



# MARLOW AND DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024  
JANUARY 2025



Donated to the community by Marlow & District u3a

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

As you have probably noticed, a plaque is now in place, next to the defibrillator outside Liston Hall, recording that it was donated to the community by our u3a (see photo above). Hopefully it will rarely - if ever - be needed but, just in case, a training session was held to give guidance in its use to those group convenors who most frequently run activities at Liston Hall.

The Discovery training programme was successfully launched by Rod Greygoose and Robin St John Smith to enhance our members' knowledge and skills in using their smartphones and tablets. The six-session programme was heavily over-subscribed, leading to the need for a waiting list to be created. We are now at the half way point; the programme will be completed in early December.

Last month I laid out the case for more volunteers to help with various tasks to ensure we continue to operate effectively. We were not overwhelmed by people coming forward!! Please come and talk to any member of the committee. Your contributions of time, whether large or small, can make all the difference.

Under the guidance of Pauline Pearson, our website is being upgraded to make it more appealing and easier to navigate. We expect it to launch by the end of November.







u3a was represented at the Remembrance service at The Causeway, and a wreath laid on behalf of our organisation.

Although the weather is currently mild, the festive season is fast approaching. On behalf of your committee, I want to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas together with a healthy and peaceful New Year.

**Roger Shipton**

## YOUR COMMITTEE

<b>Roger Shipton</b> Chairman <a href="mailto:chairman@marlowu3a.co.uk">chairman@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	478968	
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<b>David Part</b> Vice Chairman <a href="mailto:chairman@marlowu3a.co.uk">chairman@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	711626		<b>Niki Ralfs</b> Joint Groups Convenor <a href="mailto:groups@marlowu3a.co.uk">groups@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	473377	
<b>Pauline Pearson</b> Secretary and Safeguarding Officer <a href="mailto:secretary@marlowu3a.co.uk">secretary@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	483717		<b>Barbara Lawrence</b> Membership Secretary <a href="mailto:membership@marlowu3a.co.uk">membership@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	486734	
<b>Chris Eyles</b> Treasurer <a href="mailto:finance@marlowu3a.co.uk">finance@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	487295		<b>Helen Glover</b> Joint Groups Convenor <a href="mailto:groups@marlowu3a.co.uk">groups@marlowu3a.co.uk</a>	484074	

## MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Lorraine Stephen, Jo Murray, Barbara Whitehead, Margaret Brewer, Julia Read, Chris Munro, Sheila Blair, Christopher Sheldon, Mary Summerel, Jane Haynes, Siobhan Mckenna, Nina Holding, Kathleen West, Liz Phillips, Sarah Feilder, Paul Burden, Maggie Jones and Janette Honey

For any queries regarding membership please contact the membership secretary either by

email: [membership@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:membership@marlowu3a.co.uk) or phone **486734**

**Barbara Lawrence**



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Liston Hall 2.30 on the 4th Thursday of the month

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November**

**Peter Ellis**

**Experienced Mountaineer**

Peter Ellis is an extremely experienced mountaineer. He is one of very few people who has climbed the highest mountain on each of the 7 continents. He will be talking about his expeditions and experiences when climbing Mount Everest, and Kilimanjaro etc. His travels have also taken him to the Antarctica to climb Vinsom Massif.

### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm

**Sandygate Infant School children will be entertaining us with some Christmas Songs**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

**Dave Allen**

**Merry Christmas, Mr Dickens!**



David Allen's talk tells the story of Dicken's amazing life, including how the novella, 'A Christmas Carol', written at lightening speed, inspired aspects of the Victorian Christmas that have continued to this day. David will be reading snippets from the great man's work.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January**

**Tom Chambers**

**Actor and Dancer**

Tom is a very well-known actor and dancer who lives locally. He has appeared in stage shows, such as **Top Hat, Dial M for Murder, Murder in the Dark.**

His numerous TV appearances include **Strictly Come Dancing, Waterloo Road, Holby City, Father Brown, Midsomer Murders** and many more.



## THANK YOU U3A! THE BEST CURE FOR RETIREMENT BLUES!

I joined u3a over the summer following retirement back to Marlow after some years working away. Everyone said 'join things', so I did join several other local organisations and activities.

Now, in u3a, I've fulfilled a long-held ambition to join a u3a play reading group. It was brilliant: by far the best thing I've done since retirement.

We had a coffee morning recently when I met some of the group, and since then we've read a play which I enjoyed so much. So far, I've also joined 3 other u3a activities plus the monthly meeting, and look forward to the music meetings and the 'talk' and 'chat' activities, outings, etc.

At our recent play reading, we had more characters than people to read them. We could do with some new members to read some of the parts with us. It's great fun, a lovely group, and good to keep the brain ticking over too. One of our convenors is Moira [moira.pete@btinternet.com](mailto:moira.pete@btinternet.com), if you'd like to give it a try!

**Sue Irwin**

# GROUP NEWS

[groups@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@marlowu3a.co.uk)

## SPANISH

Two new Spanish groups have started:

### Beginners

Suze Bateman is the convenor, contact her for more information [batemansuze@gmail.com](mailto:batemansuze@gmail.com)

### Improvers

Moira Mason is the convenor and Pat Fricker is working with her. Contact Moira [moira.pete@btinternet.com](mailto:moira.pete@btinternet.com), for more information.

## HAND AND FOOT

Hand and Foot is a card game which is a clever mix of Rummy and Canasta, it is increasing in popularity. Brigitte Recklin has started a 3<sup>rd</sup> group. If you are interested, email Brigitte [prehlin@aol.com](mailto:prehlin@aol.com) for more information.

## CHESS

10 members are interested in joining a Chess group, a mixture of beginners and players with some experience. No grand masters have come forward!

We will arrange a meeting to establish the best way forward. If you are interested in joining us, email [groups@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@marlowu3a.co.uk) to go on the circulation list.

If you are having problems joining a group, please email [groups@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@marlowu3a.co.uk) and either Helen Glover or Niki Ralfs (the group co-ordinators) will get back to you.

**LET'S TALK** continues to meet in The Marlow Donkey every Monday at 11.00am for anyone to come along and meet a committee member and other members.



## MONTHLY MEETINGS IN LISTON HALL

### September

#### PETER COX – Growing up in London

Our great thanks go out to Peter Cox, for travelling over from East Finchley, in appalling weather, to deliver his research into living conditions during these 60 years.

Peter interviewed over 100 members of the Greater London u3as, born between 1919 and 1939 about their experiences growing up before, during and after the war, from birth to 21 - from their first recollections through school, bombing, evacuation and return, teenage years and, for some, early marriage and baby rearing, under rationing.

On a dreary, waterlogged car park kind of afternoon when a low attendance at the Liston Hall could be expected, those who were able to make it were treated to a nostalgic journey, through their childhood, with Peter's talk on this period of London's not-so-glamorous social History.

The 1930s were described, in precise detail, from the mouths of those ordinary people who managed to survive the pre-Second World War era of hardship, suffering and ill-health that was an outcome of the world's financial crisis.

There were many in the audience who could relate to this time of deprivation for ordinary people and the 'make do and mend' lifestyle that is hard to identify in our current 'throwaway' society.

A fascinating array of slides, taken during these years, illustrated the talk, full of additional reminders of how the nation lived. Our members contributed readily to the lively discussion that followed, as they related to lots of the experiences and memories of everyday objects from long-ago. They left on a tidal wave of nostalgia from this thought-provoking trip through time.

**Dave Part**



### October

#### JEFF EVANS – Childrens TV



As a late replacement for our scheduled speaker, Jeff Evans, from Newbury, did a magnificent job of entertaining those who came to the October monthly talk. His subject 'The Golden Age of British Children's Television' covered an era very familiar to our audience at the Liston Hall. We were treated to a nostalgia trip 'par excellence', by our skilful guest, who supplied some excellent slides and memorable moments from those early pioneers of our childhood.

Jeff's deep research into the facts and events, which were a major part of our upbringing, supplied us with the back

story on those popular programmes and 'behind-the-scenes' anecdotes which added great value to our afternoon.

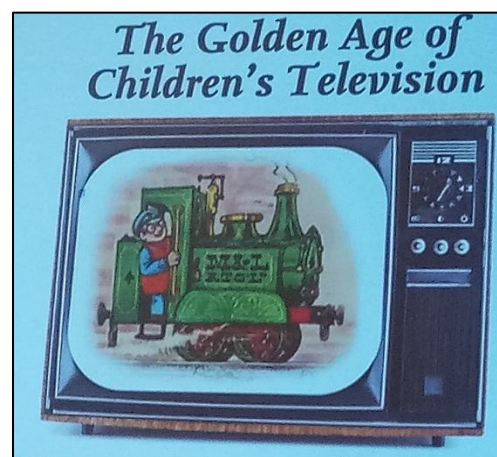
After only two years, 'Watch with Mother' followed on from 'Listen with Mother' and the stage was set for the TV series to become the major source of fascination for young viewers.

Our oldest memories were stretched way back to those days of Andy Pandy; Muffin the Mule, The Flower Pot Men and many others, as we looked forward to our daily favourites.

Shows such as Crackerjack were early pioneers, as children's variety shows, and enjoyed a long run. Who can have forgotten 'Double or Drop'? As such programmes for wider audiences developed, there grew alongside veritable classics, with strong

central characters, such as Ivor the Engine, The Magic Roundabout & Thunderbirds, particularly revelling in technological features, which seemed exceptionally novel at the time.

Jeff kept up the pace of fascinating facts and interesting asides to bring together a real 'feelgood factor' finish to our glimpse through the lens of our early childhood media experiences and a lot to chat about over the tea and biscuits.



**Dave Part**

## COFFEE AND CHAT

We meet on Friday mornings, the meetings are now back at Da Luca in Marlow Bottom at 10.30 until 11.45.

Dot Jaques 07767 703552



## FAMILY HISTORY

The family history group meets at 10.00 on the first Thursday of month at Liston Hall. We are an open group, why not come along and join us?

**Family History** – *let us help you find those hidden stories*

**Upcoming meetings:**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December**      **Christmas social** meeting with group members invited to talk about their biggest achievement in their family history research during 2024 and also, any New Year's resolutions they might have with respect to family history

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January**      **No Meeting**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February**      **Rags to Riches**      Marguerite Fletcher (Chalfont St Peter u3a)

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March**      **Wills and Probate**      Karen (Marlow u3a)

**Adrian Spearman** [adrian.g.spearman@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.g.spearman@gmail.com)



## FRENCH IMPROVERS GROUP

Our group continues to thrive. We meet once a week and work hard to improve our knowledge of the language as well as the culture and country.

The agenda includes items such as preparation for each class through some written work to act as a discussion point, reading various French books and articles, listening to podcasts whilst reading and translating transcripts.

Whilst striving for improvement, most importantly we have fun as we support each other. Of course, as the Christmas season approaches, we will enjoy a French meal together.

As we meet in each other's houses with 6 members in the group we are currently full. If other Marlow members wish to set up a similar group we would be pleased to provide more details of our sources and approach.

**Valerie Griffith**



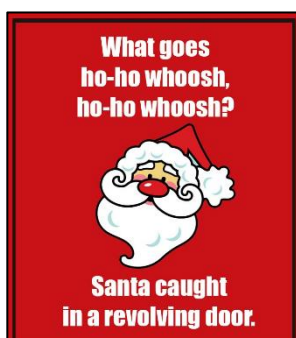
## DISCUSSION GROUP – HARD TALK WITH WINE

We're changing our name – It is now "HARD TALK WITH WINE"!

Meeting first Monday in the month at 7.30pm at various homes in central Marlow.

Very successful year with some riveting chats on subjects ranging from our rotten politics, the NHS, future of Marlow, what is love.

**Evan Parker**



## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORT (ETT)

The ETT group holds its regular Monthly Meetings on the first Tuesday of Every Month at Christ Church (URC), 18 Oxford Road, Marlow, SL7 2NL commencing at 2.00pm (Doors open from around 1.40pm and there is no admittance after 2.00pm).

The ETT still offers a Pay-As-You-Go arrangement (at £3.00) for those who wish to attend on a Month-By-Month basis. Please remember that all payments are now cashless and must be made by Debit or Credit Card. New Members are welcome to come along.

### ETT Monthly Meetings

The meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October by ETT Member Dr. John Baylis covered The Brief History of Wind Turbines covering a glance back at the old-fashioned windmill, explaining the fundamental facts and figures of wind power with a little science and engineering before going on to give an overview on wind turbines since their origin at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The talk continued to talking the wind turbines of today including the huge machines now being deployed and a look at wind turbines as a main source of renewable energy. This was both an interesting and informative talk that was much appreciated by the ETT members.

The meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November was presented by Richard Jones who is a signalman at, and a member of, the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway. His presentation on "How and Why My Railway Journey Is Safe" looked at a series of notable railway disasters including those at Amagh (1889), Quitinshill (1915), Abergele (1868), Harrow & Wealdstone (1952), Ladbroke Grove (1999), plus a few others. When explaining the incidents in detail, the talk covered the root causes and the steps taken to prevent such accidents from happening again including the introduction of new Regulations and Codes of Practice to make rail travel safe.

### Programme:

<b>Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	<b>Marlow Bridge Hydro Scheme</b> Rob Olney (Guest Speaker)
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Britain's Early Trading Companies</b> Alan Fitzgerald (Marlow u3a)
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>History of London's Airports</b> Paul LeBlond (South Bucks u3a)
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Water Quality – Use and Abuse</b> Jane Sellwood (Reading u3a)

### ETT Christmas Social

At the end of the December meeting, the ETT will hold its traditional Christmas Social in the Cornerstone Room with a range of festive treats.

### ETT Visits

Our Visits Co-ordinator, Mike Hyde, is currently putting together options for ETT Visits in 2025. If there are any particular ETT-related venues, museums, places of interest, etc. that you think would be of appeal to members, then please can you share your ideas with Mike.

### ETT Member Well-Being

The ETT is keen to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of its members and requests that potential attendees do not come along to the Monthly Meetings if they have, or show signs of having, any illness.

**Nigel Cornish**



## LUNCH GROUP

<b>December</b>	<b>No lunch in December</b>		
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>The Britannia, Marlow</b> Ring Carole on 483903 to book	12.15	£3 for tip
			<b>Carole Thorpe</b>

## MOTO GROUP

This group is for members on their own who wish to meet others in a similar position. We meet for coffee and a chat at The Old Brewery Public House in the middle of Marlow High Street on the third Tuesday of every month at 10-30

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

If you would like to join us but do not wish to come alone, please call **Carole** on **483903**

**Carole Thorpe**



## MUSIC APPRECIATION (MAG)

Our meetings are held on the third Thursday every month at Christ Church (URC), Oxford Road, Marlow, SL7 2NL starting at 10.15am. The group is open to all members of Marlow u3a. The attendance fee is £3.00.

### September

Hailey Wong visited us for the second time. She is now 18 and studying at the Royal College of Music where she has been awarded a scholarship. Hailey played sonatas by Ravel and Grieg on a 18<sup>th</sup> century cello on loan from the Benslow Music Trust. We noticed how her confidence has increased in the last year. In the afternoon she was off with some fellow musicians to play for the residents of a care home in Wycombe.



This was followed by John's the third and final presentation about Gershwin. We heard about his visits to Hollywood, a boozy trip to Cuba, something about his personality (with contributions from his girlfriends!) and his untimely death at the age of 37!

### October

A double bill! Violinist Kwanita Kwan-Lau and pianist Guangmei Chen. Kwanita visited us a few years ago but it was Guangmei Chen's first time.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Kwan Lam performs regularly in the UK, Europe and Hong Kong. She is a winner of many awards and international competitions.

Guangmei Chen has been praised for her 'admirable passion and sensitivity', 'profound interpretation' and 'wonderful finger work'. She too has performed extensively with critical acclaim, as a soloist and chamber musician.

Their programme was sonatas by Mozart and Brahms and a very beautiful Nocturne by Lili Boulanger.

Following a break John talked about Elgar's first Symphony. It was finally unveiled in the year Queen Victoria died (1901). He said it represented "a massive hope in the future" as the Edwardian era was beginning. It was an overwhelming success, receiving over 100 performances in its first year.

[mag@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:mag@marlowu3a.co.uk) [john@johnlenehan.co.uk](mailto:john@johnlenehan.co.uk)



## RUMMIKUB D

Now that The George and Dragon has closed this group is now meeting in the library in Institute Road. We continue to meet on the **first Wednesday of each month at 2:30pm** but now we have to bring our own drinks. Everyone is welcome – members who can already play and those who wish to learn.

### Meeting dates:

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025**      **No Meeting**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

**Niki Ralfs 473377**

## SPANISH IMPROVERS GROUP

This group meets at 10am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month.

A mixture of reading, listening and conversation is used to improve members' previous knowledge of the language.

Moira Mason [moira.pete@btinternet.com](mailto:moira.pete@btinternet.com)



## WALKING GROUPS SCHEDULE

Jane Statham 01494 881634 [jes@withurst.co.uk](mailto:jes@withurst.co.uk)

Walking in the autumn is so beautiful: spotting fungi and watching the trees change colour over the last few weeks has been glorious.

The walking group have bought yet another gate making another difficult stile easier for all walkers. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> gate that the group have purchased. As always, we had a small celebration by the new gate. Look out for the plaques on gates when you are out walking - you might spot one donated by Marlow u3a Walking group.

If you would like to join the walking group, please e-mail Jane Statham [jes@withurst.co.uk](mailto:jes@withurst.co.uk)

Details of walks will be e-mailed to members of the walking group about 10 days in advance and only members can join the specific walk by contacting the walk leader by email. Please arrive 10 minutes before the start of the walk. The numbers of walkers are restricted for any one walk. No dogs please.

### Wednesday Walks – Circular walks of around 5 miles

11<sup>th</sup> December Mike Basnett  
18<sup>th</sup> December Jane

#### 2025

8<sup>th</sup> January David and Lorraine  
15<sup>th</sup> January Olivia and Clive  
22<sup>nd</sup> January John and Sue  
29<sup>th</sup> January Jeff Short

5<sup>th</sup> February Win and Chris  
12<sup>th</sup> February Tim and Jenny  
19<sup>th</sup> February Isobel  
26<sup>th</sup> February Sandie and Stuart

### Long Loopers (Circular) and Long Leggers (from point to point) – Walks of between 8 and 10 miles

#### LONG LOOPERS

5<sup>th</sup> January Jeff Short  
5<sup>th</sup> February Graham and Mary

#### LONG LEGGERS 21<sup>st</sup> of each month



## STROLLERS

Jill Kemp 416998, Carole and John Battersby 474366

There are no walks scheduled for December, January or February

We will start up again in March when the first one will be on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March. Look out for the walk details in the next February/March Newsletter.

Our last walk of this season will be Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November from Winter Hill car park at 11am. Details in the last newsletter (Meet at the Winter Hill car parking area. Proceed along Quarry Wood Road, ascend Winter Hill and shortly after the sharp bend to the left, bear left to the car parking area) Ring Carole and John on 474366

## WALKERS WELSH WANDERINGS

Mid-September saw around 20+ of the Walking Group set off for a week of walking in mid Wales.

We were based in Llandridnod Wells which had a number of good and scenic walks directly from the hotel. Each day there were two walks on offer - a longer one of around 7-8 miles with some more strenuous hills and a shorter one of 4-5 miles with gentler hills. Our leaders were from the company Secret Hills who had organised our trip; Simon and Nina, who have been with us for a number of years now and know us well, and Graeme who was new to us but soon sussed us out! The scenery was lovely with rolling hills and attractive valleys - and lots of sheep!!

After last year's Derbyshire Deluge, the weather was ideal for walking - dry, not too hot and not too muddy.

Our final day's walking took us by coach to Rhayardar from where we walked up the Elan Valley. After lunch we climbed to the top of the first of the dams built to supply Birmingham with water and then further up the valley to the site of the dam first used to test the Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb in WWII. This was a supposedly flat walk which turned out to be stoney and a steady climb - described by Simon as a "sloping flat"!

All our walks were very enjoyable with lots to look at and some history too which our leaders were able to pass on to us - and did I mention the sheep!

We found a wonderful ice cream parlour by the lake in the town which was a favourite final stop after our walks. The hotel was comfortable and also had a very pleasant pool and spa which many of us used to ease aching legs at the end of the day.

After dinner we had lighthearted quizzes which always showed up the gaps in our knowledge and one evening Simon taught us a Russian dance with hysterical results - there's a video but it's on very limited release!!

All round a very successful holiday and our thanks to Sandie for organising such an unruly crowd so efficiently!

(Photos of this wonderful time are at the end of this newsletter. Ed)

Isobel Hopewell



## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

**THANKS!** Many thanks to all the people who have provided input to this Marlow Newsletter – without you our members would be looking at just a list of events or even just blank sheets. Your Committee and Editor work hard to make the newsletter both informative and interesting, but we can't do it alone. **We need your help!**

We will be even more grateful for contributions that come unprompted – i.e. ones that arrive without the originator being cajoled – or even bullied a little – into writing a few words for the newsletter.

**HOW DO I PROVIDE MY CONTRIBUTION?** In any way you like! Email it; scribble it down on a sheet of paper – whatever comes easiest to you. Ideally, Email to [newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk)

**FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER** The deadline for your contributions will be

**30<sup>th</sup> December 2024** Please send your articles and photos to [newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk) by then.

Thank you.

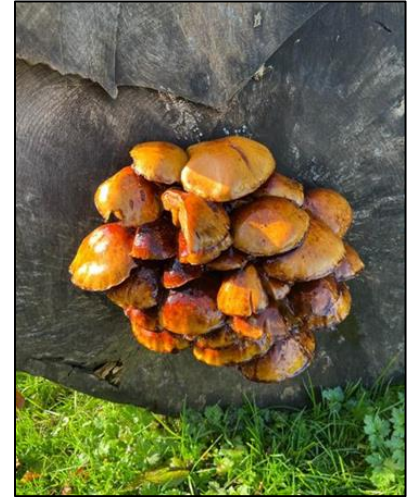


# PHOTOS FROM THE WALKERS WELSH WANDERINGS



## PHOTOS TO ENJOY

### Walkers



### Strollers

