

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

August 2024

Photo by Debra Richardson



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Hello and happy August! We hope everyone has some lovely summery plans for the next few weeks, if we can ever get the weather to play ball...

Firstly, we'd like to wish a big, warm welcome to Laura Chatwin, our new Shop Manager. Laura brings with her huge amounts of retail experience and is a true community champion with lots of ideas to enhance our shop products/ displays and help deliver on the feedback from our recent survey (thank you to those of you that completed this). We're really excited to have her on the team, so please say hi and make her feel welcome when you next see her in the shop.

You may have seen on our social media that we've received a substantial funding boost from Crapper & Sons Ltd. The money has been made available through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) which is administered for Crapper & Sons Ltd. by Community First, the Rural Community Council for Wiltshire. We've been working with the Parish Council to secure this funding to enable us to provide much needed solar panels, which will greatly reduce our electricity costs. We'd also like to thank Larry Banda for his hard work in making this project happen in liaison with the Blunsdon Parish Council and Community First.

Upcoming events

As part of our ongoing fundraising efforts, we're very pleased to announce this year's Summer Raffle. Once again, our suppliers have been very generous with their prize donations and we've received numerous other prizes from customers and volunteers this year too – thank you! There's plenty up for grabs (20 prizes in total) including a Pipp & co doughnut voucher, a picnic backpack, a selection of Splosh detergent products, a case of six wines and a food and drink hamper to the value of £100, just to name a few! Tickets are on sale now for £1 each, or £5 for a book. The prize draw will take place on Saturday 24th August at 3pm in the shop, so please do get involved!

Our 2024 AGM will be held on Tuesday 3rd September. This is a shareholder only event, so we'll be sharing more directly with them about the event via email over the coming weeks. If you're interested in becoming a shareholder, shares are £10 each and you can buy as many as you'd like – please pick up a form from the shop. As a shareholder, you'll not only be invited to our annual AGM, but you'll also receive regular newsletters containing important updates about the shop/ how it's running/ any changes we're planning to make.

The next wine tasting event will take place on Thursday 5th September and tickets will be available to purchase during August for £20 each. We continue to share our 'Wine of the Month' with shareholders benefiting from 5% off when you show your membership card – another perk of your support!

And finally...

A quick word on the second phase of our personalised blocks, which you may have seen on our social media recently. We're so close to having the blocks laid, now they've been delivered, and we have a groundworker on standby. However, there's a fault with the electrical supply to the external pillar lights, which needs to be investigated before we can get the blocks laid, to ensure the area designated doesn't need to be dug up. We're waiting on the external electrical plans from Hayfield to agree the next steps with the Parish Council. Please keep an eye on our social media, as we'll keep you updated there on when the blocks are being laid – thank you for your patience.

Normal Opening Hours Monday – Saturday: 8am – 5pm Sunday: 8am – 4pm
Café shuts an hour before close



BLUNSDON WI

Firstly, thank you very much to the army of WI members that helped at Blunsdon Open Gardens – seems so long ago now. Especial thanks to Carole Stephens that corralled us all into action with the resulting much needed refreshments and very tasty cakes.

A dozen of us went on a walking tour of Highworth. The fascinating tour lasted just over an hour – you think you know a place – so worth spending the time to look more carefully. We thoroughly enjoyed the pub or post office game too. Of course, the trip was rounded off with tea and cake. These tours run regularly from Highworth Information centre (the old Lloyds bank building) which also houses lots of lovely art and crafts. Well worth a little visit on its own.

After May's talk on making the most of our clothes a bit of retail therapy was required. And so, a select few visited Victoria's preloved shop in Newbury on one of the hottest days of the summer to date.

There are also a couple of NT visits in July, Buscott and Cliveden, where we share transport to make sure everybody that wants to can get there. Also, more tea and cake will have been consumed.

Although there are no meetings until 17th September, August promises to be a busy month with walks at Waterhay; theatre visits and a trip to Blenheim palace (not more tea and cake!) planned.

For more information about joining Blunsdon WI please contact Anna on Tel 01793 706392

The Best of Blunsdon

I have lived in this village for 30 years this week and I have to confess I love it. My children may have all grown and moved away and the village may have swollen with new houses such that it is now close to being an outer suburb of Swindon but it still feels like *my village*. Blunsdon Open Gardens 2024, which took place on July 22nd and 23rd, is an example of why I am still in love with it.

Firstly, and most importantly the people. It takes a few to set the ball of organisation rolling, but very many more to make an event successful. I won't mention individual names but thanks to those organisations who helped us make the weekend such a success;

- Scarecrow makers- 40 in all
- 13 residential gardeners who worked hard to get their gardens in the best conditions they could for others to visit
- The Breakfast crew who cooked over 112 breakfasts
- Children's Activity Table supervisors
- The Women's Institute for a fabulous effort on the afternoon refreshments.
- St Leonards Church for a scarecrow, bellringing, and a concert space
- Pupils of Ali Morrell for their concert
- Scouts and Cubs for help with the tables
- St Leonards School for their Art Exhibition
- Stitch-a Story makers of 2023 for allowing their banner to be displayed
- Blunsdon House Hotel for Dave the "Chef" Scarecrow and use of their gardens and car parking
- Blunsdon Community Shop for their Clown scarecrow and Little Folk Doors
- The Parish Council for the use of the village hall
- ParkView Nursing Home, Abbey Park Homes, Blunsdon Preschool and the Heart in Hand for joining in with their scarecrows.

However, an event is nothing without supporters and, helped by some wonderful weather (I think the Church had put in a good word with someone in authority), these turned up aplenty. The village was positively buzzing with families, walking, talking and scratching their heads along the Scarecrow trail and not a mobile phone in sight. The gardens were busy with admirers and amazed faces. One of the wonderful things about Open Gardens is how you are constantly surprised by an area that you think you know well. Sounds of "Wow, I never knew this was here" "I didn't know these gardens went so far back" and "What a view" were heard alongside enquiries about plant names and the history of buildings. In addition, there were some little surprises spontaneously put on by other villagers- a duck hunt, a model train set in the garden, and some Little Folk Doors.

We had visitors from further afield such as Newbury and Dursley, thanks to advertising the event on the National Open Gardens website, and it was heartwarming to hear them compare favourably our village event with other Open Garden Events they had visited.

So, after 14 kg of bacon, 125 eggs, 200 sausages, about 50 cakes & 250 programmes and scarecrow trails sold, and with some sore feet, we finally relaxed on Sunday evening.



The total raised was a mammoth £2812.80. A cheque for £1400 was presented to TWIGS on Thursday 11th July by Carole Stephens and Helen Griffiths and the remainder will be used by St Leonard's PCC to support their re-ordering plans.

How much was raised is an achievement, but what will remain indelibly etched in my memory was the buzz of the whole village working, walking and talking together. Thank you all, until the next time in 2026! Judy R

New Development at Kingsdown

Last year, Swindon Borough Council resolved to grant Outline Planning Permission for Persimmon Homes' proposal to deliver a major new mixed-use development at Kingsdown.

Persimmon Homes is now developing a Design Code to shape the detailed design of the Kingsdown project.

We are keen to engage the local community in the preparation of this Design Code and would welcome your thoughts on design options we are considering.

Please visit www.kingsdownswindon.com to complete our survey and share your thoughts on the design proposals.

Comments are invited until **Monday 26th August 2024**.





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If you're pregnant or have a child under the age of 4, you could be eligible for the NHS Healthy Start Scheme



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for Healthy Start, visit:
www.healthystart.nhs.uk



Parish Council News – August 2024

Growing Concerns

We see various posts on Facebook where community focussed residents contribute to the improvement of the look of the Parish. Like those in Manor Close who cleared their kerbside of weeds and debris or Alex Kasperczak who has opened up the fantastic footpath from Burytown Lane to the B4019 at the Anti-Aircraft Gun emplacement. (well worth a walk) The Parish Council is very grateful to those residents.

Swindon Borough Council have not carried out any consistent maintenance to our hedges, verges and roadsides for a long time now and we have taken it upon ourselves to carry out necessary work that is the responsibility of the Borough Council.

This month it has been announced to the Parishes that the Borough will not carry out any of their responsibilities in these areas from next April. They wish to transfer these services and, to some of the large Parishes, their staff that carry them out.

This is good news and bad news for us.

The good news is that we will have control of these services and can plan to maintain them regularly, for the future.

The bad news is that we will have to pay our Grounds Maintenance contractor or one of the Larger Parishes to carry out the work. This will result in the Precept from April next year increasing. (The Precept is a tax that Parish Council's charge their local residents to meet their budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide.)

At present we are not sure by how much the Precept will rise but we are currently understanding the full implications of what the transferred services will be, to establish a cost. As a result, we are looking at all of our costs to ensure we keep the rise to a minimum.

On Line Parish Booking System - <https://blunsdon-village-hall.lemonbooking.com/>

We have now installed a new system to enable residents to book Parish Facilities on-line instead of having to telephone each time. The system allows you to see a calendar of each of our bookable facilities, showing available times for you to book. Currently it provides you with an invoice and details of how to pay the Parish by bank transfer.

Planning Applications

The detailed planning application for the 1557 houses at Kingsdown is nearing completion and Persimmon are creating a website so that residents can see progress through their planning process.

There is a 'revised' application in for the land opposite Sutton Park to the south of Hayfield Wood:-

S/OUT/19/1267 | Outline application for the erection of up to 100 no. dwellings, open space, landscaping and associated works - Access not reserved. | Land East Of Sams Lane Blunsdon Swindon. **The Parish Council has reiterated its objections that it has made over the years**

S/TPO/24/0808 | Works to trees within BOSTPO 198201 T1 | 21 Beech Lea Blunsdon
S/COND/24/0673 | Discharge of Conditions 3 (External Facing Materials), 4 (Site Levels), 11 (Tree and Hedgerow Protection) and 12 (Construction Method Statement) from Planning Application S/23/0883 - Erection of 16 No. dwellings (Use Class C3) and associated landscaping and infrastructure works comprising a partial replan of the residential development approved under S/21/1338/TB and S/OUT/17/1032/RA. | Land At Hill Cottage Blunsdon Hill Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8BZ

Planning Decisions

S/23/0870 - Change of use of land from a concrete batching plant (Sui Generis) to a self-storage facility (Use Class B8) and associated works. 21 Turnpike Road Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7EA. **Status: Application Granted. This application was not approved by the PC and went to the SBC Planning Committee who approved it. This will be 250 shipping containers 6 metres high, for personal storage and will be open 24hrs a day 365 days a year. The planning officer said that there were no objections from neighbours. If you are a resident of Turnpike Road and you were not notified, but think you will be affected by this development we would like to hear from you please.**

S/TPO/24/0427 - Works to trees within BOS TPO 09-2010. Lyndale West Hill Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7BQ. **Status: Application Granted**

S/HOU/24/0394 - Change of bedroom and garage to games room and gymnasium. (retrospective) Eldswyn Kingsdown Lane Blunsdon. **Status: Application Granted**

S/23/0933 - Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission S/22/1134/RACH - Erection of 1no. dwelling Land Adjacent To Eden Field Kingsdown Lane **Status: Application Finally Disposed Of**

S/23/0883 - Erection of 16 No. dwellings (Use Class C3) and associated landscaping and infrastructure works comprising a partial replan of the residential development approved under S/21/1338/TB and S/OUT/17/1032/RA. Land At Hill Cottage Blunsdon Hill. **Status: Application Granted**

S/COND/22/0904 - Discharge of condition 13 (Contamination Remediation Strategy) from previous permission S/OUT/17/1032. Land At Hill Cottage Blunsdon. **Status: Decided**

S/RES/22/0702 - Erection of 90no. dwellings, including recreation space, landscaping, road and drainage infrastructure - Reserved Matters from previous outline permission

S/OUT/17/1032 without compliance with conditions 1 (Approved Drawings) and 3 (Electric Car Charging Points) of previous permission S/RES/19/1773 (in accordance with description amendment pursuant to S/AMEND/22/0548). Land At Hill Cottage Blunsdon **Status:**

Application Withdrawn

S/RES/21/1371 - Erection of 15no. dwellings and associated works. Reserved Matters application following outline permission S/19/0171. Former Thames Water Site High Street Blunsdon. **Status: Application Finally Disposed Of.**

Speedwatch

Our hardy volunteers are out regularly helping with road safety in the Parish. This has led to many prosecutions by local Police for those abusing the law. They always need volunteers and provide training. Please contact me if you are interested in helping and I will arrange for someone to contact you.

Date	Location	Vehicles	Speeding	%	Maximum	Speed Limit	Start	Finish		
17/06/2024	High St	117	20	17%	30	20	16:55	17:55	Heart in Hand	
11/06/2024	High St	206	23	11%	30	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand	
21/06/2024	Turnpike	78	8	10%	43	30	15:30	16:30	Layby Opp No 16	
01/07/2024	High St	203	11	5%	29	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand	
27/06/2024	Ermin St	205	8	4%	43	30	08:00	09:15	Minerva Heights	
02/07/2024	Ermin St	171	6	4%	46	30	16:30	17:15	Minerva Heights	
12/07/2024	Lady Lane	429	8	2%	45	30	16:00	17:00	Cycle Path	
24/06/2024	Lady Lane	457	7	2%	43	30	16:00	17:00	Cycle Path	
03/06/2024	Ermin St	332	5	2%	39	30	16:00	17:00	Minerva Heights	

As you can see High Street and Turnpike Road are the worst hot-spots for speeding.

Parish Council Meetings –

The next two Parish Council meetings will be on **Monday 5th** and **Monday 19th August 2024**, at 19:30 in the Village Hall. If you want to come along, please let us know, details are on the Parish Council, notice boards, Website in the Blog section and on our Facebook page.

Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk – 07702 684281



Upper Thames and Ridgeway National Trust Association

With the National Trust holiday in Pembroke over the main event of 2024 is a happy memory. This year we went to Pembroke in south-west Wales. We visited St David's which in spite of its size earns the title of a City and Tenby needed a long period of sunshine to make it attractive. Apart from places we visited one of our abiding memories is of our BARNES coach driver persuading the coach to go into an out of some very tricky places without scratching it. The weather was no better for us than anyone else trying to holiday in the UK this year but our hotel was welcoming and comfortable. On July 16th we're off to Dorney Court near Windsor and that is only one of the social events to look forward to this year.

For further information, please contact Penny Hockley on 07758 398397

Lechlade Occasional Choir

Monday 7th October 2024

In St Leonard's Church At 7pm

Retiring collection for local charities

Refreshments served

Lechlade Occasional Choir - an overview

Formation, size & concert giving

Formed in September 2019 by its conductor, the choir comprises c25-30 members. The choir undertakes about four concerts a year in the Lechlade area.

Something for all tastes!

Our concerts last about an hour without an interval. We sing a wide repertoire, including Rounds & Spirituals, Anthems & Traditional songs, as well as Songs from the Shows and Light Pop (viz. Abba / Beach Boys). Concerts almost always include a chance for audience participation.

Choir fees & expenses

There are none! The choir performs free of charge and all receipts are for the host venue to put towards whatever is deemed appropriate - i.e. the fabric of the building or a charity.

Who are the conductor and accompanist?

Conductor

Colin Dowdeswell, former Director of Music at Norwich School, Norfolk, orchestral and choral conductor, and for 5 years, conductor of the Norwich Occasional Choir.

Accompanist

Debra Warner, music teacher, former Assistant Director of music at St. Hugh's School, Faringdon and experienced accompanist.

Our aim.....

To enjoy making music together and hopefully, bring joy to others!

For more information: [**griff9999@btinternet.com**](mailto:griff9999@btinternet.com)

Notes from the Editor

The magazine is run by volunteers from the village. All your ideas, comments and contributions will always be welcome.

Blunsdon Village Magazine is available to read online at Blunsdon Parish Council website: blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk

EDITOR: Please email all items for the magazine to blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com

Arlene tel. 01793 727306

ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073

Front Cover: In the garden of Blunsdon House Hotel

Your September Magazine will be delivered from: 30th August

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
September	21st August
October	18th September

Bonfires - I have been asked to highlight the pollution caused by bonfires when lit in residential gardens. Please consider your neighbours and be mindful of the wind direction especially in summer months when windows are open, washing is drying outside and families are enjoying their gardens.

(Editor)

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A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Red Onions

Such a lot of recipes start with frying some onions. Now that's fine with me but raw onions, no thank you! When you eat out, they almost always bring a salad with raw red onion and I always have to pick it off. However, I love pickled red onions and having a jar of them in the fridge is perfect. They are great added to salads, sandwiches or wraps, as well as a topping on other dishes. This is the recipe I use.

Pickled Red Onions

2 large red onions, finely sliced	8 tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 tsp salt	2 tbsp sugar
Clip top jar (Like a Kilner jar)	

1. Put the onion into the kilner jar.
2. Add the other ingredients and then add boiling water to just cover the onions.
3. Put in the fridge when cool. Best to eat after 24hrs and then keep the rest in the fridge.

The second recipe I use is for a sweet preserve, sticky onion marmalade. Delicious with cheeses, pates, cold meats, BBQ meats or with whatever you fancy.

Red Onion Marmalade

2 tbsp olive oil	2/3 sterilised jam jars with lids
1 kg red onions, peeled, halved and finely sliced	
Salt and pepper	150ml red wine
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar	3 tbsp white wine vinegar
6 tbsp light brown sugar	

1. Heat the oil in a preserving pan or heavy-based saucepan.
2. Add the onions, salt and pepper and cook **slowly** for 30mins stirring occasionally to allow them to caramelise. (Don't let them burn.)
3. Increase the heat and add the red wine and vinegars. Stir to mix and bring to the boil.
4. Reduce the heat, stir in the sugar, and cook **slowly** on a low heat, stirring occasionally, for 30-40mins until most of the liquid had evaporated.
5. Spoon into the sterilised jars, add a waxed paper disc and seal.
6. Leave for 1 month in the fridge to develop the flavour and keep in the fridge when opened.

At stage 3 you can add extra flavours e.g. 2 tsp fresh thyme or rosemary or a pinch of chilli flakes.

Enjoy

Book sales at St Leonard's

Coming up We are excited to have a great run of forthcoming events connected to the monthly book sale.

In September we are hosting a MacMillan coffee morning. Please come along and have a cuppa, with your friends, whilst raising funds for this worthwhile cause.

In October we are going bonkers with a 'Books & Bygones' event. This will be 10am until 4pm: please note longer time. This will include a nostalgic display of everyday domestic items. In fact, if you have anything that you think might fit the theme, do consider getting in touch.

In November, we present our annual craft event. Please also get in touch if you have a hobby or craft that is saleable. The more the merrier.

In December we will have our 'mince pie special'. This feels a long way off but I'm certain that it'll be upon us before we know it.

Obviously, books are key to each of these days, and we all know that it's good to relax with our feet up and enter another world for a short time. We're also aware that there are children without access to good books. We have a great selection of varied titles, so don't be shy. Look out for relevant posters with times and contacts. For further info please contact: Jane Ockwell jane_ockwell@hotmail.com or Barbara Carlson bcarlson@btinternet.com



Blunsdon Village Garden Club

There will not be a meeting in August, and the next club evening is in the village hall on September 12th at 7.30 pm to hear a talk on the management of the parks by Ross Sheppard (Stanton Park Ranger).

As ever, prospective new members are welcome to come and join us, even if just for the evening.

Brenda Boyd 01793 725928



St Leonard's CE Primary Academy

Living and Learning Together with God's Help

As we reach the end of this academic year, we reflect on a year filled with achievements, and exciting events at school. It's hard to believe how quickly the time has flown.

Our children have shown incredible attitudes to their learning, impressing every visitor with their enthusiasm, curiosity, and supportive attitude towards one another. The positive atmosphere in our classrooms is a testament to the hard work of both our students and our staff.

This term we have enjoyed Sports Day and taking part in the Scarecrow trail. We are also looking forward to our upcoming school discos, which promise to be a fun way to celebrate the end of the year. Soon, the children will be meeting their new class teachers and for our Year 6, this is time when they prepare to transition to secondary school. We would like to thank them for their positive contributions to St. Leonard's and wish them all the best for the future. We are sure they will continue to shine in their new schools.

On a personal note, this year marks the end of my five years as Headteacher at St. Leonard's. It has been an immense privilege to lead this wonderful school. Together, we have faced challenges, such as Covid-19, and we have celebrated many successes. I leave knowing that St. Leonard's is in excellent hands. Our dedicated staff and fantastic children and their families will continue to take the school from strength to strength. They are supported by a brilliant Academy Council, the church community and the community of Blunsdon. The school will also continue to be supported by the Trust. While I will miss being a part of the daily life at St. Leonard's, I will watch with keen interest and pride as the school continues to flourish.

I extend my best wishes to all stakeholders at St. Leonard's CE Primary Academy. The future is bright, and I am excited to see the continued successes and achievements of our wonderful school community. Thank you for the memories, the support, and the incredible journey we have shared.

Headteacher

Mrs Julie Warburton

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CREATE and CONNECT

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10:00-11:30 AM

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From drawing and painting to knitting and crafting, this is a chance for adults of any ability to create in a social setting. Bring along your projects.



CREATE • CONNECT

The Chatterbox Choose Your Words Carefully

Susie Dent was recently appointed an MBE for services to literature and language. She's a familiar face on TV's "Countdown" where she provides explanations and meanings of words or phrases that we commonly use but aren't aware of their origins. Some, for example, 'Raining cats and dogs' or 'Saved by the bell' have incredibly interesting roots, should you wish to look them up.

Apparently, the average adult, native speaker of the English language on testing has a knowledge of about 20,000-30,000 words. That number isn't fixed, of course, and there are certain factors which can increase the vocabulary that a person uses. One of these is by reading so, clearly, a young child who displays a love of books should be encouraged to pursue that passion as much as possible.

Every word we use routinely was once a new word to us, encountered for the first time. We learnt its meaning, began to use it confidently and it became embedded in our vocabulary. Most of us probably can't remember when we heard a particular word for the first time, but I do remember while reading when I was quite young, I'd frequently come across words that I knew neither how to pronounce nor their meaning. I would usually assume what it meant in my interpretation of the whole paragraph or sentence but that could lead to completely misunderstanding a crucial part of a story! We had a tiny Collins Gem dictionary at home, and I would try and find the word in there. I found looking through the dictionary fascinating as it brought new words to light. I suppose our range of vocabulary is usually based on what is commonplace within our individual households but I really enjoyed finding new words and tried to shoehorn some of them into stories or pieces of work that I would do in school or fit them in to conversations, hoping that I had pronounced them correctly. Not a chance with names like 'Persephone' and 'Phoebe' when they cropped up in stories!

Occasionally I've witnessed words being used as a form of bullying. One person may have a wider range of vocabulary than another, perhaps due to their upbringing or education and can take pleasure in alienating others by using "big" words. Instead of showing off how much money they have, it's more of a case of, "I know bigger words than you do" and they use them with the intention of belittling the other. Similarly with correcting somebody's grammar. It's a sure sign that they're on the losing foot when they start getting critical about commas and semi-colons! Sadly, social media can be a particular hotbed for this.

Many words used in legal, medical or scientific terms are unfamiliar. Receiving a copy of a hospital report full of medical terminology can put us in a tailspin as we head straight to Google to try and decipher the jargon. Words have the power to cause fear when we don't recognise them and can't put them into context. Maybe that's something for hospitals to think about when they copy us in on letters to our GPs.

Words can also cause amusement and sometimes embarrassment when we mispronounce them, misunderstand or make the wrong choice. I remember nearly falling off my chair many years ago when an elderly relative told me about his "Infidelity Pension!" I also loved the saying my young child had when asked how he was feeling. "Fine as a trumpet!" would be the reply. That was clearly what a trumpet meant to him and it still makes me smile, so many years later. I hope your month ahead is a good one and as trumpet-like as possible!

. FOOD FOR THOUGHT.
Outside Catering



Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunt Rise, Blunsdon

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Thursday 5th Sept, Thursday 19th September

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Thinking of joining a PROBUS Club?

The Thamesdown Probus Club meets twice-a-month at The Blunsdon House Hotel and you'd be very welcome to join us. Like Probus Clubs across the world, we aim to provide regular social gatherings for retired or semi-retired men or women from a wide variety of business or professional roles. We have a full programme of talks arranged by our Speaker Secretary comprising an eclectic mix of educational and entertaining subjects. Visit our website at <https://probusclub.net/thamesdown/> or just 'google' Thamesdown Probus Club to see the dates and the titles of up-coming talks.

The annual membership fee is £55. Wives or partners of paid-up members of the Club are welcome to attend our meetings on payment of the door fee (£5 per meeting) which includes coffee, tea and biscuits. Expressions of interest in membership are most welcome; potential members may attend up to 2 meetings free of charge other than the £5 door fee. On 3 occasions in the year, members gather after the meeting for a pay-as-you-go lunch in Carrie's Bar of the hotel. On 3 further occasions, members' wives or partners are invited to join us for a Ladies' Lunch, again pay-as-you-go.

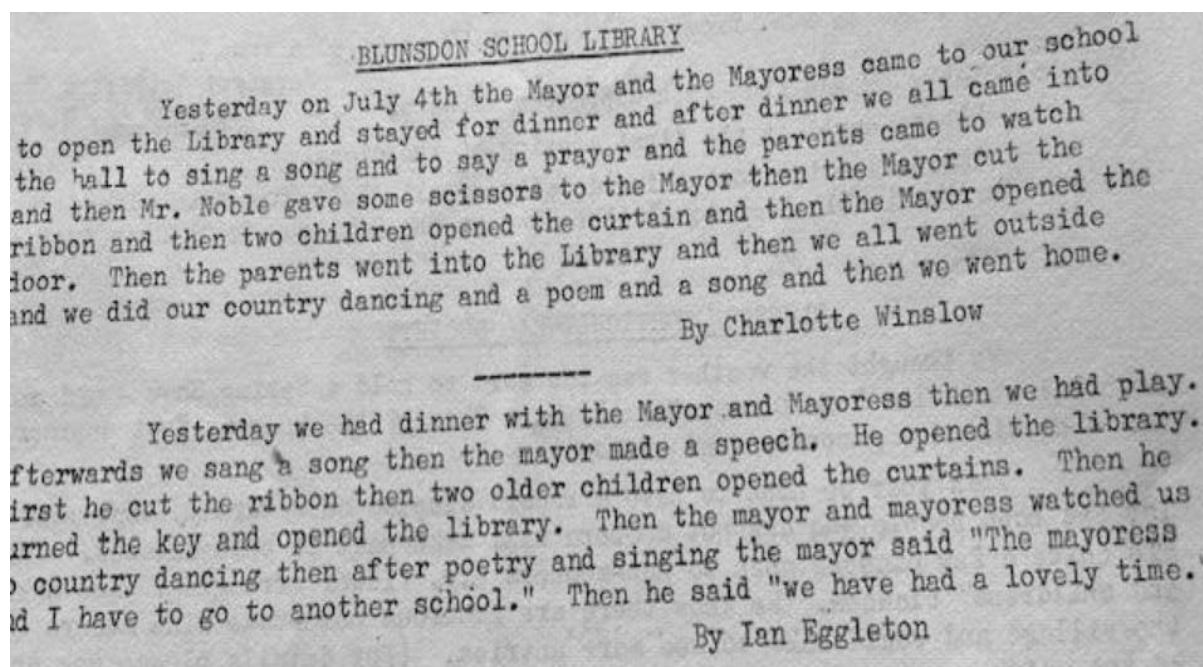
Interested? You're welcome to just turn up at one of our meetings or you could contact our Secretary John Hudson by e-mail johnhudson81@aol.com or his phone number 01793 762636.

Down Memory Lane

(from BLUNSDON "PARISH" MAGAZINE JULY 1979)

As we reflect on another school year at St. Leonard's Primary Academy, a very pleasing Ofsted inspection and the end of Mrs Warburton's successful period of headship, it seems appropriate to remember the long history the school has of being at the heart of the community, particularly for those readers who themselves attended the village school in the days when it was 'St Andrew's Primary school'

In this month (July 1979) Mr Paul Noble, then Headteacher, wrote about the opening of the school library. He thanked all the many people who helped with the preparations and work involved. But he left the main reporting of the event to two Infant children saying there was 'little to be added to their (unedited) reports. Clearly this was a prestigious event attended by the Mayor and Mayoress! I wonder if Charlotte and Ian would have expected their words to be reprinted so many years after the event?





Reading with Wine

Hello! Well, that was a bumpy ride through the Euro's, now to bring on the Olympics! For many of us, August might see a trip away; possibly to see the sea! For that reason, I have gone with beach themed books.

I've mentioned before that I'm a big Sarah Morgan fan and her books always staple my seasonal reading. This summer, she has released *The Summer Swap* and it's possibly my favourite yet. I love a book with a generational friendship and this one absolutely delivers. Cecilia is 75 and running away from life as the matriarch of her family; Lily has quit her degree and is running away from the pressure from her family to be a doctor. They find a common theme, and both gain a lot from each other. I loved the characters; the setting is beautiful and the family dynamics are the icing on the cake. Other options could be *The Secret Beach* from Veronica Henry and *Summer at the Comfort Food Café* by Debbie Johnson; both lovely books that will see you through a sunny day at the beach...or the garden if you are pretending!

If you want something with a little more grit, try *After the Storm* by Gary Wirght. One parent is faced with a decision no-one should ever have to make, a moment to make a choice that will live with him for the rest of his life. This is the debut novel from Gary and it will draw you in and keep you turning the pages. Four best friends who have been torn apart by the decisions of Andrew that resulted in the loss of a child, and the ongoing investigation that follows. As the author is an ex-policeman the authenticity of his understanding really comes through, in addition to the heartbreak of being a parent in that position, you cannot fail to be moved....and there's a huge twist at the end- here's my end twist, its currently available as a pre-order for 99p on Amazon, and it's worth every penny!

If you are heading on a summer's day out, you might not fancy carrying a glass bottle around with you so I have a couple of alternative options. Firstly, Aldi are leading the way with their carbon neutral choices, with three offerings of plastic bottles (please take home to recycle and not leave at the beach) The Sauvignon Blanc and Shiraz are 97% carbon neutral and built with an integrated chiller layer. The Sauvignon is crisp and refreshing with grassy flavours of a summer's day. The Shiraz is packed full of dark fruits like plum and ideal as a Sundowner. The Rose offering is a Mediterranean Rose that really will transport you to a harbours edge to watch the sea sparkle as you sip summer fruits in a wine...one of my favourites this year. Alternatively, canned wines are really having a moment, I recommend the Most Wanted Wines as you can get a variety of options; my recommendation is the Sparkling Rose Pinot Grigio, it's a little, light treat that bubbles pleasantly and is the perfect way to toast to summer reads. 19 Crimes have also just released their Rosé and Chard (Chardonnay) in a can and would be well worth a try; especially as they are both currently on offer in Asda.

I hope you have a lovely summer of reading with wine, as always read as much as you like but please drink responsibly. Please share any new finds- books or wine with me via @reading_with_wine as I'm always on the lookout!



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Make sure all doors and windows are shut and locked



Avoid discussing holiday plans on all forms of social media. Burglars can use this information to their advantage

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