TOWER AND TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

FIELDS OF SORROW

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November Edition Front Cover:
Credit: The Rifles Museum

TOWER AND TOWN

Credit: © Noonans

Medals of Engineer Commander Hillier, buried at Manton

Armistice Day November 11th 1918 saw nearly 11 million casualties on both sides. British and Commonwealth dead amounted to almost 1.1 million.

Approximately two thirds of all First World War service records were destroyed in September 1940 by a German bombing raid that struck the War Office Record Store in Arnside Street, London. Percy Charles Albert Hillier (medals above) was born at Marlborough, in August 1875, and entered the Royal Navy as Probationary Assistant Engineer in June 1896. At sea regularly, he was promoted Engineer Lieutenant in June 1902 and to Engineer Lieutenant-Commander in June 1910. He served on the cruiser H.M.S. Challenger on the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. He saw action in the Cameroons campaign in 1914, with the rounding-up of the Konigsberg in 1915. Hillier departed from HMS Challenger in May 1918 when he was transferred to the HMS Colombo, which was then being commissioned. He died of pneumonia on 30 October 1918. His life and many others like him, are part of the history of our local people, the history of our families and of our community.

The stories of a few are mentioned here. Remember them all.

Andrew Payne - Editor

November Edition No. 764
Compiler: Peter Noble
Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster Kemp

Marlborough Churches Together

The reaping of the 'MoonRakers'

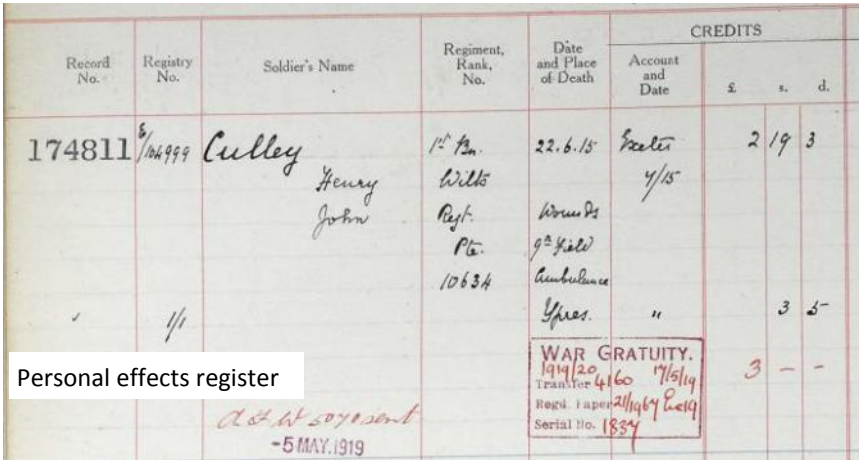
The front cover, courtesy of the Rifles Museum, depicts a First World War cigarette card, showing a soldier of the Wiltshire Regiment raking the moon. The Moonraker nickname comes from a local story.

The story is that Wiltshire smugglers threw barrels of illegally imported French alcohol into a pond to hide them from customs officers. That night, when they returned to retrieve the barrels, they were confronted by the Revenue. They quickly pointed to the moon and explained that they were trying to fish out a round wheel of cheese that had fallen into the pond. Taken as fools, they were off the hook.

The Wiltshire Regiment were not so fortunate. They paid a heavy price in France with 5,081 dead. The 1st Battalion received orders to mobilise in Tidworth on 4 August 1914 and by the 14th arrived in Rouen, France. In November 1914 Major T Roche (Officer Commanding, 1st Battalion) noted:

"Total wastage up to date for the first 3 months appears to be 26 officers and about 1000 men, or practically a whole battalion"

Private Henry John Culley was born in Inkpen and served in the 1st Battalion, and is commemorated on the Manton war memorial. Fighting at Hooge, Belgium, he was wounded likely between 17 June (103 other ranks wounded), 20 June (4 casualties) or 22 June (where at 8pm No 1&3 platoons attacked but were held up by machine gun fire). He may have been one of the 24 casualties that day. Evacuated and treated for wounds at Ypres, 9 Field Ambulance, he died on 22 June 1915. Like who fought in WWI, he was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. His personal effects file (see image below) shows that his next of kin was paid the £3 war gratuity.



Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS Account and Date	£	s.	d.
174811	6/104999	Culley Henry John	1st Bn. Wilts Regt. Pte. 10634	22.6.15 Wounds 9th Field Ambulance Ypres.	Exeter 4/15	2	19	3
	1/1				"		3	5-
				WAR GRATUITY. 1914/20 Transfer 4160 17/5/19 Regd. Paper 21/1464 Card Serial No. 1834		3	-	-

-5 MAY. 1919

Personal effects register

Credit: Wilts & Swindon Archive

A cricketer gassed: David Jennings

The First World War saw cricket players suffer a disproportionate number of deaths (one in six who went to war) compared to other men who enlisted from a sporting background. At least 34 first-class players were killed from the 210 county players who served. One was David Jennings.

David Jennings at Kent

Credit: Kent Cricket

Corporal David Jennings was born in Kentish Town around 1890. From a cricketing background, his father played for Devon County from 1892 to 1914. From 1905 till his death in 1938 he was coach and head groundsman at Marlborough College.

In the 1911 census, David was living at 1 Elmswood Terrace, Marlborough. His occupation was listed as professional cricketer. In a family of nine, he was the oldest sibling, with ages spanning from 7-21.

He answered the call to arms, enlisting in the 20th Depot (RE) Kent Fortress. In March 1915 he was promoted to Second Corporal and for 18 months worked on coastal defence and construction duties. He played cricket for the Army twice in 1917 at Lords Cricket ground.

With Royal Engineers being essential for battlefield defences and construction, in February 1918 he was posted to France to the 206 Field Company (RE). In April 1918 the German Spring offensive began with a series of gas attacks in his sector. The unit war dairy stated:

"8th. 3-5am. Heavy hostile gas bombardment which lasted until 7am. Sections worked as yesterday.

9th 6am. Heavy hostile gas and HE bombardment till 9am

10th. 19 ORs [other ranks] wounded (gas)"

Corporal Jennings was one of 19 men of 206 Field Company who became casualties in the gas shell bombardment by Bienvillers, near Arras. He was evacuated to England and spent two months in hospital. Two weeks after his release he was admitted to St Mark's Military Hospital, Tunbridge Wells, with pleurisy. He died on 6 August 1918 with the death certificate listing cause of death as *'Gas Poisoning in France. 2. Double pleuropneumonia five weeks'*.

He is buried at the Victorian cemetery, Marlborough.

Sergeant 'Bertie' Witts

Bertie Witts is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave at Mildenhall and is commemorated in St John the Baptist Church.

Sergeant (Sgt) Witts served in the 1st Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry (SLI) which was part of the 11th Brigade, 4th Division during World War I. The battalion was heavily engaged in the Battle of the Somme, particularly during the Battle of Albert in July 1916, where it suffered significant casualties.

In 1914 and early 1915 the details of soldiers, with their embarkations, were kept in penny 'School Copy Books'. Army Books were subsequently used. The original muster roll is a complete transcript of the original volume, which lists all the men (Officers and other ranks) who served with the 1st Battalion throughout the First World War. It provides personal details such as name, regimental number and rank, particulars of casualties and date and reason for leaving the Battalion. Witts' entry brings home the cruel reality of the war.

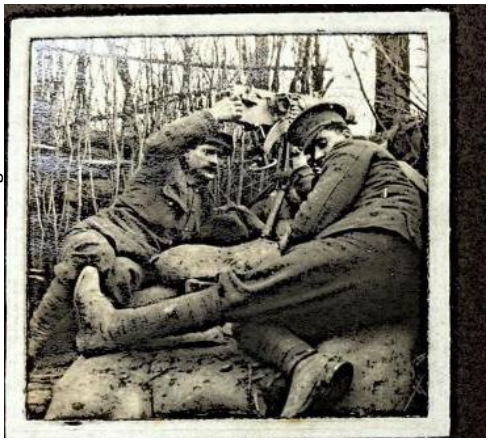
Witts embarked on the 21st August 1914 . He was admitted to 10 Field Ambulance Hospital on the 25th October with a 'gunshot wound to the right arm'. Appointed Lance Corporal in May 1915 he was promoted to machine gun (MG) Sgt in December 1915 then despatched to 3 Army School for further training. He rejoined the Battalion on 30th April 1916. July 1st saw a major battle commencing with the detonation of a mine at the Hawthorn Redoubt. The casualty list (in just a single day) was a staggering 468 men. In the battalion's war diary, officer casualties were named individually, but soldiers simply as 'Other Ranks - 438.' Bertie was evacuated to 12 Field Ambulance on 1 July 1916 - marked in the school copy book as gunshot wound (GSW) to the head.

His entry then reports a move to 1 General Hospital with 'GSW to the head' and marked as 'non-effective' as of that date. He was then transported back to England.

He died of his wounds on 21 January 1917.

Extracts from 1st Battalion War Diary 1 July 1916

"Z day. Fine and warm. After a very intense bombardment a mine was exploded under the Hawthorn Redoubt [a German fortification]. Practically no casualties were suffered while in the assembly trenches...At 0730 the attack was launched. Battalions advanced on a front of one Company…The Battalion lost very heavily. No officers with the exception of Captain ACKLAND, R.A.M.C., who formed up in the assembly trenches escaped unscathed at the end of the day."



Credit: South West Heritage Trust archive

1st Battalion Somerset Light Infantry

Machine Gunners

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Twenty-eight short days in France

The need for soldiers saw Marlborough residents join Regiments across the country. During the First World War, The Royal Sussex Regiment expanded to 23 battalions. Beyond the regulars, 'service battalions' were formed as part of the `New Army' raised by Lord Kitchener in 1914-1915. (See photos on page 16).

John Bussell served with the 7th Service Battalion. As a boy he volunteered to serve in the Imperial Yeomanry in the Boer War. Returning in 1901 he went up to Oxford, was a blue for Rugby in both 1903-1904, and rowed at stroke in a College eight. In 1905 he was invited to play rugby for England which he declined (due to injury). He taught at St Edward's Oxford, was ordained in 1905 and in January 1914 came to Marlborough College as a master.

His tenure was brief. Just months after the war started on 28th July, he was commissioned into the 7th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment as an infantry Captain in September.

The 7th was raised with a flurry of recruitment for men between the ages of 19-30 for the duration of the war. The Battalion began its journey to France from Aldershot with an initial detail consisting of 3 Officers, 102 other ranks, 79 horses, 24 vehicles and 9 bicycles. Captain Bussell ('A' Company), followed with 15 Officers and the remaining 450 soldiers, from Folkestone Harbour, departing for Le Harve, France, on the SS Victoria. Arriving at 1am on 1st June (after a smooth voyage) the Battalion disembarked at Boulogne, and marched to Ostrohove rest camp.

Brought by train closer to the front, marching then became essential. On 6 June, in a reported 'great heat', a 15 1/2 mile march resulted in the unit being 156 men short on marching in. In billets, further training took place. By 11 June the Battalion was in Armentieres, with Captain Bussell taking 'A' Company into the Royal Irish Fusilier trenches for 24 hours to familiarise the men with the trenches.

The casualties began. On the 15th, the Battalion was briefly in billets, before further training and marches until the 25th to reach Ploegsteert ('Plug Street'to British soldiers).

The Commanding Officer and four Company commanders reconnoitred the Leinster Regiment trenches, planning for the Leinsters' relief on the 26th. By 9.10pm on the 27th 'A' Company had conducted its relief. Captain Bussell was on the front line. The next war diary entry baldly states, *"28 June. 1040. Captain Bussell, Commanding 'A' Coy, killed in advance salient by sniper, when pointing out dangerous spot which required closing"*

He left behind his wife Dorothea Bussell, of Seven Stars, Marlborough with four children, two boys and two girls. Lawrence, the youngest, was born in December 1915, six months after his death.

A long journey to death

Large numbers of young British men had been encouraged by the Canadian government to emigrate abroad to develop farms and take up selected occupations around the turn of the century.

Prime Minister Laurier's government, especially the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, was determined to fill Western Canada with immigrants. Sifton created an immigration policy that reflected Canada's need: European newcomers had to be farmers. Agents were paid $2 (Canadian dollars) for every British immigrant farm labourer.

Frederick (Fred) Ford, was born on 22 May 1886 in Marlborough. Aged 20, he emigrated on the SS Carthaginian in May 1906 landing at Halifax, Nova Scotia. The ship was later sunk by a mine laid by the German submarine U79 in 1917 with no loss of life. There were ten other passengers from Wiltshire on the same ship, with four marked as 'British Bonus Allowed'. The ship's manifest identified Fred's destination as Winnipeg with his occupation listed as labourer, stamped 'farmer'.

On the outbreak of the war, the 29th Canadian Infantry Battalion (also known as "Tobin's Tigers") was formed in October 1914 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J.S. Tobin. The battalion was mobilised in Vancouver, recruiting in both Vancouver and New Westminster. Fred Ford's attestation papers on 9 November 1914 showed his next of kin as his mother Sarah (father Daniel) at The Lodge, Bath Road, Marlborough. He was described as 5'7" tall, with grey eyes, dark complexion and brown hair. The average height of a British soldier in 1914 was around 5' 5" in (165 cm) with the minimum height requirement for enlistment being 5'3". His medical was conducted at Hastings Park, Vancouver, aged 29. He weighed 142 lbs with a 35 inch chest with 'good physical development'.

As a Private, he embarked with the battalion from Montreal on 20 May 1915 aboard the RMS Missanabie, disembarking in England ten days later. Its strength was 37 officers and 1104 other ranks.

September 1915 saw field firing at Hythe, trench attack training then marching from Moore's Plain to Folkestone Quay.

RMS Missanabie

Credit: University of British Columbia

The battalion's departure was postponed due to mines being found at Boulogne, arriving in France on the SS St. Seriol, 17 September 1915.

The battalion became part of the 2nd Canadian Division, 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade and was quickly at the front.

The unit's first casualty came quickly on 26th September in the trenches. Private MacDonald was killed by rifle fire.

In April 1916 the battalion and Private Ford were in the thick of the action. War diary entries reported:

"At Crater 6...it took three quarters of an hour to get from a point between trenches 19 and 20, heavy machine gun fire, our own shelling and flares causing delay. Found crater unoccupied except for our own dead"

On 12 May 1916, Private Ford was promoted to Corporal in the field. That day was windy and cloudy with a working party of 400 suffering no casualties. On the 27th May (when Corporal Ford was likely to have been wounded) the unit war diary reported:

"After midnight the enemy bombed trench 16 but silenced by our guns...at noon heavy shelling...Casualties two killed, two wounded, two died of wounds"

His records show that on the 31st he had already been moved from the 4th Canadian Casualty clearing station, suffering from gun shot wounds and shrapnel to the thigh, to the no 13 Stationary Hospital in Boulogne. This was

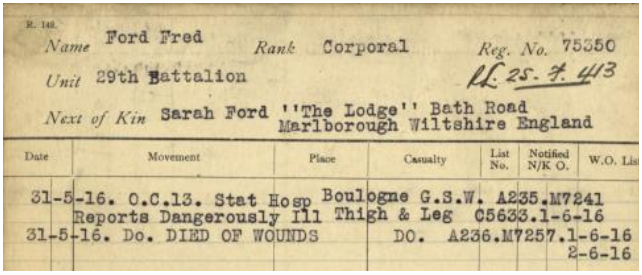
Credit: CEFRG at St Eloi 29th Bn

a British base hospital housed in sugar sheds and warehouses at the Gare Maritime. These hospitals were established to provide advanced and specialist care for casualties from the

13th Hospital entrance

Credit: Imperial War Museum collection

Western Front. He died of his wounds on 31 May 1916. The final assigned pay sent to his mother was $25 a month. He is buried at the Commonwealth War Graves site at the Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, alongside 5,779 other soldiers.



R. 148.

Name Ford Fred *Rank* Corporal *Reg. No.* 75350

Unit 29th Battalion

Next of Kin Sarah Ford ''The Lodge'' Bath Road Marlborough Wiltshire England

Date	Movement	Place	Casualty	List No.	Notified N/K O.	W.O. List
31-5-16.	O.C.13. Stat Hosp Reports Dangerously Ill	Boulogne G.S.W. Thigh & Leg		A235.M7241 C5633.1-6-16		
31-5-16.	Do. DIED OF WOUNDS		DO.	A236.M7257.1-6-16	2-6-16	

Credit: Canadian Great War Project

A wife's anguish: Maude Manders

The First World War accounted for some 886,000 British military fatalities. The toll on the adult male population meant that the 1921 Census recorded 109 women for every 100 men.

The newspapers called this the 'Surplus Two Million' women – the women these men would have married. The pain of loss was even more severely felt by the 240,000 widowed. Maude Braybrooke Vane (Mrs M Manders), married to Colonel Neville Manders, RAMC, was one of those widows.

Colonel Neville Manders served as Assistant Director of Medical Services with the New Zealand and Australian Division during the Gallipoli campaign.

Born 12 Dec 1859 in Marlborough, Colonel Manders was a prominent entomologist, a Fellow of the Entomological Society, and the Bombay Natural History Society. He had several species of butterflies named after him.

He served in the 1885 Suakin Expedition and was awarded the Egypt Medal & Bar, and Khedives Star, then in Burma 1887 - 89 (India General Service Medal and two Bars) where he had been severely wounded. He married Maud Braybrooke at St. Michael's, Colombo, Ceylon, on 15 September 1900, aged 41.

Stationed in Egypt, he wrote a memo requesting that 'should anything happen to him', to kindly cable Mrs Manders c/o Chateau Mon Choisi, Lausanne, Switzerland.

He then went on loan from the RAMC to the NZ & Australian Division on 13 March, landing at Anzac Cove 25th April 1915. He was killed in action at Gallipoli, 9 August 1915, during the attack on Sari Bair, a barren hillside, and was buried on the beach at No. 3 Post. A record from Herbert, Mons, Anzac & Kut noted:

'Monday, August 9th, 1915. Bullets came streaming down our valley, and we put up a small wall of sacks, 3 feet high, behind which we slept. I was sitting at breakfast this morning listening to Colonel Manders talking, when suddenly I saw Charlie B. put his hand to his own head and say: 'By G----, he's killed!' Manders fell back dead, with a bullet through his temple'.

Maude was notified of his death on 11 August by telegram. *"Deeply regret to inform you your husband Colonel Manders reported killed in action in Gallipoli, 7 August*' TH Donne, Records Officer.

Maude, clearly shocked and distressed, began writing letters about this death, citing the conflicting dates and loss of his personal effects. She asked for '*a packet containing a gold ring, watch, private papers & diary which never reached her*.'

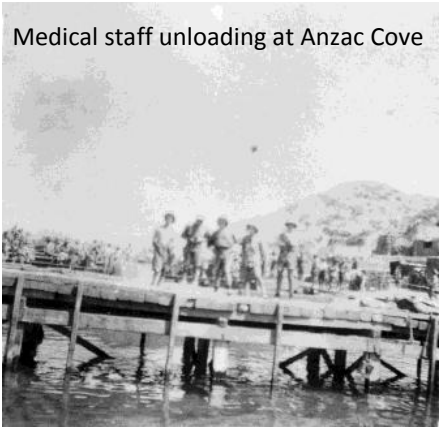
Maude provided evidence from a Trooper in the Auckland Mounted Rifles about the correct date of death. She pursued the War Office, NZ Records in London, the High Commissioner for New Zealand, all of which received extensive follow up. This included attempts to trace two soldiers, Sergeant Harper and Private Gorton (both NZMC, as his kit had been handed to these two men).

Many of these letters came from hospitals, where she was a volunteer, including the East Lancashire Red Cross Hospital in Worsley and the Hopital Yvetot, north of Rouen. In 1916 the General Post Office informed her that:

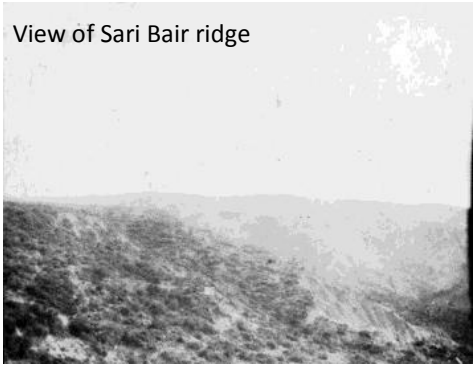
'a full enquiry had been made, in this country and abroad, but it has not been possible to find any trace of the package in question, or any record of its posting. I am to explain that no record is kept of unregistered packets; but if the packet was registered in accordance with the usual practice and the office of posting can be furnished, further enquiries can be made'

The package was never recovered.

Anzac Cover



Medical staff unloading at Anzac Cove



View of Sari Bair ridge

Heroes of the Red Cross

credits, all pictures: The National Library, Wellington

A soldier lost, a nation sacrificed

Nearly 180,000 Polish service personnel escaped Poland during the Second World War and served with the Polish Free Forces. Far from home, they fought to defeat Nazi Germany.

'Plutonowy' (Platoon Leader) Jozef Jablecki was one such soldier.

Jozef served in the 5th (Polish) Anti-Aircraft Artillery (5th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment), which (with its 40mm anti aircraft guns) was part of the 5th Kresowa Infantry Division, II Polish Corps. The Division was formed in March 1943 in the Middle East. It was composed of three infantry brigades, supporting arms, and critical divisional artillery - including the 5th Kresowa Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. He saw combat in Italy as part of General Anders' II Polish Corps, known as 'Anders Army.'

Credit: Sikorski Institute London

The division famously had a bear named 'Private' Wojtek, who was fed with diluted condensed milk via an old vodka bottle. He quickly grew huge, weighing 250 kg and loved wrestling with soldiers, without harm.

In May 1944, the Division suffered 15% casualties in the Battle of Monte Cassino. Jablecki was awarded the Monte Cassino Cross, a medal awarded only to those soldiers of the Polish II Corps who fought in the battle. He took part in further actions at Ancona, with operations leading up to and along the Gothic Line, then the final Spring 1945 offensive to capture Bologna.

After active service in Italy, the 5th Kresowa Division remained as part of the occupation forces. By then, the Soviet Union had occupied Poland. The despair was evident in this 'order of the day' from Brigadier General Sulik, Commander 5th Kresowa Infantry Division, 9 April 1945:

"The danger is great, those who have found themselves again enslaved by the violence of Russian imperialism. The danger is becoming widespread and threatens others. SOLDIERS . We did not fight for a change of occupant. The relentless war waged against the Polish Nation has not ended."

May 1946 saw the Division transported to Britain, and later disbanded in 1947. Many personnel, facing the new realities of post-war Poland, chose to remain in the UK as part of the Polish Resettlement Corps. Plutonowy Jablekcki tragically died on 5 December 1946 at the Savernake Hospital.

As a Sergeant, likely based at RAF Ramsbury, his death came from a fracture at the base of his skull, sustained by misadventure when thrown from an Army truck which had turned over. He is buried at St Katharine's Church. A soldier far from his family, his comrades, his country.

Boy soldiers - an accidental death

In WW2, there were nearly 120,000 'non' combat deaths from wounds, disease, accidents or other causes in the British Military.

Private Harry George Quarterman served in the 70th Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment, which was a young soldier unit. Born in Liss, Hampshire, on 7 September 1921 he was one of eight siblings. This unit was part of the Young Soldier companies attached to Home Defence and conducted defence exercises and military skills training. The war diary for 24 June 1941 simply stated:

"Glastonbury. No. 5674665 Pte Quarterman died in Bath Military Hospital"

He was just 19. He is buried at the Marlborough Cemetery.

Born in 1921 in Dundee, Rifleman John Joseph West-Woods signed on at Chatham to the Kings Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC) in 24 January 1938 for a period of 12 years, nine as a regular and three on the Army reserve. He was 5'8" and weighed 139lbs on enlistment. His trade was listed as plumber's assistant.

He was awarded the third class certificate from the Army School in 1938. On attaining the age of 17 years and six months, he was posted to the ranks and subsequently he served in the M.T (Motor Transport) of the KRRC.

He died 1 July 1940 as a result of a motor vehicle accident while as a despatch rider at Port Hill, and taken to the Savernake Hospital. Records show that he was killed by another army vehicle. The distress caused his mother to suffer ill heath but she sought the other driver until 1955.

While that other driver was named by the family, 1955 documents stated that *"without an indication of that driver's Regiment or number it would be impossible to trace him."*

His Commonwealth War Grave at the Marlborough Cemetery is inscribed
'For everyone he did his best,
God grant him eternal rest'

Reference K.R. 1639.

It is notified for your information, in confirmation of telephone message of yesterday afternoon, that No. 6846066 Rifleman Joseph John West-Woods of this Battalion, died at about noon on 1st July, 1940 as the result of an accident in which he was involved whilst riding a motor cycle in the capacity of a D.R.

Credit: The National Archives Extract from a redacted file.
(the words above are an exact copy of the original which is too feint to be legible in this magazine. D.R. = Despatch Rider)

What's On in November

The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale

4th (Tuesday) 2.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. John Singer Sargent – the private radical. Famed society portrait painter, lauded for his consummate skills, yet he scandalised Parisian Society and the city's salons with his frank depiction of human sexuality. Speaker, writer and broadcaster Gavin Plumley. Doors open at 2.00pm but refreshments will be served after the lecture. Visitors very welcome - £7 on the door, cash or card. For information www.taspv.org.uk

Marlborough Floral Club

6th (Thursday) 2.00pm Mildenhall Village Hall. Christmas with Friends with Jo Jacobs. £6 to attend, no pre booking necessary. Information from Micky Graham on 01672 514301

Marlborough Gardening Assocn.

12th (Wednesday) 7.30pm Town Hall, Marlborough. Borderline Plants with Derry Watkins. Display table: Evergreen Foliage for a Vase. For more information marlbgainfo@gmail.com

Folk Roots

14th (Friday) 8.00pm St Peter's Church, Marlborough. Nancy Kerr and James Fagan are one of the best-known and most experienced folk duos on the British circuit today. Outstanding musicianship, a lifelong grounding in traditional singing and instrumental playing, acclaimed original compositions but most noticeably a visceral chemistry between these two make Kerr and Fagan a perennial favourite at festivals, venues and clubs across the country. Tickets £21 from Sound Knowledge or at marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk

A Christmas Carol Comes to Life

18th (Tuesday) 10.00 - 4.00pm

and all Tuesdays to the end of December at the Merchant's House.

Tickets: Adults £11, Children and Historic House FREE

Serenade for St Cecilia.

22nd (Saturday) 7.00pm

St George's Preshute Autumn Concert. A celebration of vocal, choral and instrumental music for all, together with readings to enjoy. In aid of the ongoing work of St George's. Tickets £15, including wine and canapés, available from David Beacom at dbeacom@aol.com

Santa's Grotto at St Peter's

28th (Friday) 3.30 - 7.30pm

Step into the magic and meet Santa in his cosy grotto. Plus enjoy some festive cheer.

(See Christmas Lights Advert P.21)

Christmas Lights Switch-on

28th (Friday) 6.30pm

Town Hall steps (se advert p.21)

Storytime with Santa

29th (Saturday) and 6th December (Saturday) 10.00am – 3.00pm

The Merchant's House, Marlborough. Santa is making a magical stop at The Merchant's House for two whole days of festive fun. Gather with a small

What's On in November

group for cosy story time with Santa, then enjoy a special moment to say hello, pick a present from his magical sack and snap a photo (or two) to capture the memory. Spaces are limited. Tickets £8 per child (with a maximum of two accompanying adults per child) at themerchantshouse.co.uk

School Dates

Please see school websites for any updated information.

Marlborough St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary term starts Monday 3rd.

Marlborough College term starts 9.00pm Sunday 2nd. Exeat 12 noon Friday 21st – 9.00pm Monday 24th.

Looking Ahead.....

Christmas Wreath Making

Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th December The Merchant's House. Make your Christmas extra special this year with a festive wreath-making workshop in the atmospheric setting of The Merchant's House's historic kitchen. With only 4 people in each group you'll get plenty of hands-on help. Enjoy a hot drink and mince pies as you create. Limited spaces so book early. Tickets £55 at themerchantshouse.co.uk

Monthly Monday Market

1st 8th 15th and 22nd December 10.00am – 3.00pm St Peter's Church. The market, which usually runs on the first Monday of each month, will run each Monday for December. The market aims to showcase the best of local businesses bringing together their products and produce all under one roof.

Brilliant Young Musicians Series

Sunday 7th December 7.00-9.00pm Jâms Coleman (piano) and Colin Scobie (violin). St Peter's Church. Full information and tickets at stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

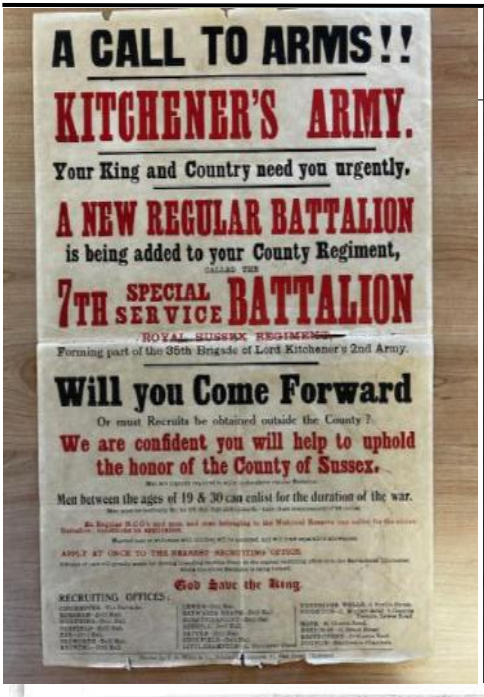
St Agnes Fountain

Tuesday 16th December 8.00pm Marlborough Town Hall. Fairport Convention's Chris Leslie and multi award winning duo Chris While and Julie Matthews bring musical invention and laughter to the star-dust atmosphere of the season. Fans agree, Christmas starts with St Agnes Fountain. Tickets £26 from Sound Knowledge or at marlboroughfolk-roots.co.uk

Trek the Great Wall of China

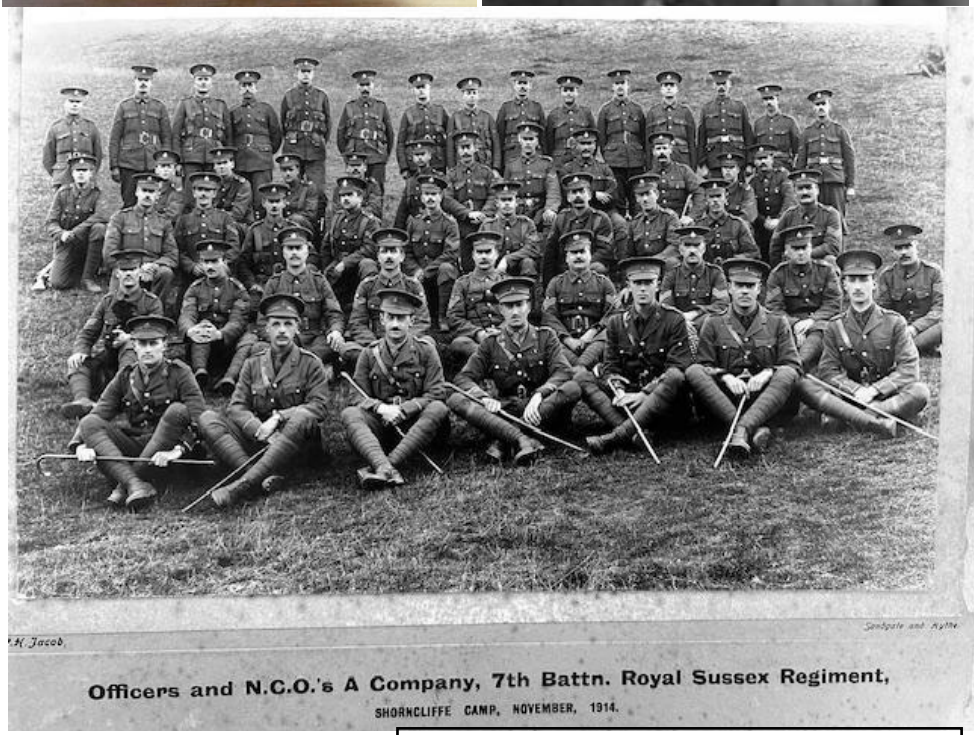
Friday 19th – Sunday 27th December 2026

Julia's House, the Wiltshire and Dorset children's hospice charity is inviting adventure-seeking supporters to embark on an unforgettable challenge, a nine day expedition to the hidden and remote sections of the Great Wall of China. For full information and to register your place by December 2025 visit www.juliashouse.org/event/trek-great-wall-china-2026



Captain John Bussell

Credit: image courtesy of Christ's Hospital



Officers and N.C.O.'s A Company, 7th Battn. Royal Sussex Regiment,
SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, NOVEMBER, 1914.

Credits: By courtesy of the Trustees of the Royal Sussex Regiment Museum Trust,

The pictures above illustrate the article on page 7

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Magical Light and Mystical Dark

Mystical dark, nearly black, foliage has been an obsession with plant collectors for many years. I've just bought a Zantedeschia Memories lily and it's the closest to actual black that I have ever seen. This is particularly special because although dark foliage is getting more usual in garden centres, actual black flowers are still rare.

Credit: Carolyn Stimpson

Dark foliage is invaluable at adding drama and enhancing particular areas of interest in the garden because your eye is naturally drawn to it, especially as purple foliage compliments every shade of green and I use them as feature plants in the border to draw attention to what is around them.

Mostly deciduous and fully hardy, the foliage comes in the most stunning range of textures from fernlike Sambucus, strappy leaves like Eucomis, cut leaves like Acers and broad leaves like Colocasia. Evergreen purple shrubs like Pittosporum Tom Thumb are borderline hardy so I move them right up to the house wall in the winter.

Full sun or part shade is best, unfortunately their colour fades in shady conditions, but they will grow in all soil conditions with no special needs.

Magical light foliage and the love affair with Hostas begins! The sheer range of colours, textures, sizes and shapes is mind blowing. I went to the Spring Show at Malvern and the biggest buzz was around the Hosta stands. They are probably one of the most collectable groups of plants and that's interesting because we spend a fortune on them and they are total slug magnets! My favourite supplier is Sienna Hosta, they are Chelsea Gold medal winners and grow over 1400 different varieties. They also supplied the plants for King Charles for his stumpery at Highgrove. Next spring I will get their new Hosta Silly String, I've got to wait

that long because there's a huge waiting list of other obsessed collectors!

Always grow them in pots in multi-purpose compost with a very generous layer of horticultural grit on top to deter molluscs. The bigger leaved varieties won't grow as big as if they were in the ground, but your leaves won't look like lace!

Hostas don't like too much sun although the yellow leaved varieties are more tolerant and they all need to be kept moist, feeding isn't really necessary. The added bonus are the beautiful lilac flowers that appear in the autumn arising from the foliage.

They get bigger every year so in the autumn take it out of its pot, cut it in half with a sharp knife and re-pot with new compost.

Foliage will die back in the late autumn so just wait for another miracle next spring when their fat buds appear again.

Dark or light, you will not be able to stop at one plant!

Wendy Jackson
Marlborough Gardening Association

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Family News

Ann Birley died at the beginning of October, aged 97. If anyone personified 'service' it was Ann. She was always busy at the centre of her large family and in the life of whatever school or community she lived in.

The daughter of a schoolmaster at Shrewsbury and married to another, her late husband, Mike, she found herself eventually the headmaster's wife at Eastbourne and then a housemaster's wife at Marlborough College.

She involved herself copiously in these schools and in local life, and she knew not only the pupils and the staff, but an incredible number of former pupils and a huge range of people in the community, too. Her memory for names, dates and incidents involving people was colossal and accurate, not as a gossip (she wasn't) but out of a fresh, genuine and good-humoured interest in their lives and achievements.

There was no limit to what she was prepared to do, practical, energetic, and tireless. Happy to roll up her sleeves, she was the first to get on with anything that needed doing, in St Peter's Church for example, without any sense that she was doing anyone a favour.

The mottos 'Make Do and Mend' and 'Waste Not, Want Not' could have been invented for her. We recall Ann with fondness and gratitude, and send our sympathetic thoughts and memories to David, Sarah, Rick, Jo and their families.

John Osborne

A Christmas Carol Comes to Life

at

The Merchant's House

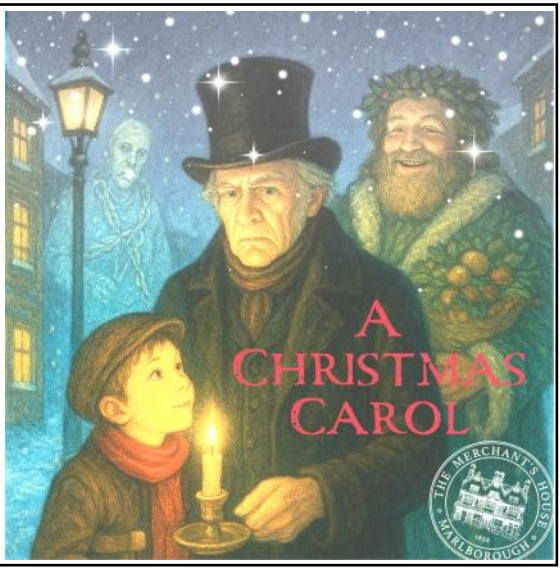
18th (Tuesday)

10.00 - 4.00pm

and

all Tuesdays to the end of December

Tickets: Adults £11, Children and Historic House FREE



Clergy Letter - Mind the Gap

During the wistful first week of September, just before our youngest departed for university, we took a week's holiday in North Cornwall, to revisit a seaside haunt much enjoyed in their childhood. The high-baked summer heat finally giving way to that more familiar British blend of showery spells and sunny intervals, we eschewed the beaches in favour of the ruined splendour of Tintagel Castle, situated on an almost-island along the headland from our cottage.

Since 2019, the legendary birthplace of King Arthur has been connected to the coast by an elegant suspension bridge, the crossing of which offers giddily magnificent views. Perhaps helpfully, pedestrians can't see the rocks beneath them but for a 40mm gap, halfway across. The bridge is constructed in two sections, each drilled into its own side of the yawning chasm. The inch or two between them is, I learned, both structural and symbolic - representing the space between past and present, myth and reality. A lovely touch, I thought.

In the Christian year, Autumn's mood is one of gratitude and remembrance – with Harvest, All Saints and Remembrance Sunday each inviting us to look back and consider what we have received. In so doing, we find in Jesus Christ one who bridges the ages, reconnecting us both to God and neighbour.

At times this year it has felt as though the gap between us – as individuals, cultures and nations – is growing ever wider. We launch out from our separate sides and find it ever harder to meet in the middle. Christians are not immune from any of this (and can even be guilty of widening the divide) but we follow one who offers true peace: within ourselves, with each other and with God. Whatever lies before us this winter, may we walk in his way.

Bishop Andrew Rumsey

The Grand Christmas Lights Event

Friday 28th November

High Street Market from 10.00am

Santa's Grotto at St Peter's Church 3.30pm - 7.30pm

(see St Peter's website to book Santa slots)

Street Entertainment from 5.00pm

Christmas Lights Switch-on at the Town Hall Steps at 6.30pm

followed by performers on the steps

A Good Read

I promised you last month that I'd read something, and indeed I have, though I'm only half-way through the first book I want to tell you about.

It was recommended to me by Angus; he said it made him cry. **The Winter Warriors** by Olivier Norek (who, among other things, wrote the French TV crime series Spiral) is a fictionalized history of the brief and bloody conflict of the Winter War, the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939. The main character is the Finnish sniper known to the Soviet soldiers as 'The White Death".

Simo Häyhä and a group of friends from his village join up together and the story is of their experiences of uncompromising and dehumanising warfare. But as Angus says, it's not the descriptions of death and battle that are so heart-rending, it's the tender moments of ordinary life, friendship and resilience that make it so hard to read.

The author also shows us the operation of the morally bankrupt Soviet army with utter disregard for the welfare of its troops, and the lies and excuses of the generals unable to report truthfully to Stalin. It's a vivid, and poignant and altogether brilliantly humane novel, do read it.

And now, in a tyre-screeching motion-sickness inducing change of direction and pace, comes number several-hundred and something in our occasional series of books I really didn't think I'd enjoy.

Automatic Noodle by Annalee Newitz is probably best described as 'cosy dystopia'. I don't know if that's an official genre, but it's the best description of this tale of a group of robots who band together in post-apocalyptic San Francisco to open a restaurant selling hand-pulled noodles.

It's no more than a novella, the plot and characterisation really don't stand up to too much scrutiny, and I think proper SF fans would find it derisory. But if you fancy something light and gently uplifting and out of your normal reading comfort zone, you could do a lot worse.

I am cheerfully embracing batty cat-lady-hood by reading **The Writer's Cats** by Meriel Barbery. Most stories about, or as in this case, ostensibly 'by' cats are too saccharine even for me (and sometimes too sad) - mais ce roman est tres Francais, so manages to avoid twee-ness.

Just enough space to press upon you The **Stones of Britain** by the late and very much missed Jon Cannon. A study of geology and history and the landscapes formed by the interaction between the two. It is knowledgeable, elegant and full of information you didn't realise was so interesting.

Debby Guest

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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 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

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

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

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

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

5.00pm 1st Sunday: All-age worship with children's tea 4.30pm

5.00pm 2nd, 3rd & 4th: All-age worship with Energize children's church

St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)

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

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

11.00 am Mass

Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)

10.00am Worship, a young children's group and refreshments

4.00pm Worship, crèche, Sunday School and refreshments.

Marlborough College Services are shown at the college chapel.

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

FROM THE REGISTERS

Departed - We pray for the parents and family of:

14th Sep	Maurice Hillier	79	Roger's Meadow	St Mary's
24th Sep	Mandy Gulliver	62	Isbury Road	St Mary's

News from the Churches

Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship

The Marlborough Anglican Team will be marking Remembrance Sunday across all three churches, with different services:

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. In November our All age service will be on the 2nd with a family tea at 4:30pm followed by a service for all ages at 5pm. On the first and third Sunday of the month, we break bread together.

Energize

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

All age worship for November

Sunday 2nd . All are welcome.

Children/Family Activities

The Ark Parent / Carer and Toddler Group

Mondays in term time, 9:30am to 11am in the Church Hall, Silverless Street. Please contact Caroline Philps for more information cphilps2@gmail.com

Midweek Activities

Welcome Wednesdays

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

St Mary's Women's Group

Thursdays 10 am to 11 am. Join for coffee, chat, Lectio and prayer. All welcome - for more details and dates, email marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk

The Big Town Christmas Giveaway 2025

St Mary's Church and Hall, Saturday 29th November, 10.30-3pm

Many in our town will find Christmas a challenge. The vision is to bring help and hope in difficult times through a fun-packed activity day.

Coffee, tea, homemade cakes and soup lunch provided.

The event will include carol singing, craft activities for all ages and a gift fair.

Emanuel Church

Weekly/one-off Events:

Curry Night & Talk with Andy Bannister

Have you ever wondered - The clues to the spiritual meaning of life

Monday, 3 November, 7.30 - 9pm, Wesley Hall, SN8 1AP. Entry is free, book your place here: emmanuelmarlborough.org/curry

Women's Bible Study

Every other Friday during term time, (7th and 21st November), 10 am-11.30 am. Friends discovering God's truth in the Bible (All women are welcome - onsite crèche available).

Homegroups

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

Little Friends Toddler Group

Thursdays during term time, 10-11.30 am at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough, SN8 1AP.
Come and enjoy free play, singing and story time, snacks for children and refreshments for carers.

Explorers

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

Friday Nights

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

Sparklers

Monday, 17 November, 3.45-4.45 pm (Doors open at 3.30 pm) at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough. A monthly kids club for school years Reception to Year 2. Games, Snacks and Bible Stories! For more information, or if you have any questions, please at the address below.

Rooted

A discipleship group for Y7-9 and Y10-13: Friday, 7th and 21st November, 6-7.15 pm at the Prest's home. Through Bible study, training and discussion, we want to grow in love for each other and for Jesus. Held fortnightly with food, before Friday Nights youth group. We'd love to see you there! For more details and the location address, please email at the address below.

More details for all Emanuel groups and events can be found on our Website at:
www.EmmanuelMarlborough.org
or email:
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

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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 December issue by Tuesday 11th November please.

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