire it is a notable rarity. Unlike the mute swan, it calls, especially in flight, with a loud 'whoop-whoop-whoop', hence its name.

February is a good month to witness the courtship display flight of the goshawk, one of Wiltshire's rarest birds of prey, and sure enough, in a wood of mixed coniferous and deciduous trees I find a pair soaring and gliding above the tree line.

With chiffchaffs beginning their stuttering song at the end of **March** I set off on my annual search for the mysterious stone curlew on the local ranges. Blending in beautifully with the stony field they were standing on, a pair were happily ensconced, and a pair of common curlew, now rare inland, were gliding overhead, uttering their bubbling cries.

In early **April** my wife and I stopped by Ramsbury Lake: there were swallows flitting back and forth over the water, and above, perched on a dead tree, an osprey looked down!

By early **May** it had probably transferred to a nest site on a Scottish loch, whilst here in Wiltshire most summer visitors were back: in one area of the Cotswold Water Park I logged ten warbler species, a pair of water voles, two cuckoos, three hobbies and a nightingale.

June and **July** are the months for butterflies and flowers: there were purple, pyramidal, lesser butterfly, fragrant and twayblade orchids at Morgan's Hill and memorable amongst the butterflies were the purple emperors gliding back and forth above a favoured tall oak in Savernake Forest. An adder crossed our path on a canal towpath and my neighbour found six grass snakes wriggling about in his compost heap.

Summer visitors were drifting south in **August**: redstart, spotted flycatcher and sedge warbler all passed through our local fields and a quail was still calling on Windmill Hill.

September and **October** were notable for two separate sightings of hedgehog, whilst at Town Mill in Marlborough a dipper has occupied a stretch of the Kennet where kingfishers and grey wagtail have also been seen, as well as the spraint of an

otter.

Flocks of fieldfares and redwings are still arriving in **November**, as are golden plovers and wintering lapwings. And what is there to look forward to in **December**? holly, ivy, mistletoe, a turkey, and my favourite - a Gressingham duck!

Dipper

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News from the Churches

Our Carol and Christmas Services are correct at the time of going to print; however, please check with individual churches in case of any changes - the service times and dates can be found on page 20 Please contact the clergy page 17 if you are in need of prayer support.

All Souls' Update

The ecumenical All Souls' Service which was held at the end of October was a very moving occasion and appreciated by friends and families of those who attend. We give thanks to all the clergy and lay people within Marlborough Churches Together who offer support and care to those bereaved.

'Falling Leaves and Early Snow': 3rd December

Friday 3rd December, 7pm at St George's Church - a seasonal concert of music and words. Tickets £15, available from dbeacom@aol.com

A December to Remember: 6th December

Monday 6th December, 3.30-4.45pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. A Christmas Advent event for Reception, Y1 and Y2 school kids, organised by Emmanuel Marlborough. Join us for Christmas games, Crafts and snacks! Admission is free but limited spaces available - Book your spaces now at: <https://tinyurl.com/KidsAdvent2021>

EMMANUEL
MARLBOROUGH



1000 Stars for Christmas 2021

Is the project by St Mary's Church for this year, following on from last year's 1000 Angels.

St Mary's will be home to golden stars, decorated as you choose, to celebrate Christmas. The Wise Men followed the star to the birth place of Jesus and like them we are invited to journey through the church to the stable. This journey will explore the wonders of the universe along the way, building on the recent Marlborough Dark Skies Festival.

Stars to decorate will be available in the church and local schools. Please return finished stars to the church by 5th December. The "1000 Stars for Christmas" will be officially opened on 12th December.

The church will be open to visitors daily until early January except December 25th, 26th, January 1st. Any questions or offers to help contact Vincent & Helen Stokes (hcestokes@gmail.com.)

Carpark Carols: 12th December 4:30pm at Tesco Marlborough Car Park.

Back by popular demand - a drive-in Christmas Carol Service organised by Emmanuel Marlborough! Prizes for the best dressed car. Admission is free - reserve your tickets via our website at Emmanuelmarlborough.org

Women's Fellowship: 14th December

Meet on Tuesday 14th December in the crush hall at Christchurch at 2.45pm for Carols and mince pies and then take a break until 8th February 2022.



Carols by Candlelight: 19th December 4pm at Christchurch

A traditional Christmas carol service organised by Emmanuel Marlborough, with crèche and children's activities. All are welcome to stay afterwards for refreshments and a sandwich tea for children.



Emmanuel Marlborough

We are grateful to meet for a weekly Sunday service at 4pm at Christchurch, New Road, with creche and Sunday School groups. All are welcome to stay afterwards for refreshments and a sandwich tea for children. Midweek we are also delighted to offer a variety of activities including homegroups meeting in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George and community groups as below:

Little Friends Toddler Group. Thursdays, 10-11.30am at the Marlborough Community and Youth Centre. Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers.

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

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

Christianity Explored. Explore the life & claims of Jesus through Mark's gospel using this video based course in a friendly, interactive setting. All are welcome to come and ask any question or just listen. For more details, email office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Christingle Services

Take place on Sunday 5th December at 9am at St John the Baptist, Sunday 12th December at 10.30am at St Mary's & Sunday 2nd January at 10.30am at St George's.

We invite you to join the lovely tradition of Christingle when a lighted candle symbolizing Christ as the light of the world, is held by children at a special service.

Methodist Covenant Service

The Covenant Service is on 2nd January 2022 at 10.30am. All welcome.

Marlborough Churches Together: Fraternal

The next Fraternal will be at noon on Wednesday 8th December at West Trees, Mildenhall SN8 2LP, the home of Sarah Musgrave. The January date is yet to be decided; please contact your clergy if you wish to raise anything at either meeting.

Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group (MAPAG)



Next meeting will be Monday 10th January by zoom at 5pm.
More details from Rachel Rosedale 512205.

Christmas Hampers for local families - request for financial support

Many of us will have started our Christmas shopping, but not everyone is in a position to do so. This year instead of gift donations we are requesting financial support to enable us to work within Covid safety parameters. MAPAG will be coordinating the Christmas hampers. Please email Rachel Rosedale for further details about how to donate: rachelrosed1@gmail.com

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18th - 25th January 2022

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022 has been prepared by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterised by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. The Christians of the Middle East offer these resources conscious that the world shares many of the travails and much of the difficulties that it experiences, and yearns for a light to lead the way to the Saviour who is the light that overcomes darkness.

Serving the Gospel today requires a commitment to the human being, especially the poorest, the weakest and those marginalised. It requires from the churches transparency and accountability in dealing with the world, and with each other. This means churches need to cooperate to provide relief to the afflicted, to welcome the displaced, to relieve the burdened, and to build a just and honest society. This is a call for churches to work together so that young people can build a good future according to God's heart, a future in which all human beings can experience life, peace, justice, and love. <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2022/>

Wednesday Prayer Meetings

Our prayer meetings are in St Mary's Church every Wednesday afternoon at 5pm via zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6726727777>

The Anglican Team of Churches remain open for private prayer:

St Mary's (Mon-Sat 9am-5pm), St George's (daily) 9am-4pm,
St John the Baptist (daily) 9.30am-4pm.

Please visit the church website for other services or our YouTube link:
<https://youtube.com/channel/UCLNKtUKXSWXxfemiPfRXXDw>

Open the Book

The Open the Book teams have loved visiting the local primary schools after a long break during the pandemic. The Marlborough St Mary's team are looking for a volunteer to help join their team. Dressing up and acting out bible stories for the children is great fun and well received! If you want to join us please contact Alison for further information: alison@crossmead.net

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Please send articles and letters to the Monthly Editor or the Chairman, other notices or announcements to the compiler. All items for the February issue by Tuesday 11th January 2022 please.

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