

# The Marlow Society



**Autumn 2025**

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Cover - By Platt's Garage, photo Barrie Lea

## Co-Chairs' Report

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Marlow Society Newsletter. It's been a busy year so far with plenty of issues to deal with - and even a little progress on some too! We welcome the new set of Marlow Town Councillors and look forward to their plans for us all.

In the town centre, the CCTV cameras have been upgraded to colour and high definition, which will be a great improvement. High Street pavements are due for a refurb but this work has now been put back in the calendar to 2026-27. Applications for residential developments in the centre of town are forging ahead, which will come head-to-head with those establishments that currently enjoy a late licence. The Society continues to have discussions about the capacity of central town car parks so there may be more to say about this headache in our next *Newsletter*.



It's all go down on the Causeway: one door closes - Burgers - and another opens - the excellent refitting of the George and Dragon, and further down the Bridge works have commenced. More on that elsewhere in this issue.



The Film Studios? I hope that it's the last time we mention this as the project has caused so much stress and worry for so many local people. The Inspector has made her decision and this has been sent to Whitehall, but is sealed for now. The government decision will be in early October. In the light of recent announcements such as *Holyport* - a government "no" due to it being green belt land and there being no demand in the industry for more Film Studios; *Pinewood* - a data centre instead of more studio space; and *Ashford* - a plan change to residential, here the correct judgement must surely be made!

In this issue we focus on the important work going on at Marlow Bridge. We also have an article about our jewel - Higginson Park - and are looking forward to the centenary of the Town's purchase of the Park in 2026. We anticipate celebrating the centenary with Buckinghamshire Council and all of Marlow. The purchase of Higginson Park was an early example of what is now known as "crowd funding" of course - as was Temple Bridge (enough said!) and the Millenium Maze.

It's been good to see many of you when we have been out and about with our gazebo this year - we are at the Saturday market a few times in the year and were recently at the Regatta fun day. We will again be at Carnival in September, so do pop by and say hello. Reaching out further, do follow us on the Society Instagram account - [themarlowsociety](https://www.instagram.com/themarlowsociety). That's where we put

our latest news, including talks. In addition, these updates also feature on the blog section in our lovely website (*use the QR on the back cover - Ed*).

The committee looks forward to meeting as many Members as possible at the Society's Summer Party at Sir William Borlase cloisters on August 31st. You should already have received an e-mail detailing this ticket only event.

Elsewhere in this edition, my Co-Chair, Richard, sets out his exciting launch of a brand-new Town Walk. It will have a dozen stops, each complete with QR info, all located on a colourful map available from the Library and Marlow Museum.

It just remains for me to wish you a peaceful Summer and to thank you again for your valuable support.

*Andrew Wood*

## **Higginson Park**

More news in the next *Newsletter* about next year's centenary celebrations of the Town purchasing the land and saving it from development, securing what is surely a jewel in the heart of Marlow. The Society is working closely with key stakeholders to make it a special year.

*Andrew Wood*

## **Marlow News**

### **Council Changes**

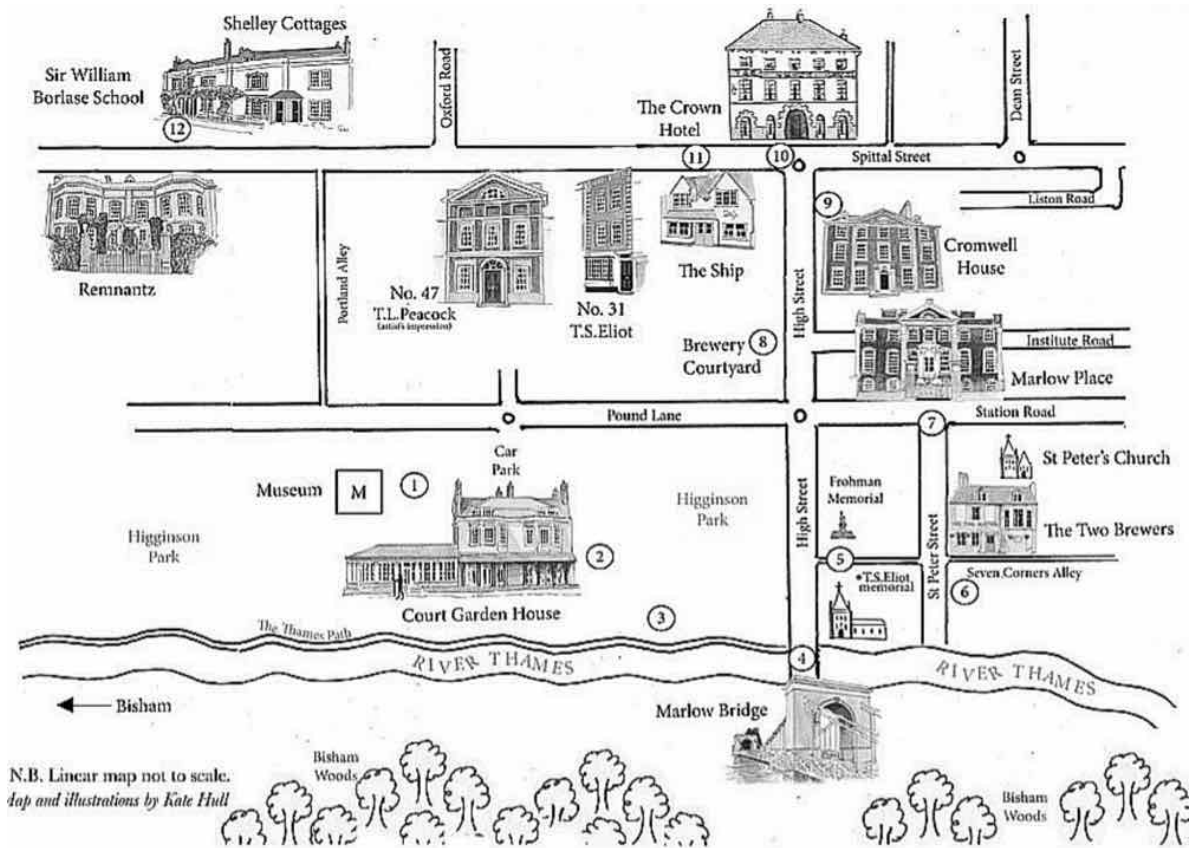
As you are aware the council elections were held in May. Local councillors are invited to attend the Society executive's monthly meetings to brief the team and to take questions and hear representations.

Marlow Town Council's only Councillor from the previous administration is Jocelyn Towns. The new councillors, mainly representing Residents4Marlow, are currently on a steep learning curve. They have appointed Emma Hawkins as the Society's main contact with Gary Nuttall deputising. Emma has already attended one of our Executive meetings. We look forward to working with Emma and Gary.

Marlow's representatives on Buckinghamshire Council are Alex Collingwood, Anna Crabtree and Carol Heap. Carol has been appointed to be our main contact. Bisham Parish will still be represented by Jim Cooke and Little Marlow by Viv Morton.

## Town Walk

In July The Marlow Society will be launching the Town Trail. This is a self-guided walk with 12 points of interest - see the map below.



Each point will be clearly signposted and a QR code will be displayed at each location so locals and visitors can get immediate access to verbal and written information about the feature.

In addition, paper maps will be available in the Museum, the Library and hopefully at commercial venues to maximise availability.

The Society's Local History Group will continue to run a programme of led walks each looking at a different aspect of Marlow. See Calendar (p19) for details.

Richard Parker

## Please leave a legacy



The Marlow Society is a registered charity (no. 262803) dedicated to the preservation and development of Marlow and the surrounding villages and countryside. Since 1960 we have made a real difference by preserving what needs to be maintained and supporting appropriate development.

Your membership of the Society is much appreciated. Please consider including The Marlow Society in an amended or new will.

## The Very Latest on our iconic Marlow Bridge

A bridge over the Thames in our town has existed for over 600 years. The metal suspension bridge we currently enjoy was completed in 1832 and with the support of The Marlow Society has stood the test of time.



Originally an experimental design by Tierney Clarke, the bridge was completed for an age before motorised transport. It's impossible to imagine our town without this beautiful Grade 1 structure.

It remains to this day because of the efforts and commitment, back in 1960, of Professor John Griffith and other Marlow luminaries, such as Alan Coster, who led the Marlow Bridge Preservation Society. This, in turn, became The Marlow Society.

Restorations have taken place in the past - notably in the 1960's when the roadway was re-laid, among other major works. The Society holds an historical archive of those works.

We have been aware for some time that the structure needs to be “re-tuned”. These essential works will keep the bridge safe for a number of years to come.



We are privileged to be regarded as stakeholders by Buckinghamshire Council. To this end we were given an insightful briefing of the schedule of works by a representative.

First things first - the most important .....

Works to replace the bearings have been dependent on the granting of EA environmental permits to enable projects that are river based.

Agreement was made with the Marlow Canoe Club for the vacating of their premises under the Marlow side of the bridge. Demolition went well and was finished ahead of the planned schedule . These works were necessary in order to allow the bearings to be replaced. Underside painting will also now be possible in this area.

Ground investigations (Summer 2025) where the Club was - and under the bridge at the Berkshire side will be undertaken. This will allow the temporary works design for the jacking of the bridge to be finalised. The bridge will be lifted from its existing bearings to allow them to be replaced. This is job number one. This should be quite a sight, by the way!

We understand that any bridge closures will be kept to a minimum. It's a question we are repeatedly asked, and the contractor is sensitive to the needs of local people. There will be advance notice of any closures. Key dates for when the bridge may be closed will be displayed on boards, the project website and Council media channels.

Walkways and road resurface are future works, following the bearings. Though local repair is being done now for more urgent walkway concerns as planks are getting warped in the recent heat.

Work is taking place to understand future weight restrictions and the best way this can be managed.



Info boards will be up soon with QR codes to a dedicated BC webpages:

Left - Major Maintenance Works: Marlow Bridge

Right - Marlow Bridge Latest Updates

*Andrew Wood*

## Platts 100th Anniversary

Platts of Marlow, the jewel on the corner of Oxford Road and West Street, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. R J E Platt Ltd opened its doors in 1925 on the site of the Black Lion pub, initially selling early radios such as Bush and Pye, and also servicing bulky 2V and 4V batteries which local residents brought in to recharge.



Auto sales and services were developed by the founder, Reg Platt, in the 1920s and 1930s when Platts became an Austin/Morris main dealer. The first petrol pumps were on the West Street pavement and swung out to fill up the parked car. The company faced a fair bit of competition in our town. Many members will remember Curralls in

the High Street and Inwards which replaced it on the same site, and also Wellicomes further up next to Liston Mall. Then there was Comptons and later T&G Autos on the south side of West Street.

Jim Platt joined the company after the war and has steered the company through thick and thin in the decades since. He was a pupil at Borlase School and was a keen and talented rower, participating in many regattas and Head of the River races. He also rowed competitively whilst a student at Imperial College. Platts have been keen supporters of Borlase rowing and the British rowing teams at the 2012 Olympics. Many certificates and photos of these events adorn the upstairs office where Jim is still to be found on most working days.

Jim is obviously a tough cookie because he survived the worst that Adolf Hitler could throw at him when, in 1944, a V1 rocket demolished the house where he was visiting his grandmother. He suffered serious injury and lost a few months of his school summer holidays while he was recuperating in our Cottage Hospital.



Jim has always been very keen on classic cars and owns several including a Bullnose Morris (1913-1926), a Ford Model A (1903-1904), and a Ford Model T (1908-1927), usually to be seen in the West Street showroom, and driven with gusto in past years on the London to Brighton rallies.

Forty years ago, Platts became a Ford main dealer, but sadly that arrangement was terminated earlier this year. The good news is that the garage has now become a main dealer for Suzuki, and the future of the company under Jim's son, Tim, looks assured for the next 100 years.



The Marlow Society congratulates Platts on the occasion of this anniversary and wishes the business all the very best for the future.

*Geoff Wood*

## News from Marlow Museum

### Marlow Museum Accredited

We're proud to announce that Marlow Museum is now an Accredited Museum, recognised by Arts Council England for meeting national standards in governance, collections care, and public engagement.

This is a major milestone for our small museum, achieved through the dedication of many over the past four years. Special thanks go to Della Fitzgerald, who led the effort with great energy and commitment.



### Leadership News

After many years of dedicated service, Mike Hyde has stepped down as Chairman. Mike was central to the museum's development, and we thank him sincerely.

At our recent AGM, Alex Collingwood was unanimously elected as the new Chairman. We look forward to his leadership as we move into our next chapter.

### Current Exhibition: Lace in Marlow

Our exhibition *Lace: From Sir William Borlase to Pamela Nottingham* celebrates 400 years of lace-making in Marlow. It showcases historic lace, tools, and stories that trace this intricate craft through generations. The exhibition finishes on September 7th and there's still time to see lace-making demonstrations at the museum—check the website for full details.

### Lace - A Musical Celebration

A packed audience at All Saints Church enjoyed *Lace - A Musical Celebration*, a fundraising concert in support of the Museum. Please see photo opposite.

Folk artists Jackie Oates and John Spiers captivated listeners with traditional music, storytelling, and spoken word. They were joined by Ann Hilton of Waltham Abbey Folk Club, and Mary Simmons from Marlow Writers Society and Heather Adams and Mike Bryan from The Marlow Society. The evening beautifully celebrated the legacy of lace-making in our region.



## Join Us - Volunteers and Trustees Wanted

As the museum continues to grow, we are looking for new volunteers and trustees. Whether you have time to spare or skills to share—in fundraising, admin, visitor engagement, or more—we'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch via our website [www.marlowmuseum.org](http://www.marlowmuseum.org) or speak to a team member during your next visit.

*Heather Adams*

## Supporters

*The Marlow Society is very grateful for the generous support given by local organisations*

**Cliveden Manor Care Home**  
**Heighway Associates Ltd - [haa-ltd.co.uk](http://haa-ltd.co.uk)**  
**LGP Solicitors - [lgpsolicitors.co.uk](http://lgpsolicitors.co.uk)**  
**Mark Taylor Design - [marktaylor.com](http://marktaylor.com)**  
**MKB Designs - [mkbdesigns.co.uk](http://mkbdesigns.co.uk)**  
**Platts of Marlow - [platts.co.uk](http://platts.co.uk)**  
**Seymour Taylor Accountants - [stca.co.uk](http://stca.co.uk)**  
**Temple Island Management**

## A Walk Through Time

Just imagine you are standing in Hambleden's square. There's the Church with its cemetery embraced in the warm sunshine. Opposite, brick and flint cottages have colourful gardens spilling with blooms. The village shop provides essentials and refreshments. It's a scene that's remained almost unchanged through the centuries, offering a rare glimpse into the past. On a sunny day in June, about thirty members of Marlow Society were treated to a walk back in time by local historian, Chris Whitehead, organised by the Local History Group.

Back in 1944, the WH Smith family, famous for their shops selling newspapers and books, owned the estate. They placed a restrictive covenant on the land to protect the historic architecture and rural integrity of the Hambleden Valley. Hambleden now feels like a hidden gem, a delightful slice of history waiting to be discovered.



Stories, sites, and famous inhabitants were woven into the narrative as we strolled past several fascinating landmarks as Chris brought Hambleden's history to life. Stories included the outdoor privies, in locally named Melody Lane, where people would sing to ensure no-one disturbed their meditations. The lace school, which provided general education to girls

*'when time was available'*, as early as 1814. Opposite the Church, we peeked through the gates of the Elizabethan Manor House. This historic home sheltered Charles I for a night whilst he fled parliamentary forces during the English Civil War, and was also the birthplace of Lord Cardigan, who led the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade. No visit to the village is complete without stepping into the Church. Hambleden's beautiful 12th century church boasts treasures including Elizabethan monuments and early sixteenth century carved panelling, traditionally believed to be part of Cardinal Wolsey's bedstead.



The perfect end to the day was enjoying the fabulous tea and cake served by Church volunteers. If this article has inspired you to visit Hambleden, go on a Sunday and treat yourself to a delightful afternoon tea in the churchyard (inside the church in inclement weather). You won't regret it.

*Heather Adams*

## **New Members**

*The Society is delighted to welcome Members who have joined recently:*

Duncan Lewin	Jenny Simnett
Anne Hudson	Paul Gilliam
Pamela North	Liz Riches
Jane Wise	Jo & Tony Bingham
Erik & Gaynor von Schmidt	Sally & Ronnie Bolton
Myra & Paul Hurley	Nick & Suzanne Rowcliffe
Sheila Gaunt & David Leggett	James & Karen Kennedy
David Edwards & Julie Metelko	John & Diane Williams
Helena Cook	Nicholas Ricketts
Suzanne & Simon Davies	Alyson Coates & Ethan Hall
Michael & Stella Shields	Helen Strube
Andrew Keeley	Raffaella Back
Liz Peters	Grant & Kate Jenkins
Michael Smith & Dennis Gallagher	John & Reena Bowden
Jocelyn & Rob Rayner	Elizabeth Gardner
Richard Peach & Petra Vaidak	Steve Yard-Young
Catherine Boyle	Kate Tysoe
Alison Ward	Jennifer Burns
Julian & Rebecca Baker	Jeremy & Alison Browning
Steve Thomas	Jonathan & Catriona Slack
Eugene & Ethel Daly	Paul & Niki Mainds
Andy Kinnear	Bernard Guly
Heidi Johnson & Samantha Drake-Brockman	Ruby Osorio & Paula Zamorano-Osorio

## **Editor's notes**

The Winter edition of *Newsletter* will be delivered early in December. Please send copy to the editor by Sunday 9th November.

## Library

Buckinghamshire Council are changing the opening hours for Marlow Library. The changes result in a reduction of the number of hours that it is staffed. The library will be open for more hours, but at times it will be unstaffed. During the times that it is not staffed immediate access will be available by using a library card. Weekly staffed times have been reduced from 34 hours to 25 hours. Marlow Library Hours (from BC website, July 2025):

	(Current hours)	New hours	Unstaffed	Staffed
Monday	closed	10:00-17:00	10:00-17:00	none
Tuesday	10:00-18:00	10:00-18:00	17:00-18:00	10:00-17:00
Wednesday	10:00-17:00	10:00-17:00	10:00-17:00	none
Thursday	10:00-16:00	10:00-17:00	none	10:00-17:00
Friday	10:00-17:00	10:00-17:00	none	10:00-17:00
Saturday	10:00-16:00	10:00-16:00	14:00-16:00	10:00-14:00
Sunday	closed	closed	closed	closed

The Society is concerned that the Library is the only Information Point in the Town and the level of service for visitors and non-library members will be significantly reduced.

## Banking Hub

Marlow Library now hosts a Banking Hub that will remain in the Library until a permanent home is found. It is understood that the Post Office in Institute Road will be involved going forward.

The Hub will be open Monday to Friday from 9am-5pm providing a counter service for day-to-day transactions such as cash withdrawals, deposits, paying of bills, change-giving and topping up gas and electricity:

- Mondays - Lloyds
- Tuesdays - NatWest
- Wednesdays - HSBC (start date tbc)
- Thursdays - Santander
- Fridays - Barclays

The Society congratulates all those involved in making this important facility happen.

*Richard Parker*

## Forthcoming Events at LHG

The schedule of the walks, talks and visits organised by the Local History Group continues over the summer and into the autumn. As our talks run on the fourth Tuesday of the month we do not organise a December talk. All members are welcome to our talks and walks so do bring along friends and neighbours who might be interested.

All events will be announced on our website and reminder emails will be sent to all those on our mailing list - be sure to sign up for the Local History Group talks so you don't miss out.

### Talks & Visits Programme

Mo 11 August	Visit - Members Only	Stonor House and Grounds
Mo 25 August	Walk	Little Marlow Walk and Talk
Tu 26 August	Talk - Liston Hall	<i>Cliveden: The Canadian Red Cross Hospital</i>
Su 14 September	Heritage Open Day: Marlow Place	<i>The Williams Family</i>
Su 14 September	Walk - from Marlow Place	Victorian Marlow Walk
Tu 23 September	Talk - Liston Hall	<i>It Takes the Biscuit! Biscuit Making in Reading</i>
Tu 28 October	Talk - Zoom	<i>Sport in Marlow Through the Years</i>
Tu 25 November	Talk - Zoom	<i>That's Entertainment - The Cinema in Marlow</i>

### Talks

***Cliveden: The Canadian Red Cross Hospital*** by Ray Isted (Volunteer, National Trust Cliveden Talks Service) - Liston Hall, 26 August

When War broke out in 1914, Cliveden was a grand country estate well known for its exclusive parties and famous guests, yet within months it was offering a lifeline to Allied troops injured during the fighting. Four different hospitals were developed at the Cliveden Estate during the course of the twentieth century. The first hospital was the brainchild of Waldorf and Nancy Astor, adapting the Estate's tennis court. Soon a major extension was required, resulting in a fully operational wartime hutted Hospital.

An entirely new hospital was designed and built in 1940.

This talk tells the story of the War time hospitals, its patients, the involvement of the Astors, the local community, how the hospital eventually came under the wing of the National Health Service and what remains today.



The Memorial Garden at Cliveden. The graves are managed by the Commonwealth Graves Commission

***It Takes the Biscuit - Biscuit Making in Reading*** by Nigel Crompton  
Liston Hall - 23 September

Exploring the rise and then decline of the well-known biscuit manufacturers, Huntley & Palmers, including Huntley & Palmers railway, recreation facilities and their involvement with the Great War which saw them producing shells as the very hard 'Army Biscuits'. The company also employed a female Police Officer to prevent theft but also protect the younger lady workers!

***Sport in Marlow Through the Years***  
Zoom - 28 October

To coincide with the latest exhibition at the Marlow Museum, this will be an exploration of the the great sport stories associated with Marlow.

Learn of tales from the first horse races at Marlow, which took place as early as 1717, to the Olympic medal winners of the present day including Naomi Riches, the Paralympian who secured our gold post box.



## ***That's Entertainment - Cinema in Marlow*** by Sue Cheetham

Zoom - 25 November

Marlow has a long history with film. The first cinema popped up in 1903. 120 years later The Everyman opened, again in West Street. And Marlow has also played host to the filming of many impressive films and TV shows, including James Bond and Midsommer Murders right up to the Marlow Murder Club, which is currently being filmed in the town as I write.

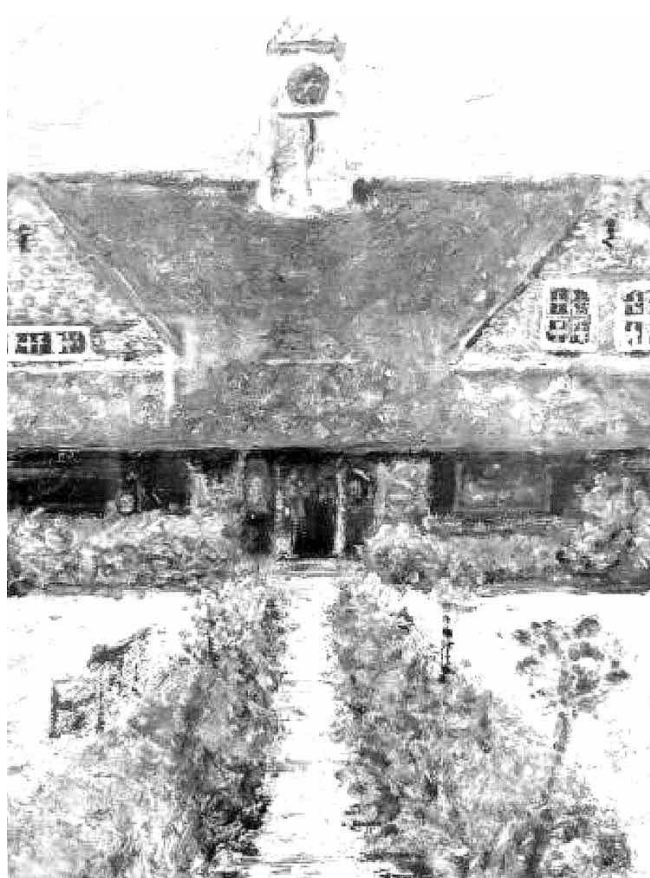
## **Heritage Open Day**

Marlow Place - 14 September, 10am to 4pm, FREE

A rare chance to see inside Marlow's only Grade 1 listed building, a fine Georgian mansion lived in by a titled family and visited by several young royals escaping the restraints of Windsor. Our exhibition on the principal floor covers the period around 1790 when it was owned by the super-rich Williams family of Temple mills, the founder being known as the "Copper King". Later family members were Great Marlow MPs for almost a century.

*Heather Adams*

## **Garden Party**



The Marlow Society is holding the Members' Annual Garden Party on **Sunday 31st August** from 2pm to 4:30pm in the historic and atmospheric Cloisters of Sir William Borlase Grammar School, West Street, Marlow SL7 2BR. Please note there is no regular parking on the School site.

The Marlow Writers Society will provide entertainment. Party tickets are £14.50 to include a sandwich, sweet treat and a soft drink or a glass of wine.

This year's venue can only accommodate limited numbers and advance booking is essential. Please find tickets at:

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-marlow-society](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-marlow-society)

## Calendar

### *AUGUST*

- Mo 25th Walk - Little Marlow + Talk. Return tickets only  
Tu 26th Talk - Cliveden, The Canadian Red Cross Hospital  
Su 31st Summer Party (see below for tickets)

### *SEPTEMBER*

- Sa 13th Carnival - Marlow Society stand  
Su 14th Heritage Open Day - Marlow Place 10-4pm, Free  
Su 14th Walk - Victorian Marlow (from Marlow Place)  
Tu 23rd Talk - Biscuit Making in Reading

### *OCTOBER*

- Tu 28th Talk (Zoom) - Sport in Marlow

### *NOVEMBER*

- Su 9th Newsletter copy deadline  
Th 20th Christmas Lights Switch On (Town Council)  
Tu 25th Talk (Zoom) - Cinema in Marlow

### *DECEMBER*

- Tu 16th Carols on the Causeway (Town Council)

## Regular events

First Wednesday afternoon at Ark Café in Spittal Street - Green Coffee 2-4pm to chat about all things sustainable. [transitionmarlow.org.uk](http://transitionmarlow.org.uk)

Second Monday evening - Marlow Society Executive Committee.

## Event booking

Please see the website: <https://marlowsociety.org.uk/events-talks-walks/> (or scan the QR on the back cover) to obtain tickets for bookable events, including the walks, the Garden Party and all on-line talks (winter-time by Zoom). Liston Hall events are pay-at-the-door. All talks start at 8pm.

The Society has a dedicated notice board, courtesy of the *Amorino* gellateria [try the choco sorbet! -Ed] at the bottom of High Street, where upcoming the Society's upcoming talks and walks are displayed.



[marlowsociety.org.uk/events-talks-walks/](http://marlowsociety.org.uk/events-talks-walks/)

Events / Talks / Walks

## Heritage Open Day

The focus of the exhibition will be on the Williams family, one of the richest families in Britain who owned much of Marlow for well over 100 years and four generations of whom were MP for Marlow.

Thomas Williams initially purchased much of Marlow in the early 1790s, there was a major sale of their properties in the town in 1905, Marlow Place was sold in 1921 and the last of their properties in the town, a century ago, in 1925.

**Sunday 14th September**  
from 10am to 4pm

*Entry free - everyone welcome*

**Marlow Place**  
Station Road, Marlow

Registered charity no. 262803  
[www.marlowsociety.org.uk](http://www.marlowsociety.org.uk)

'SUPPORTING MARLOW'S FUTURE'

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