

Blewbury Local History Group 2022 Annual Report

Despite the pandemic the BLHG has kept going through a variety of virtual and in-person meetings. This has allowed us to have a busy and successful year. Key features have included the following:

- Regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of each month from 8:00 – 9:30pm. These are normally held in the BLHG Room, which is adjacent to Robinsons in Parsonage Lane (off South Street and nearly opposite the Dibleys entrance road). Anyone is welcome to join us at these meetings.
- A series of BLHG visits to local places of interest such as the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock, the Dale & Downland Museum in Wantage, and a Historical Tour of Wallingford.
- We completed our research into the Nov 13th 1940 WWII Junkers 88 German plane crash up on the Downs, which has been reported through feature articles in the Blewbury Bulletin, Didcot Herald and Oxford Times.
- We gained permission from the Oxford Town Hall to photograph their well known T.F.M.Sheard painting of the *Gossiping Gaffers*, which was known to have been painted in South Street, Blewbury around 1920. A copy was framed and presented to the Blewbury Village Hall to coincide with the re-opening of the BVH. Further copies of this striking bit of Blewbury history are available as prints, cards and mugs. The cards and mugs are available for sale in Blewbury Post Office. The original painting can be viewed in the Old Library at the Oxford Town Hall.
- We have also completed the restoration of a photograph of another T.F.M.Sheard painting, entitled *Our Village Handicap*, which depicts three Blewbury residents playing billiards in what is now Swallows sitting room, and which then was the Blewbury Clubhouse. This too dates back to the early 1900s.
- We completed our restoration of the very attractive 1943, hand drawn by John Hone, Map of Blewbury and copies of this are now available for purchase in various sizes, either framed or unframed. Examples are on display in the Blewbury Post Office, Savages and Style Acre Café.
- We held a book launch to coincide with the publication of Jeni Whittaker's novelised biography of her great aunt Gladys Hazel, who was a very well known suffragette who lived in Westbook Street, Blewbury from 1939-1959. Jeni spoke about her book at a public meeting in Blewbury Village Hall. *The Courage Game* was published by Troubador Publishing Ltd in the autumn of 2021 and is available in paperback for £9.99 or in electronic format for £3.99.
- Our group has had a stall at some of the recent Blewbury Sunday Markets in order to publicise the work of the BLHG and to sell some of our goods.
- We have tidied up and improved the layout of the BLHG resource room, which others are welcome to visit by arrangement.
- We are planning a display for the June 5th 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration at Blewbury School. Anyone with interesting material related to previous coronation related events is invited to contact us.
- For further information about the BLHG please contact Audrey Long (Chair audreyrosettalong@gmail.com) or Mary Gaines (Secretary m-gaines@outlook.com)