



# Marlow National Trust Association

*A voluntary association of National Trust members and volunteers*

NEWSLETTER No. 223

October 2025

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Can it really be Autumn already? The Equinox has passed and nights are drawing in. We have planned some interesting outings and talks to lighten the dimming days.

The evening meetings will be, as usual, in Liston Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Doors open at 7.30 for an 8pm start. Refreshments will be available in the interval.

### **Wed 7 Oct            Hungerford and Rose Canal            Penny Clarry**

The morning will be spent in the pretty historic market town of Hungerford. The afternoon will be spent gliding along on the Kennet and Avon Canal for a couple of hours.

### **Wed 15 Oct            London Tube Stations            Mike Grundy**

London's underground system is 160 years old; it was the earliest and now the oldest in the world. Mike will be looking at the various architectural styles of the stations.

### **Wed 19 Nov            Policing and Society            Ray Wilks**

Ray is a recently retired chief constable in High Wycombe; he will be looking at the demands and difficulties of policing in the modern world.

### **Wed 3 Dec            Winchester Christmas Market            John Pearce**

An outing to visit this beautiful cathedral city and enjoy the traditional Christmas Market.

### **Wed 10 Dec            Christmas Social**

Join us for a traditional Christmas Dinner, followed by a Christmas Play performed by the Marlow Players.

### **Thurs Jan 15            New Year Walk and lunch            Julia Stacey**

Blow out those new year cobwebs with a walk exploring the National Trust Maidenhead and Cookham Commons.

The Newsletter of the Marlow National Trust Association is edited by:

Jean Frost  
Alison Pearce  
Web site:

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## **From Our Chairman**

### **Chairmans Report - Autumn 2025**

We had a great day at the Marlow Carnival. Despite the watery forecast the weather was very kind and we were treated to a splendid sunny autumnal day. It was great to chat with the visitors to our stall, many of whom were old friends. Unfortunately, we didn't sign up, a huge number of new members as happened last year but we made ourselves known to the general Marlow public. I would like to thank all those people who came and helped set-up and run our stall – it was much appreciated.

We have had some fabulous talks and excursions since our July Newsletter, and now our sub-committees are busy putting together their programmes for next year 2026 and making good progress. Unfortunately, we are down to 4 members on the Outings committee, and each member is undertaking 2 trips which means 8 visits next year instead of the usual 9/10. Our Speaker's Committee is now down to 2 people instead of the 3 or 4 as before, which obviously puts a greater load on each person, and our Holiday Committee is also looking for an extra person to join them. Some of our members on these committees have been on them for 'ages' and are now looking to take a back seat. Therefore, if we are to continue to thrive, we need some new faces to help out. So please volunteer and either contact me, John Smith (Executive), or Penny Clarry (Outings), or Jean Frost (Speakers), or Angie Magee (Holidays) to enquire about joining one of the committees.

Our programme for the rest of the year is quite varied, from talks on London's tube stations and policing, to a trip on Hungerford Canal, and culminating in a special trip to the Winchester Christmas Market which is exciting from two points of view -Winchester and Christmas Market. These events are all advertised in this Newsletter.

By the time of publication of this Newsletter, we would have returned from our holiday in Bulgaria, for which the itinerary and meal menus look very exciting. One of the great benefits of these holidays is the social companionship that they bring. So hopefully everyone will have enjoyed their time away. I am not sure what the numbers are for our French holiday next April 23rd to 28th April, but I believe there are still shared rooms available. It looks like a very interesting itinerary so hopefully we can get a full coach. The Yorkshire holiday next year will be advertised in the New Year.

We are now organizing our Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 10th December. We are very pleased that our splendid caterers Nick and Clare Wood are providing a Christmas feast for us once again, and that Gloria Kendrick-Hurst from the Marlow Players is putting together a Christmas play for us, to be performed by her group. It should be a jolly evening, and a great start to Christmas. The booking form for the event is included in this newsletter.

Several of us from the committee had the privilege of attending the celebration for the renovation of the Cliveden Long Garden. Robert Miles (General Manager) and Anthony Mason (Head Gardener) welcomed us and gave us a talk on the creation of the new garden, which looked fabulous despite the fresh planting, and drought affected Summer we have had. I think we were all impressed.

***John P. Smith, MNTA Chairman***

## Outing to Ightham Mote – 30 July 2025

Our July outing was to the NT House at Ightham Mote, near Sevenoaks in Kent. We had a pretty full coach, and things did get just a little complicated due to roadworks in Marlow, which forced us to pick up from Chapel Street rather than the usual Liston Road. We arrived at Ightham (as expected) soon after eleven and unsurprisingly a lot of people made for the café, etc.



The weather was lovely, and many of us gathered soon after 12 for the introductory talk about the house, before going into it. As the photo shows, the house (and its outbuildings) include half-timbering, much stone construction, and an impressive complete functional moat. Ightham was first built in the 1340s and is one of the

oldest medieval manor houses in England. Certainly there cannot be at all many in such good condition. The house contained – amongst other things – a wall chart with a lengthy list of English monarchs during its history - going back a long way, obviously. The Great Hall made really quite an impression, and so did the Chapel ceiling.

Information at the house interestingly dwells on some of the frequent visitors / inhabitants of the house. We gained some insight into the artist John Singer Sargent, and into the last owner / resident Charles Henry Robinson. A couple of rooms are very much in the style that he left them when he passed away in 1985 and the house was left to the National Trust.



Fortunately, we made good time on the trip home, along a lot of the M25.

We received many positive comments about this trip. Thanks to the organiser John Pearce and also to Alison Pearce and Ann and Tim Dennis, who checked people in at the Chapel Street and Britannia boarding stops.

***John Pearce***



## **MNTA CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

**Wednesday 10th December 2025**  
7.45pm to 10.00pm at Liston Hall Marlow



**Join us for a traditional Christmas Dinner**  
**Including a Christmas Play performed by the Marlow Players**

Tickets: £32.00 per person to include a 2-course festive dinner and a complimentary glass of wine/soft drink from the bar.

Maximum 60 tickets available on a first come first served basis.

## **Marlow Carnival September 2025**

On a bright Saturday morning, 13th September, Higginson Park was a busy place. Celebrating the annual Marlow Carnival, stands had been erected the length of the Avenue, offering merchandise of various kinds – and also representing the many local Clubs and Associations which exist to brighten our lives.

Among them was the blue gazebo proudly displaying the logo of the Marlow National Trust Association. This was manned throughout the day by a succession of supporters, chief of whom was our dedicated Chairman, John Smith. He and his wife, Tricia had constructed a series of screens on which were photographs and illustrations of the past year's activities – days out to places of interest and holidays to locations at home and overseas. These proved an attraction for many of the passers-by, including young families who were warmly welcomed in.



In the course of the day, some of the visitors to the MNTA exhibition signed up for membership but many more went home with application forms and further information to think about. It was a very pleasant and profitable way to spend a sunny day in the park and we look forward to seeing some new friends at our monthly meetings.

***Jenny Annett***

## Speakers Evening – Wildlife on your Doorstep

What a treat! On Wednesday 16 July, Tom Way came to speak about his life as a wildlife photographer, and he showed us a lot of superb photographs of animals in the UK and in Africa.

A number of properties attach themselves to his work and the first of these is quality. He sets himself incredibly high standards - he said that, in eight months in Africa, he took only 5 photographs, but what he actually meant was that, of the 5000 or so images that he took, only five met his approval.



The next quality is perseverance. It is not always comfortable being a wildlife photographer and he often had to be on watch for a long time in order to capture the image that he wanted - for instance, he spent four days sitting in a cold river to take a perfect picture of a water vole.

Thirdly, he spoke about light, which can make or break a picture. The low angle of light at dawn or dusk can produce a magical effect. We saw several pictures where a beam of sunlight illuminated an animal - including a cheetah at dawn.



Just one more - Tom tried to imbue some of his animals with character or personality. He compared a good but 'ordinary' picture of a puffin with a clown-like one of a puffin in flight. We saw several photographs of male lions and they all looked confident and regal.

Tom said that his ambition was to create a portfolio of 40 or 50 pictures that defined the wildlife of Africa.

This was an excellent evening - lively, entertaining and his talented pictures showed us what could be done by dedicated professional - thank you, Tom.

**Geoff Edwards**

*The Lion and Elephant pictures appear by kind permission of Tom Way*

## Summer Tea Party at Greenlands Hotel – 7 August 2025

A group of MNTA members went to Greenlands Hotel for a very sociable and sumptuous afternoon tea. We wore our posh frocks and smart shirts to honour the occasion. The hotel is set in beautiful grounds leading down to the Thames, next to the Henley Business School.

A full English afternoon tea was served in the very elegant dining hall: we had an assortment of finger sandwiches; fresh scones with clotted cream and strawberry preserve; fancy cakes and copious quantities of tea. (Many of us had to request doggy bags to take home cakes for later).



Ray Isted gave us a talk on Cliveden during the war years; it has been the site for four military hospitals during both the first and second World Wars. Nancy Astor allowed the Canadian Red Cross to install the first hospital in 1915 on the tennis courts. It was then greatly extended. Ray's talk was accompanied by moving slides of the hospitals.



John Smith, our Chairman, also gave us a picture show of our last group holiday in Devon with a musical soundtrack which was an entertaining way of reminding us of what a good time we had.

I think we all had a very enjoyable afternoon and hope we can do it again sometime. Our great thanks go to John Smith and Jenny Annett for organising this event.

***Jean Frost***

## Outing to Rycote Park - 19 August 2025

We had a very interesting morning at Rycote Park and Chapel. First we had tea and biscuits in the lovingly restored Tudor barn while Sarah Taylor gave us a brief history of the site. The estate has had many owners over the centuries. The Taylor family bought the property in the year 2000 and spent five years renovating it. Being so near Oxford the estate has had many royal visitors including Henry VIII, who had one of his honeymoons there; Elizabeth I and Charles I.



We first walked to the Chapel which is owned by English Heritage. Inside there is a Musicians' Gallery in an intricate wooden filigree design and a brand new organ on which Sarah Brown treated us to a tune. There are stars painted on the original ceiling and the pews date back to the seventeenth century. The chapel is reconsecrated once a year at the Benefice Service which can be attended by the public.

We walked around the Tudor house and the gardens which were originally designed by Capability

Brown. We were also shown the biggest compost heap I have ever seen.

There is a huge variety of fruit and vegetables growing in the walled garden; Sarah commented that they are a great luxury and it would probably be cheaper to buy what the family needed from Harrods, which made a few of us smile. The Victorian designed greenhouse is made from painted aluminium and has three different areas for different plants: orchids, tomatoes and citrus trees.

Rycote is open to visitors and I would definitely recommend it. It is open from April to September on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Thank you to Alison Rae for organizing this interesting outing.



Visit the web-site for more details: <https://www.rycotepark.com>

***Emma Hawkins***

## MNTA Holidays 2025 / 2026

We have two exciting holidays arranged for next year. The first is to the Hauts de France area of France. Dates 23rd to 28th April and travel will be by coach and the short ferry crossing. We are staying in Compiègne and visiting various other towns and villages in the area such as Laon, Chantilly and Beauvais. All with great history and architecture - plus French food and wine to enjoy at the hotel and elsewhere. Brochure and Application Form were attached to a previous newsletter. Why not come and join us – you will be with good friends, even if you didn't know them before we left Marlow, you definitely will by the time we return.

Our second holiday is to The Yorkshire Coast and Country – Dates 21st to 25th September. We shall be staying just outside York with visits to Whitby, various National Trust properties and a ride on the North Yorks Moor Railway. Brochure and application Form will be sent with the January newsletter.

If you have any questions or need further information, please do contact me.

*Angie Magee*

## NEW YEAR WALK -THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2026

Can we tempt you to join us. This year the walk has one gentle incline and no stiles, but we are recommending walking poles and stout footwear as the path is uneven at times, and we would like to say no mud...but as with any winter weather in this area...impossible! Please come prepared as it could be muddy in places.

We will be setting off from **The Golden Ball, 2 Golden Ball Lane, Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, SL6 6NW** at **10.30 am** and the walk will start at 10.45 am after we have taken your lunch order. Parking in the Pub Carpark.

A reminder and Final details will come in the January Newsletter.

**Please let us know to book a place on the walk by 10th JANUARY 2026. Email:**

If you can't join us for the walk, please join us for lunch at 12.30 pm. and please **let us know if you require a pre-ordered meal.**

If you have any questions, PLEASE telephone Penny Clarry

## A Celebration of the Long Garden at Cliveden

Gardeners and stone-masons, garden designers and local dignitaries, NT staff, volunteers and members of local NT supporter groups came together on Tuesday, 9th September for



a glorious celebration of the renovation of Cliveden's beautiful Long Garden.

Marlow National Trust Association, which recently donated £2,000 to Cliveden for their current projects, was represented by MNTA Chairman, John Smith, and some of the executive committee. This was their first chance to see the newly-restored and fully-accessible garden, with its central pathway of York stone, which has replaced the outdated astro-turf and is wide enough

for two wheelchairs to pass each other, and the new perennial planting scheme in the four large central beds, based on Norah Lindsay's early 20th C designs for Nancy Astor, now reimagined by The Garden Company.

Cliveden general manager, Robert Miles, welcomed the gathering, including VIP guest David Lindsay, grandson of the original designer, and thanked the hard-working team of gardeners and volunteers, who have transformed and future-proofed the garden for the many thousands of visitors each year. Head Gardener, Anthony Mason, described the planting scheme and the buzz that has been created by the increase in biodiversity, now that the beds are planted with colourful perennials, rather than annual bedding plants. Principal Designer, James Scott, was on hand to answer questions and thanked Cliveden for entrusting The Garden Company with this project.



Sunshine in between the showers picked out the bright colours in the flower-filled borders, with their vibrant palette of yellow, pink, bronze and lime green. The yew edging and topiary was neatly clipped; the statues spruced up. Everything looked immaculate. Refreshments and an array of delicious cakes rounded off a delightful afternoon. Do go and see what has been achieved in the Long Garden and enjoy the autumn colours.

***Kristian Perry***

## Outing to Winchester Christmas Markets Wednesday 3 December 2025

Our last outing of the year will be to the Christmas markets at Winchester. The Cathedral claims that its market is “one of the best Christmas markets in Europe” and boasts of “handpicked high quality exhibitors”. It is certainly often spoken of as one of England’s nicest. As well as the market which takes over much of the Cathedral’s close, Winchester’s normal High Street market will be in full swing, with a Christmassy flavour of course.

The Winchester Cathedral website ([www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/christmas](http://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/christmas)) gives an overview of the traders and what they will be offering. When we made a reconnaissance visit in December 2024, there were some 120 retail stalls plus another 15 or so selling take-away food. The Cathedral also had its large indoor café in operation, and toilets too. The High Street market had over 40 stalls, none seeming downmarket. These markets are all outdoors, as you would expect, but there are many indoor cafes and restaurants in central Winchester, of course.

The coach will drop us off – and later on, pick us up again - in “The Broadway” which is just 100 metres from the NT property Winchester City Mill, with its resident Otters. This is well worth popping in to, and it has a café!

There is a level walk of a little under half a mile through the largely-pedestrianised heart of the city from the drop-off point to the Cathedral’s market in the close. This walk goes via the High Street market area, and past loads of cafes and restaurants.

In addition to the Christmas markets, Winchester offers all its normal attractions, these include: the Cathedral itself; the Great Hall (linked to legends of King Arthur); the City Museum; Winchester College; Winchester’s Military museums. There are separate charges for most of these.

The footways around the city centre all seemed to be in good condition when we visited last year. The paths around the Cathedral close do include some irregular flagstones and some cobbles, etc. There are a handful of steps, which can mostly be avoided.

Price: £18.00 per person – a real bargain

Depart: 9.30 am. Bus stop at bottom of Spinfield Lane  
9.35 am. Liston Road Car Park (by LIDL main entrance)  
9.40 am. Bus stop outside Britannia, by Bobmore Lane junction

Arrive Back: 5:00pm - 5:30pm (subject to motorway traffic!)

Contact: John Pearce

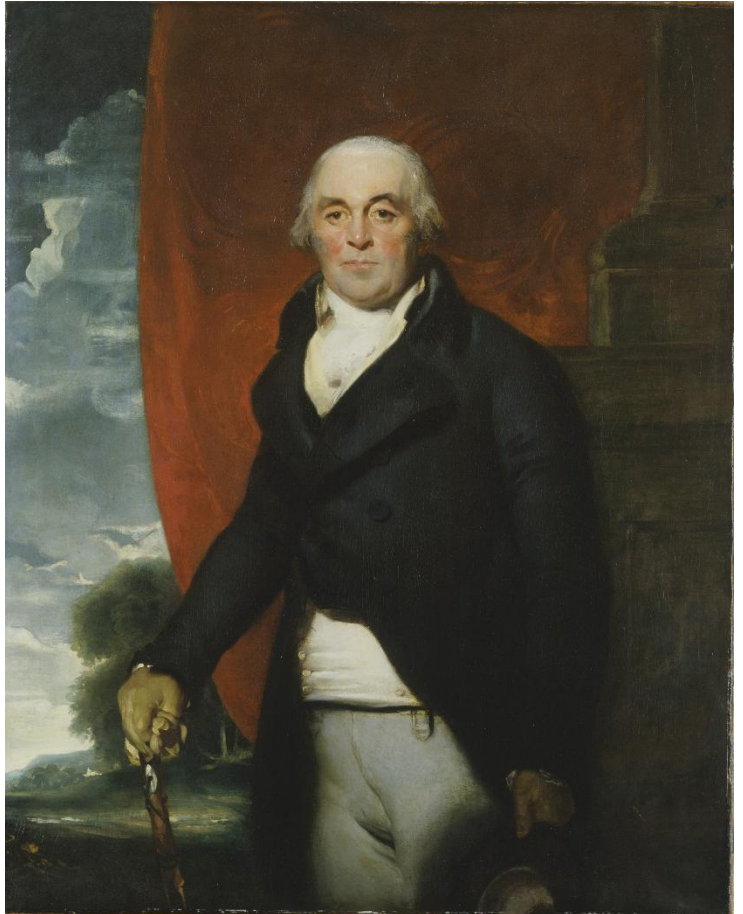
## Speakers Evening – The Copper King

On Wednesday 17th September, despite the wet and windy evening, we had nearly a full house to welcome historian and author, Julian Hunt, who came to talk to us about Thomas Williams the man who had been the most powerful and influential MP for Marlow in the late 18th century.

Julian's first comment was that Thomas Williams was the most unpleasant man he has ever researched.

Williams was born in Anglesey in 1737. He was a lawyer by training who established a monopoly of the Welsh copper mines. He was described by a contemporary as, "the despotick sovereign of the copper trade". Greedy and ruthless, he expanded his empire, buying land and properties. In 1788 he purchased Temple Mills in Bisham. He built himself a fine mansion called Temple House and used the mills to smelt the copper brought from his Welsh mines. He became MP for Greater Marlow and campaigned against the abolition of the slave trade because it might affect his business.

Williams son and grandson followed him as MPs for Marlow until the early 20th century, each of them less effective and ruthless than their forebear.



Julian Hunt's talk was meticulously researched and detailed. His story recalled the television series "Succession" and Owen Williams himself might call to mind a modern, megalomaniac businessman and politician.

Our great thanks go to Julian Hunt for a very informative talk.

***Jean Frost***

*Picture of Thomas Williams by permission of Amgueddfa Cymru — Museum Wales*