

Blewbury Bulletin

Number 659 December 2023

TIM HENMAN TO RE-OPEN STYLE ACRE TEA ROOM

The works to extend the kitchen at the Style Acre Tea Room and provide new toilet facilities are on track and the Tea Room will be open for business again on Friday 1st December.

Over the 13 years that we have been trading the Tea Room has become busier and the kitchen facilities had become too small. Over the past couple of months work has been done to extend the building to improve the working environment and create additional space so that more people we support can gain work experience and people with more complex needs and physical disabilities can access work placements. We can't wait to welcome back our customers, staff and people we support, and are delighted that **Tim Henman OBE** will officially open the Tea Room on **Saturday 16th December at 10.30am**. This is an open event and we would love to see you there.

RESCUING THE TAWNY OWLS

[Editor's note: The following article, by Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue's founder Luke Waclawek, highlights just one example of the great work being done by this Woodway Road-based charity. For more information visit their website at <https://www.oxfordshirewildliferescue.com>]

We have five resident species of owl that can be found living in our countryside: the Barn Owl, Little Owl, Short Eared Owl, Long Eared Owl and the Tawny Owl. Whilst Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue have seen and cared for all these species, by far our most regular patients are the Tawny Owls. With their beautiful mottled brown feathers and their striking deep and dark eyes, they are captivating, no matter how many we see sadly come into care. The most common cases are, unfortunately, those that fall victim to our busy roads, usually while feeding on carrion left by earlier collisions. After them come the Tawny Owl orphans, which we start to see coming into the wildlife hospital around the



middle of April. Usually, these bundles of helpless 'fluff' are at an age where they can (with a little persuasive intervention) generally feed themselves. But this year, we had something a little special – two Tawny owlets spotted at the base of a damaged tree, no more than five days old and each so small that they could both easily fit in the palm of your hand. Upon arrival, both were dehydrated and in shock. After receiving fluids (electrolytes), both were snuggled up together in the parental warmth of one of our incubators. Their rearing proved to be tricky. Being so small (35g each) the frequency of the feeds was very time-consuming. Every three hours, both day and night, for the first two weeks, which is when volunteers who have insomnia suddenly become the charity's best friend!

By the time the owlets' eyes opened, we were caring for another nine or so other Tawny owlets who had a little more experience in their natural behaviour, which meant we could introduce our two little ones, who would quickly go on to develop and learn from the other youngsters. Come early autumn, it was time to release our Tawny Owls back into the wild. It's always a bittersweet moment, but we have done our bit, and the rest is up to them!

Nature is a beautiful thing, and one of the perks to this work is the ability to work closely with species such as the Tawny Owl. Right now, in December, you may hear their famous whistles and twit-woos echoing across our countryside during the dark winter nights. Sometimes I hear them here at the centre, and I do often wonder to myself, 'could that be one of our Tawny Owl youngsters from this year?' Perhaps, they are just letting us know they are doing well, back in their natural habitat, where they belong.

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BELL RINGING NEWS FROM BLEWBURY TOWER

A successful half muffled quarter peal was rung on Armistice Day, this was appreciated by people in the village including a visitor from Derbyshire who contacted us to say how much he'd enjoyed listening to the bells. It was also listened to in Cape Town South Africa! The bells remained half muffled for Remembrance Sunday ringing. We're now looking forward to all the festive ringing in December including welcoming our branch members on the afternoon of 20th December. There is an afternoon branch practice each month which aims to help ringers learning methods or needing help with their striking.



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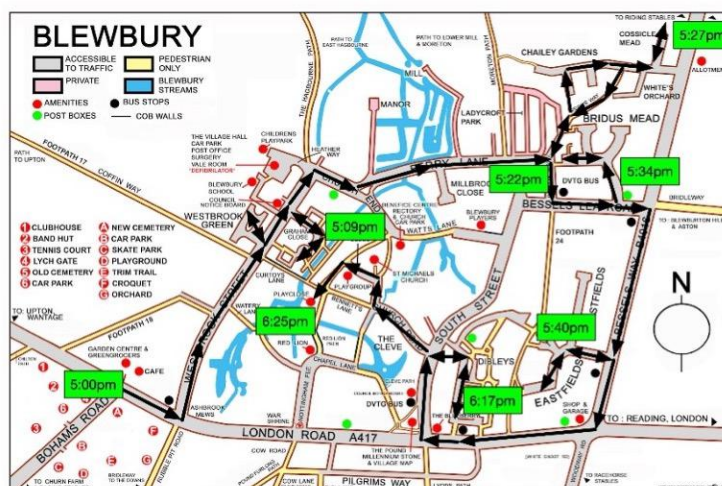
BLEWBURY CHRISTMAS 2023 - EVENTS FROM THE BVS



- **Santa's Sleigh & Carols on the Playclose – Sunday 24th December**
- **Boxing Day Walk – Tuesday 26th December**

Christmas Eve – Santa's Sleigh and Carols on the Playclose

On Christmas Eve, Santa's mailbox will be open from 10:30 am to noon, at the Pre-school (opposite the Church). Parents should bring their present (labelled with their child's name and age) and place all presents for their family in one bag. Santa's postal charge is £2 per parcel – small presents only, please.



In the evening, Santa will first make a tour of the village, starting at Boham's Road (London Road end) at 5:00 pm, and will end up at the Playclose at 6:30 pm, where he will distribute presents (see the map for Santa's route and timings at key points). Carols will be sung, accompanied by the Blewbury Brass Band.

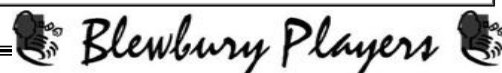
Boxing Day Walk – Tuesday 26th December

This is an informal walk around the village. You can come along in fancy dress and perform a skit or come as you are to watch and/or join the walk (i.e. 'here for the beer')!

Entries are in the usual categories: Individual, Small groups (2 to 5 people), Medium groups (6 to 10 people), Large groups (11 plus people). Entry fees: Adults £5 and Children £2 – includes refreshments along the route. Suggested donation of £5 if you are 'here for the beer'.

1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes are available for the best fancy dress/skit in each category, as well as the coveted Ron Freeborn Memorial Cup.

Registration 10:00 am at the Village Hall; skits at 10:30 am; walk starts at 11:00 am



Don't miss out. As this copy of the Bulletin reaches you there may still be a few tickets left...



30 Nov, 1 & 2 December

BOX OFFICE is now open @ www.blewburyplayers.co.uk

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ANNUAL LEAF COLLECTION 3RD DECEMBER, STARTING AT 2PM – KEEPING BLEWBURY BEAUTIFUL!

This collection is organised jointly every year by Sustainable Blewbury and the Parish Council. We collect the leaves from the Play Close and the footpaths in the centre of the village: the ones that are not along the edge of a road and therefore not cleared by residents.

Meet at the triangle of grass at the Church end of the Play Close at 2pm to be given some black bags and a map that shows which area to clear and where to leave the bags. We are very grateful to David Hollick for driving a tractor and trailer round the village and also grateful to his three volunteer helpers for heaving the heavy bags onto and off the trailer.

If you would like any bags of leaves delivered to your house for composting please ring Jo Lakeland on 01235 850490, providing your name and address and how many bags you would like.

VILLAGE CAROL CONCERT – WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER – ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME AT THE VILLAGE CAROL CONCERT – DOORS OPEN 7PM – CONCERT AT 8PM.

Please respect that the players will be rehearsing while you are entering. Lots of great Carols for all to sing – the usual format of choirs, orchestra, brass band and Festive readings. A joyful evening which heralds all Christmas Festivities. The retiring collection will be for The International Red Cross who respond to crises overseas.

How to join the ad hoc orchestra

If you can blow or scrape an instrument, do come and join our ad hoc orchestra. The only qualification needed is enthusiasm. The music is very straightforward and, if wanted, is available from early December. It is helpful to know how many chairs to put out so please contact lindyfarrell@btinternet.com to reserve yours. We have a quick rehearsal from 7pm. Please bring a music stand.

Fund raising event for BLEWBURY PRE-SCHOOL with BETTY BLOOM DANCE

CHRISTMAS DANCE AND DISCO EXTRAVAGANZA

Friday 8th December 2023

Blewbury Village Hall

Preschool - Year 2 from 3.45pm - 5.15pm (under 4 year olds must be accompanied)

Christmas Dance and Drama Story WITH Dance Routines

Christmas DISCO, Performance for parents at 5.00pm

Year 3 - Year 6 from 5.30pm - 7.15pm

Christmas DISCO AND Dance Routines, Performance for parents at 7.00pm (optional)

Tickets: £10.00 per child before 1st December (£12.00 per child thereafter)

Ticket includes Xmas snack bag and drink and a special visit from Father Christmas!

Refreshments and mince pies available for parents

Tickets available at: www.preschoolfundraising.co.uk

Please email preschool@blewburypreschool.com with any dietary requirements



BLEWBURY CALENDAR 2024

Bernard's Blewbury Calendar with colour photographs of Blewbury scenes and events and lots of space for writing your appointments, etc. is on sale **NOW** at Blewbury Post Office or ring Bernard Mattimore to reserve and we'll deliver 01235 851088 bernardmat@btinternet.com. Price £8. A lovely gift or treat yourself. Thank you.



NEXT FOOD BANK DATES: 2nd DECEMBER – 11th DECEMBER

The Didcot Emergency Foodbank is currently helping a larger than average number of needy families each session due to very high demand. At Christmas, this demand will be larger than ever and if you can help by giving even one item it will make a difference. Please do help if you are able.

The collection boxes are outside the Charity School House on these dates or at The Post Office any time.

All the usual items will be welcome and if you can add a Christmassy item for a child that would be lovely.

- Please make sure that all food is within its sell by date.

- Foodbank cannot accept alcohol, razors, medicines, or homemade preserves

ALL DONATIONS ARE HUGELY APPRECIATED -- SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

CASH DONATIONS HOWEVER SMALL ARE VERY WELCOME - To make a cash donation

on line - visit <https://churchsuite.co.uk/donate/> and select Foodbank.

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5.00pm – 5.50pm Lily Classes (10- 12 years)
5.50pm – 6.40pm Tiger Lily Classes (13 years +)
Performance Squad – 6.45 – 8pm (by invitation only)

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BLEWBURY NATURE RESERVE UPDATE

We had a very good volunteering session on 11 Nov. It was a calm sunny morning and we cleared around the hedging plants to give them more space, with a red kite flying overhead. We also started to fill in gaps in the hedging and strimmed a new path between the wildlife orchard part of the site and the grassland, to extend the area that you can walk on. But please take care. The surface is very rough and uneven. Thanks to everyone who has helped at the site this year! Email secretary@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk if you want to join our volunteer list. Our next **volunteering day** is **9 December**. For more information, email Jane at the address above.



Photo: Jane Kinniburgh

OUR LATEST REPAIR CAFE

We held our latest successful repair cafe on Sun., 19 Nov. 21 people brought in 33 items, half of which were for sharpening. We had a 70% success rate for the other 17: our experts were able to mend all but four of the electrical items and one clock. I am very grateful to the experts and helpers, and for the donations from our grateful clients which pays our village hall rent. **The next repair cafe will be on Sun, 25 Feb. at 2 pm.**

OUR NEXT TALK: SPACE-BASED SOLAR POWER, BY MARTIN SOLTAU

Monday 29 January 2024, 8.00 pm, Melland Room at Blewbury Clubhouse

Tickets £6, available at the Post Office or on the door (includes a drink of your choice)

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Good Quality Artificial Christmas Tree in three pieces and with a stand. 106cm tall. width at top 25cm. width at bottom 27 cm	Jean Richards jean@brooksend.co.uk	07966 774235
To freecycle your item please send a short description, email & phone number to Lydia Inglis (lydandmuz@gmail.com)		

Getting involved in Sustainable Blewbury contributes to the village and its environment.

To participate, email us at: info@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk or phone 01235 850372.



BLEWBURY WI NEWS

Blewbury WI go on the plonk? Is that WI-speak? Anyway, we are off to the Goring and Streatley Golf Club on Monday 11 December for our yearly Christmas lunch – sadly ‘members only’, but gives you an idea what a jolly bunch we are!

On 6 December we have an informal car-share visit to Aston Pottery, near Bampton, which has a tempting array of unusual Christmas gifts. We will also enjoy lunch at their “Country café”.

As well as our monthly meetings how about Scrabble, craft, walks, Mah Jong, pub lunches, afternoon teas, coffee mornings, all sorts? Our new Book club is now reading “Sweet Caress” by William Boyd, intriguing!

Blewbury WI is a long-standing Blewbury institution, formed in 1920 - a tried and tested formula that has stood the test of time. You need never feel lonely in Blewbury, being in the WI gives you so many choices. One of our ladies said “*Joining the WI was the best thing I did when I moved to the village 2 years ago. I have so many lovely friends and have so many choices of things to do if I want to*”.

Just give it a try! Come as a visitor – no commitment – see if you fancy it. If you’d like to come along with someone else or find out more, ring our Secretary, Joy, on 850543 or email blewburywi@gmail.com.

Calendar of events

Every Monday afternoon	2.30pm	Mah Jong	Sharon
Friday 1 December	7pm	Craft evening	Karen
Wednesday 6 December	Time tba	Aston Pottery outing (members only)	Graeme/Sharon
Thursday 7th December	7pm	Didcot WI Group Carol concert (members only)	Joy
Monday 18 December	10.30am	Coffee morning (members only)	Sharon



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BLEWBURY VILLAGE SOCIETY

Thank you to everyone who came to Bonfire Night on 4th November, and particularly to all the helpers who collected wood, baked and served potatoes, ran the entrance desks, marshalled, organised and served beer, wine and other goodies, and much much more: we could not have done it without you! Over 650 people attended, making it a very successful event – so much so that we got through all the supplies of beer and mulled wine!



Christmas is coming...

The BVS is delighted to continue running two favourite Christmas events this year: Santa's Sleigh and Carols on the Playclose on Christmas Eve; and the Boxing Day Walk on Monday 26th December. See page 3 for details.

- Sunday 24th December – Santa's Sleigh and Carols on the Playclose. Santa's village tour starts at Bohams Road (London Road end) at 5:00 pm and ends in the Playclose at 6:30 pm, where he will give out presents. Please see the main advert on page 3 for details of how to get your child onto Santa's list!
- Tuesday 26th December – Boxing Day Walk. Registration from 10:00 am at the Village Hall, skits at 10:30 am and walk at 11:00 am.

Plus, do join us to blow off the cobwebs/clear the hangover for the convivial Roger Cambray Memorial Walk from Blewbury to The Bell Inn at Aldworth and start the new year on a high note! We meet at The Pound at 10.30 am on Monday 1 January 2024.

BVS committee

The BVS committee is a team of volunteers who help to run events for the village, and we are always grateful to hear your ideas and for any offers of help. You don't have to join the committee (although we would welcome new members): there are always plenty of ways to support the BVS and your community. If you have an event that you would like to make happen, or if you would just like to support one of our regular calendar events, please contact us at blewburybvs@gmail.com.

BLEWSHED NEWS

Community Projects: We were delighted to welcome eight keen DIY beginners with varying degrees of experience to BlewShed's inaugural '**DIY for Beginners**' workshops on 24th October and 21st November. These workshops were on drilling and fixing, and attendees are now intending to put up their own shelves and curtain rails and start various woodworking projects. A repeat session will be held soon for those who couldn't come, along with a new workshop on saws and cutting; details and dates to be announced.

One of the sections of **Blewbury Cricket Club's mower** is now partly dismantled in BlewShed undergoing investigation, cleaning and diagnosis of what needs to be done. Much work, including replacement of broken parts and specialist regrinding of the three sets of blades will be required before you see the mower doing its work behind the tractor next summer. However, engineers Dick Street and Mike Magnay, currently at work on the project, believe the job can be done in time providing no major problems are encountered...

BlewShed products: Savages shelves, now loaded with Christmas items, have no spare room for BlewShed trugs and cake stands. However, these are still available directly from the Shed during opening hours if you want one.

Meetings: Following BlewShed's AGM on 14th November, village clock maker and restorer Dick Street gave a fascinating account of how, after retiring from a career in mechanical engineering, he came into clock making and restoration quite by chance when someone gave him a 'box of wheels' which he successfully reassembled into a working timepiece. Having worked on many clocks since, Dick described how he, with a little help from 'Big Ben's' clock repairer, restored St Michael's church 300+ year old clock. Every time our church clock chimes we can thank Dick for his considerable talents and effort! At our next meeting on Tuesday 12th December, 7.30pm we will have a drink and mince pies followed by a talk on 'long range shooting' by Simon Edwards. All are welcome.

Opening times and membership: BlewShed aims to help or facilitate people to learn how to do various wood, metal and other practical tasks themselves, so come along and learn some new skills, or just have a chat over a cuppa. Opening times: Tuesday and Saturday afternoons 1.30-4.00 pm and Thursday afternoons 2.00-4pm for electronics sessions and non-dusty work. Individual membership subs are £25, or £37.50 for a family, which includes expert advice and use of a well-equipped metal, wood and electronic workshop. Everyone is welcome to club night meetings on the second Tuesday of the month, whether or not you are a member. We look forward to seeing you.

Mike Wrottesley, BlewShed secretary <https://blewshed.home.blog/news/>



DIDCOT & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

D&D U3A meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm at Didcot Civic Hall. Visitors are welcome to come to one meeting as a taster before joining. On December 19th our members-only ticketed Christmas event will feature a **Magic Show with Ian Keable**. For details email chairman@didcotu3a.org or secretary@didcotu3a.org or visit www.u3asites.org.uk/didcot.



News from St. Michael's

Rector - The Revd Jason St. John Nicolle
BENEFICE OFFICE - 01235 850267

You can contact the clergy & staff on: -

Father Jason St John Nicolle
 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Revd Louise Butler
 07837 009730 revlouiseb@aol.com

Revd John Clarke
 01235 510073 jphclarke@gmail.com

Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith
 01235 850267 mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk

Elaine de Ridder, Operations Manager, is available Monday to Friday from 9.00-2.30 pm on 01235 850267, 07434 686044 or via email office@churnchurches.co.uk. Website www.churnchurches.co.uk

Bookings for Weddings, Baptisms and funerals may be made by contacting the office via email or on the office number.

Services for December 2023 at St Michael's Church:

ADVENT SUNDAY	† Sunday 3rd	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	All Age Service
		6.00 pm	Advent Carol Service
THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	† Sunday 10th	10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
THE 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	† Sunday 17th	10.30 am	<u>No morning service</u>
		4.00 pm	Nine Lessons and Carols
	Thursday 21 st	10.00 am	MU Holy Communion
THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	† Sunday 24th	10.30 am	<u>No morning service</u> at St Michael's
CHRISTMAS EVE			due to crib service at 4pm and
			midnight mass as 10.30pm. You are
			welcome to join the online service.
		5.45 pm	Crib service
		10.30 pm	Midnight Mass
CHRISTMAS DAY	Monday 25th	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
1ST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS	† Sunday 31st	10.30 am	Parish Eucharist

In addition to the services in Church, we continue to have an **online service at 10.30 am every Sunday** via the link <https://meet.goto.com/ChurnBenefice/sundayservice>. We also have **online Compline at 8pm during weekdays** via link <https://meet.goto.com/312446493>.

Everyone is invited to the mid-week communion service **every Wednesday at 10am at St Andrew's Hagbourne**. We can also bring home communion to those who are unable to attend a service in person.

Please contact the Office if you would like to receive the Churn newsletter by email every Friday. You can unsubscribe at any time.

SPECIAL SERVICES DURING ADVENT



Everyone welcome to two special candle-lit services led by the Benefice choir with plenty of opportunity to sing and reflect on the true meaning of Advent and Christmas.

Advent Carol Service: Sunday 3rd December at 6pm
 also

Nine Lessons and Carols: Sunday 17th December 4pm



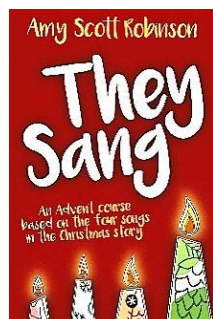
**Conversations around Christianity
2.30pm to 3.30pm in the Benefice Centre
Starting 26 November**



The opportunity for more "Conversations" and explorations around some themes relating the Christmas celebrations and to see where our conversations will take us!

Sunday afternoons 2.30-3.30pm, 26 November till 17 December.

Seasonal treats and coffee/tea too!



ECUMENICAL ADVENT GROUP

An Advent Course

based on the four songs of the Christmas Story:

The songs of Zachariah, Mary, the angels & Simeon

10:30 to 12 noon – Fridays 1, 8 & 15 December

at the home of Jenny Loder. Josie Midwinter to lead,

based on Amy Scott Robinson's "They Sang".

Please let Elaine in the office know if you would like to take part, also so that she can put you in contact with Jenny and Josie and give you the address.

Contact via office@churnchurches.co.uk or 01235 850267

Lighting a Candle of Hope

I wonder if you are a fan of the longer Winter nights? Many people find them quite a challenge. In the northern hemisphere, we shall soon be reaching the Winter Solstice- the 24 hour period with the fewest hours of daylight. The good news is that from then on, the hours of daylight gradually get longer and longer. It can be hard to believe this on a cold evening in January, but by the beginning of February I think most of us feel that the days really are lengthening, and that Spring can't be far behind.

The long Winter evenings remind us of the importance of light, and it is not surprising that festivals of light were held at this time of year. Light was particularly important in the days before artificial light was readily and cheaply available. Can you imagine what the Winter must have been like if you were dependent on a candle or two, occasionally supplemented by the light coming from a fire in the hearth?



I think every culture would understand the symbolism of a light shining in the darkness: it is a universal image, speaking of hope and security. The imagery of light is found throughout the Bible. A passage from an Old Testament prophet called Isaiah reads as follows: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen among you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will shine upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." In the New Testament, the imagery of light is often applied to Jesus, who is called the Light of the World.

Whatever your religious beliefs, I think that there can be something really helpful and hopeful in the simple act of lighting a candle and remembering our loved ones. Churches often have candles available precisely for this purpose, and locally there are racks of such candles in Blewbury and Hagbourne churches. Do pop in and light a candle. As a Christian, I believe that a lighted candle points to the ever-present love of Jesus, the Light of the World. But whether you believe in God or not, a lighted candle can still speak powerfully of the importance of hope. There is always hope, and sometimes we need to remind ourselves of this, especially when the world around us seems a dark and unwelcoming place.

- Father Jason

Food Bank Collection

2 December – 11 December



Donations for the Didcot Emergency Foodbank can be dropped off at the Old School House between the dates above or at the Post Office anytime. You can also donate at both Sainsbury's branches in Didcot.

Your generosity would very much be appreciated!

Many thanks, St Michael's Action Group

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The Caucasian Chalk Circle, 17-20 July, 2024.



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"A gem of a play. This is full of action, humour, music, and emotion... a wonderful story performed by a gang of actors - in a new translation". You can find a video recording of Director Erica Harley discussing her love for this play and sharing her vision for our production next summer on our website www.blewburyplayers.co.uk.

Auditions for *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* will be on February 3 & 4. Please e-mail blewburyplayers@gmail.com to book an audition or ask questions, even if you are not available that weekend. Anybody interested in joining the production team in non-performing roles, please also get in touch at blewburyplayers@gmail.com.

Jeff and Peter's Music Quiz

This was once again a great success. Thanks so much to everyone who helped and who competed. This annual event is held to raise funds to support local children and young people. As we go to print, we don't yet have a final total, but all proceeds will be shared between The Tony Loy Trust and Blewbury Pre School Playgroup.

JANKERS!

[Editor's note: This is an extract from the autobiography of Blewbury resident Pat Warn, recounting an incident from his time in the Army Boys' Service. We encourage anyone with an interesting story to tell to submit it to the Bulletin for consideration; see the back page of this issue for our editorial guidelines.]

In February 1959 I committed my first serious misdemeanour, which meant I was on a charge. I was marched into office of the Officer Commanding C Company, Major Maitland, by the Company Sergeant-Major CSM 'Jock' Laing of the Scots Guards. He bellowed in my ear "Quick march! Left, right, left, right, left, right... halt! Left turn! Eyes front!" The clerk sitting next to the CO read out the charge. To summarise, I was late reporting back to camp from my 36-hour pass. Instead of being back by 23:59 I reported at 02:00 hours, that is two hours late.

The CO asked me if I had any thing to say in my defence. I said "No Sir" in a loud voice. The CO then said "I find you guilty as charged. Seven days' CB. March out." The Sgt-Major shouted "Left turn! Quick march! Left, right, left, right, left, right... halt! Right turn! Fall out and report to the Guardroom at 18:00 hours for the next seven days." I was so surprised that it was all over in a matter of minutes. Those fateful words shouted the Sgt-Major opened up a whole new world to me, who up to then in my career thought I had experienced everything that the Army could offer. How wrong was I? The punishment of seven days' CB meant I was confined to barracks for seven days and I had to report to the Guardroom at certain times of the day, and this punishment was colloquially known as 'Jankers'. It normally meant parading at the Guardroom as follows:

- 1st Parade: 6:30 am in denim fatigues for inspection and 15 minutes' drill on the Parade Ground.
- 2nd Parade: 1.00 pm in normal working dress and 15 minutes' drill on the Parade Ground.
- 3rd Parade: 6:00 pm in denim fatigues for inspection and two hours' fatigues.
- 4th and final Parade: 9.00 pm in best Dress Uniform for inspection.

The drill sessions were fast-moving and you were marched all over the parade ground at amazing speeds. Whenever you appeared to be getting too far away the drill NCO would shout "Mark time - get your knees up," and he would walk leisurely towards you until he had caught up with you. 'Fatigues' was the army word for doing all the dirty jobs around the camp, so when you were on Jankers all your leisure time was spent in the cookhouse washing pots and pans or around the camp picking up litter.

BRIDGE CLUB

Congratulations to Diane Bell and Dermot Paddon, with 60.75%, who were 96th out of 1466 pairs in the national results of the Children in Need Simultaneous Pairs held in the club on Tuesday 7th November. I am very pleased to report that we raised £150 for this worthwhile charity on the evening. Many thanks to all who contributed.

We will have refreshments at our F2F sessions on Tuesday 12th December and Friday 15th December to celebrate the festive season.

Our new Realbridge sessions online for December will be on Thursdays the 7th and 21st. Wantage will be hosting sessions on the 14th and 28th. Note also that there will be no F2F session in the Vale Room on Tuesday 28th November - we will be running an extra Realbridge session online that evening.

Friday evening Social Bridge sessions are planned for the 8th and 15th December. None on the 1st, 22nd or 29th. Tuesday December 21st marks the first qualifying heat in the club for the County Pairs. Anyone who scores over 50% on the night, which is a normal club session, is entitled to enter one of the County Pairs semi-finals to be held on Realbridge in February.

Our Wessex League team were beaten in their first match of the new season, but scored a convincing victory in the second. So currently we are averaging just over 50% for the two matches. *Michael Allen 851870*

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COFFEE & KIDS!

Our pre-Christmas gathering of the Blewbury baby and toddler group is on **Monday 4th December** in the Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall, 9.30am - 11am. As well as lots of fun with toys, play, chat and seasonal refreshments, our knitted crib figures will help to tell the Christmas story and we will sing a few simple carols. We hope that Mary and Joseph (with donkey) - the POSADA - will call in on their way to Bethlehem! A donation of £2 is appreciated towards our costs. This month you also have the opportunity to make a Christmas card with your children, guided by our "crafty" mum, Kate. Mothers' Union hosts look forward to welcoming you. Louise - 07837 009730

NATURE NOTES

As we transition into the winter and the leaves have long fallen off the trees strange shapes can appear in the hedges. A brisk walk along the concrete track or a jaunt to the Chalkpit, the keen-eyed observer will note strange, spherical, growths on Dog Roses. On closer inspection these flame red, alien, fibrous like structures consists of many small branches sprouting from the stem of the Rose. These are colloquially known as Robin's pincushions.

Robin's pincushions are scientifically known as the Rose Bedeguar Gall. Bedeguar is a French name, which itself is derived from the Persian word for 'brought by the wind'. The 'Robin' part of the common name derives not from the bird, but rather the nature sprite or fairy, of English folklore, 'Robin Goodfella'. Also known as 'Puck'. In Germany the gall is known as the 'sleep apple'. A gall placed under the pillow is said to aid slumber.

These growths, which do not harm the host plant, are caused by a tiny wasp *Diplolepis rosae*. The female of the species lays a series of up to 60 eggs in the spring on the developing leaf tips. In ways in which we do not fully understand, chemical signals from the feeding of the grubs stimulates the Rose into this extraordinary growth. This new plant growth is exceedingly nutritious for the developing larvae. As the gall develops the larvae continue to feed within the, now, woody chambers. When they are ready to pupate they overwinter within the gall, safe from predators. Ready to emerge again in the Spring, as the cycle continues. Only 1% of the emerging wasps will be male. The females are able to reproduce parthenogenetically, so no need for the pesky males!

Other wasp species also find shelter in the gall. These are known as 'inquilines'. Although these species did not cause the gall, they benefit from it. These species in turn are parasitised by other wasp species! And so, in no time at all, a thriving ecosystem has been formed, all interdependent on each other. Around seventeen species have been found living in the Rose Bedeguar Gall. It is also the symbol of the British Plant Gall Society. Those that study plant galls are known as cecidologists. *Glen Meadows*

LETTER FROM DAVID JOHNSTON MP

Thank you very much to the 2,127 people who signed my petition to re-open Grove Station. It shows again the huge strength of feeling on this locally, and I will now be presenting it to the House of Commons and to the Department for Transport to make the case to them. Thanks too to Andy Holding of the Wantage and Grove Rail Supporters Group for his support. I will keep pushing for this station, which makes economic, social, and environmental sense.

We are the proud home of the 11 EOD and Search Regiment at Vauxhall Barracks in Didcot, and it was a pleasure to visit again and meet Lt Col Rob Swan and the team. Just this year they have so far responded to more than 1,800 requests in the UK to deal with explosive devices and I planted a remembrance stake in Parliament's Garden of Remembrance in their honour. I also, as ever, took part in poignant remembrance services and parades – this year in Wantage and Didcot. Thank you to everyone who made them happen.

UK Parliament Week takes place every November, and I was pleased to visit local schools and talk to different youth organisations about my role as an MP and how they can get involved in politics, including: Wallingford School, St Michael's CofE Primary School in Steventon, Brightwell Primary School, St Blaise Primary School, the 7th Abingdon Beavers, Chilton Explorer Scout Unit and Brightwell cum Sotwell Scouts.

I have been campaigning to improve our roads since I was elected and I have now launched my Local Roads Survey to enable you to say exactly where you are seeing issues that need to be resolved, including potholes, congestion, speeding and other safety concerns. I want to pull together a complete map of all the issues we are facing, and where, so that I can raise these with the road authorities. Fill it out at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey.

Now that I am the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, one of the things I have responsibility for is overseeing the Government's big new expansion in childcare. Once completed in Autumn 2025, it will give working parents 30 hours of free childcare every week from when their child is 9 months old until they start school. It is great to be involved in delivering this exciting new policy and you can check eligibility at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

It is also great that the Prime Minister has successfully delivered on his promise to halve inflation by the end of the year. It involved hard decisions and discipline, but it is right that we focused on this as inflation eats away at the pound in your pocket and has had negative effects on both prices and interest rates.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As ever, if I can help with anything then do, please get in touch via.johnston.mp@parliament.uk

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BLEWBURY SCHOOL MARKS SPECIAL NATIONAL EVENTS

The last few weeks have been a busy time at Blewbury School. We were delighted to welcome visiting families to our recent open days and look forward to many new pupils joining us in 2024. If you missed out on this opportunity, introductory visits can always be booked through the School Office.

Meanwhile the whole School has been busy participating in a range of very significant national events. What follows below is an update on them from Cici and Elliott, who are two Year 6 pupils:

Across the School we have been learning about **Black History Month**. In class we read a book called 'Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt', a fictional story based on historical events where people trapped by the slave trade in America escaped to Canada. This year, the focus of Black History Month was 'celebrating our sisters', therefore we learnt about Rosa Parks, Floella Benjamin and Aretha Franklin. We feel that we are really lucky that racism is less common nowadays and it is important to understand equality.

For **Remembrance Day**, on the gate each morning and after lunch each day, the house captains collected donations by selling poppies. The money goes to help people who have served in the armed forces. During our service on Thursday, Father Jason played us piece of music called 'I vow to Thee My Country' and we sang a song which our headteacher Miss Reeder had taught us, called 'Remember.' Annabel then read the poem 'In Flanders Fields' and pupils in Picasso class shared prayers. Here is one: 'Dear Lord, please give us peace in this world. Help us to remember the people who fought in this country. May God bless us, the Holy Spirit enlighten us, and the Son heal us. Amen.' This helped us to reflect on the past times of world wars.

This week, we are participating in **Anti-Bullying Week**, starting with *It Is OK To Be Different* 'Odd Socks Day'. We have also taken part in activities such as creating colourful socks, role-playing scenarios and writing pledges. On Monday we had an assembly on how to spread awareness about bullying and how to stop it. We have learned that it is important to celebrate diversity because everybody is different and should be valued and respected.

NEWS FROM THE RED LION

With Christmas and New Year fast approaching our agenda for the festive season is now well underway! We're holding a '70's fundraising evening on **Saturday 25th November** in support of Matty Horkan and Joe Wild. Although the tickets for the dinner are now sold out, you can still attend the auction of promises from 10pm, followed by a 70's disco. Time to squeeze yourself into the old flares for some Saturday Night Fever!

Our monthly Open Mic session takes place on **Monday 27th November**.

To keep your minds busy, join us for a merry Quiz Night on **Wednesday 20th December**.

Our own **Thursday Combo** on **23rd November** has Liza's

authentic Americana, together with G Kitchen providing Indian street

food. On **7th December** we have Laurence on the piano with some

Christmas classics, together with Friends and Flavours. On **14th December**

it's The Springliners (Matt and Jo Napper playing Bluegrass) together with

the lovely Gavita and her Ghurka street food. On **21st December** George

Parker has the full family supporting his solo act together with G Kitchen.

Street food on Thursdays means The Lionsden kitchen serves its own food

on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays – we've introduced a new 'Six of the

Best" brunch menu together with Dark Horse Roastery coffee for eat-in or

take-away. Other evening menus to suit a wider variety of tastes, include Fish n Fizz Friday's as well as bar snacks

and a selection of some old favourites including the popular Lionsden steak burger as well as roasted glazed ham

egg and chips. Check out our new menus on www.theredlionblewbury.co.uk.

In the run-up to Christmas, we're taking group bookings of 8-plus for our traditional Christmas Oakham turkey lunch

or dinner. Brace yourself for another Blewbury Boxing Day Walk including the annual singalong at The Red Lion

followed by our own well established Open Mic.

More details of what's on can be found at www.theredlionblewbury.co.uk or follow us on Instagram @redlionblew

Wishing you a very merry festive season. John and Annabel bookings@theredlionblewbury.co.uk 01235 850403

JAZZ AT MOCKBEGGARS

Bossa Gringo, Saturday 23rd December. Brilliant Saxophone player Toliy Vyacheslavov's Nu Latin group, featuring:

Tolly on Sax and percussion, ace guitarist Hugh Turner on acoustic nylon and steel string guitar, acoustic bass man

Paul Jeffries and polymath Raph Mizraki playing congas, acoustic bass and melodica. Think Getz, Jobim and more.

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FROM OUR CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

Canada is the third largest country in the world, and its glaciers, steadily declining as a result of climate change, now cover about 2% of it. But if you exclude the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, Canada's landmass supports approximately 20% of the Earth's glacier ice volume, more than any other nation. Compare this with 18,000 years ago, when the whole continent and much of Europe and Asia was covered in ice during the last ice age.

Its most accessible ice field is in the Rocky Mountains, astride the British Columbia – Alberta border, partially within the Jasper National Park. I visited part of it during a visit to Banff about 8 years ago and actually stood on the tip of the Athabasca Glacier, quite an experience. It is estimated that this will have completely disappeared between 2040 – 2100, and there is nothing we can do about it.

What happens when there is no more ice to melt and contribute to stream flows? There are six major rivers in BC, of which the Fraser is the largest (and Canada's fifth largest), its basin covering 240,000 sq km, roughly a quarter of the province! Our water in Vancouver comes from three pristine mountain reservoirs (Capilano, Seymour and Coquitlam) and is judged to be amongst the best water in the world. We also have a rainfall-rich climate, with rainfall in the reservoir areas estimated to be about 180 inches per year of new water. However, rainfall differs widely across the province, becoming much drier further inland. November and December are traditionally the wettest months (although sometimes June is known as January!) but we have had very little rain so far this month and the year is way down. The Government is doing all it can to persuade consumers to avoid wasting water, with strict watering regulations in place for most of the year and advice on how to avoid wasting water.

We in the privileged First World have the luxury of being able to turn on a tap to extract water; if we had to walk miles to the nearest standpipe (I remember the drought in 1976!) to get it, we would be a lot more careful with it!

Angela Hoy (angelahoy23@gmail.com)

POST OFFICE NEWS

Hi all! Thank you so much for your patience with me during my first month as Postmistress. Things have been going well. We have been opening our temporary hours of 9-3pm every day but from 28th November (when Karen returns!) we will be returning to our official opening hours – see back page of this Bulletin.

Our last Christmas posting dates for Christmas are listed below. Please allow plenty of time for posting. If possible please post items and gifts for Christmas early, particularly for International deliveries.

Monday 18 December	2nd Class	2nd Class Signed For	Royal Mail Tracked 48 ^{***}
Wednesday 20 December	1st Class	1st Class Signed For	Royal Mail Tracked 24 ^{***}
Thursday 21 December	Special Delivery Guaranteed [®]		
Friday 22 December	Special Delivery Guaranteed [®] (Guaranteed Saturday delivery for an extra fee)		

Our Christmas opening hours over the festive period will be:

Wednesday 20th December 9am - 3pm	Friday 29th December 9am - 12pm
Thursday 21st December 9am - 3pm	Saturday 30th December CLOSED
Friday 22nd December 8.30am-12pm, 2.30pm - 5pm	Sunday 31st December CLOSED
Saturday 23rd December CLOSED	Monday 1st January CLOSED
Sunday 24th December CLOSED	Tuesday 2nd January 8.30am - 12pm, 2.30pm - 5pm
Monday 25th December CLOSED	Wednesday 3rd January 9am - 3pm
Tuesday 26th December CLOSED	Thursday 4th January 9am - 3pm
Wednesday 27th December 9am - 12pm	Friday 5th January 8.30am - 12pm, 2.30pm - 5pm
Thursday 28th December 9am - 12pm	Monday 8th January onwards – as normal

Thank you very much for your business over the last few weeks. I look forward to serving you in a busy December. On behalf of myself, Karen and Andrew, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all! *Thanks, Sarah*

NEWS FROM BLEWBURY PRE-SCHOOL

The children are working hard to get ready for their Christmas Play and have enjoyed a great term so far looking at all the changes of Autumn. We have learnt about hibernation, nocturnal animals, how weather changes in the seasons, including colours and shapes in nature. We have thought about keeping safe and thanking people who help us including Remembrance Day when the children painted beautiful handprints to make into one big poppy.

As we move towards the Christmas festivities, we would like to thank all those, including the BVS, who supported our Fundraising stall at the Village Bonfire event. We would also like to thank The Malthus Trust and Marianne Suhr for their help and commitment in funding the new secondary double glazing in our main rooms.

We continue to be very grateful to all our lovely village friends for their support.

Blewbury Pre-School Lottery The winning numbers for the November draw were as follows: 1st - 047; 2nd - 089; 3rd - 015. In November, the prize fund of £177.50 was shared (50%/30%/20%) between the three winners and £177.50 was raised for Blewbury Pre-School. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all our members.

PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of Blewbury Parish Council's meeting: 7pm, **Wednesday 8 November 2023**, Melland Room, Blewbury Clubhouse.

Present: Dermot Mathias (chair), Sheila Austin, Andrew Calder, Jane Gibson, Lydia Inglis, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders and Mark Shayler. Also present Elizabeth Cooper (clerk) and David Hollick (lengthman). Apologies were received from Anne Millman, district councillor Debra Dewhurst and county councillor Sally Povolotsky.

Blewbury's annual leaf clearance will take place on Sunday 3 December from 2pm, organised by Sustainable Blewbury and supported by BPC – the more volunteers we have, the quicker we can clear the leaves from village paths.

BPC has agreed that the **Amazons Girls' Football Team** can hold practice sessions under floodlights on Tickers Folly Field during the dark months of the winter. The sessions will take place once or twice a week and last for a couple of hours. At the end of the sessions the lights will be turned off and removed from the area. The **skate ramp** has now reopened after the hole was fixed. The PC is now looking into the skate ramp's longer-term future including, perhaps, alternative materials or location. If you are interested in contributing to this discussion please contact the clerk.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

All Blewbury planning applications, decisions and BPC responses, including items under consideration, can be found in the 'Parish' section of the Blewbury website (www.blewbury.co.uk/parish/planning/), updated monthly. This also has links to the Vale's planning site, with full details and plans for all applications.

Responses to the District Council:

P23/V2094/HH 85 Dibleys Resubmission of planning reference P23/V0560/HH to include amended parking arrangement and proposed dropped kerb. BPC objects on the grounds that the space for the parking of two cars (as shown on the plan) appears to be too tight to be practically workable.

Decisions by the District Council:

P23/V1300/HH Charity School House Church Road Erection of detached, oak-framed home office and reading room following removal of two existing sheds. Granted.

P23/V1943/HH 29 Bridus Mead Enclose existing porch, loft conversion with rear dormer and roof light. Granted.

P21/V3076/FUL Churn Cottage, Churn Farm Bohams Road Erection of a replacement house. Granted.

P23/V2066/HH & P23/2067/LB Granary House London Road Refurbish and convert existing curtilage listed storage outbuilding into an ancillary residential annex for a family member or dependent relative. Granted.

P23/V2131/HH Lantern Cottage South Street Proposed amendments to Planning Permission P22/V1817/HH. Granted. Enquiries regarding planning in the parish may be sent to blewburypc@gmail.com

NEED TO CONTACT YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS?	
Sheila Austin 3 Ladycroft Park	Anne Millman Brook Cottage, Church End
Andrew Calder Trefagus, Chapel Lane	Lee Robinson 6 Chailey Gardens
Lydia Inglis Chapmans, Nottingham Fee	Julia Saunders Charity School House, Church Road
Jane Gibson 5 Westbrook Green	Mark Shayler 2 Eastfields
Dermot Mathias The Old Mill, Berry Lane	Elizabeth Cooper (Clerk) 07968 772935 or blewburypc@gmail.com

The next PC meeting will be at 5pm on Wednesday 13 December 2023, in the Melland Room at the Clubhouse.

BLEWBURY CLIMATE ACTION

The effects of Climate Change First it was called global warming, but it soon became obvious that this was an inaccurate name for describing all that was happening to our world. The amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere has risen from 280 to 420 parts per million since 1960. This human-induced rise is greater than the natural increase observed at the end of the last ice age 20,000 years ago, and the average global temperature has risen 1.0 °C in the same time period, but the temperature rise has also had a massive effect on the global oceans.

The sea covers more than 70% of Earth's surface, and water has a very high heat capacity (can store much more heat energy per cubic metre than the land). It has absorbed 90% of the warming that has occurred in recent decades due to increasing greenhouse gases, and the top few metres of the ocean store as much heat as Earth's entire atmosphere. The effects of ocean warming include sea level rise due to the warmer water expanding, coral bleaching, accelerated melting of Earth's major ice sheets, intensified hurricanes, and changes in ocean health and biochemistry. This data comes from NASA's Global Climate Change website, <https://climate.nasa.gov> (Vital Signs of the Planet) and I thoroughly recommend this site. I get stuck on it for hours!

This article starts with a lot of science, but the main reason for the article is the marvellous images the NASA site includes: move to the right along the menu at the top of the page to EXPLORE, click on that, and then click on the top item in the new menu to the left of the page: IMAGES OF CHANGE. As you scroll through these images you will see just how varied the effects of climate change can be: extreme drought to extreme flooding.

And what has the UK experienced this year? The warmest October on record, long dry periods, torrential rainfall, strong winds. Welcome to our new world!

Best wishes for a Sustainable Christmas and less torrential rain in the new year. *Jo Lakeland*



Autumn Leaves Dates for December 2023: Bingo Sessions in The Vale Room at Blewbury Village Hall, at 2pm are December 5th and 19th. The Christmas Lunch will be held on December 18th 2023. For further information please contact Cilla Maguire (01235 851966). If anyone would like to join Autumn Leaves, please contact Cilla on the above phone number. We would welcome any new members.

Astons Online's December round table webinar using Zoom will be 10:30 on Tuesday 5 December 2023. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com. Our **December in-person event** in Astons Village Hall (OX11 9EQ) will be on Tuesday 12 December from 10:00 to 12:00. This will be by appointment only please and not drop-in. Website: www.astonsonline.uk Email; theastonsonline@gmail.com

FLYING SQUAD Number 07891 768197 If the Flying Squad telephone holder is not available, you will be put through to voicemail and you will hear a message which starts – 'Hello, this is the Blewbury Flying Squad phone' and you will be prompted to leave a message. Wait for the beep at the end of the message and give your name and telephone number and you will be phoned back as soon as possible. Please speak clearly. **Please note that the Flying Squad is a voluntary service that relies entirely on people's personal time and vehicle availability, so we need as much notice as possible to arrange a driver.** Please also note that journeys to the Horton Hospital in Banbury are not available from the Flying Squad.

BLEWBURY POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays: 9am-3pm. Tuesdays and Fridays: 8.30 am - 12 noon and 2.30 - 5 pm.

See page 18 for Christmas/New Year opening times

VILLAGE DIARY for December 1-23 2023

				Page
Friday	1	7.30 pm	Blewbury Song for Europe, Village Hall	3
Saturday	2	7.30 pm	Blewbury Song for Europe, Village Hall	3
Sunday	3	2-3.30 pm	Annual leaf clear-up. Meet at Playclose	5
Monday	4	9.30-11 am	Coffee & Kids!, Vale Room	15
Tuesday	5	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	20
Friday	8	3.45-7.15pm	Christmas Dance/Disco Extravaganza, Village Hall	5
Monday	11	1 pm	WI Christmas lunch	7
Tuesday	12	7.30 pm	BlewShed meeting, The Shed, Recreation Ground	9
Wednesday	13	5 pm	Parish Council meeting, Melland Room	19
Wednesday	13	7 pm	Village Carol Concert, St Michael's church	5
Wednesday	13	7.30 pm	Deadline for Christmas/January Bulletin – Swallows, Church Road	
Saturday	16	10.30am	Official re-opening of Style Acre Tea Room	1
Monday	18	12.30 pm	Autumn Leaves Christmas lunch	20
Tuesday	19	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	20
Saturday	23	7.30 pm	Jazz at Mockbeggars – Bossa Gringo, Mockbeggars Hall	17

For Christmas and New Year dates, see forthcoming Christmas/January issue

HOW TO ADVERTISE IN THE BULLETIN The Bulletin welcomes advertisements from organisations and individuals based in Blewbury and immediately neighbouring villages. Space permitting, we also welcome ads from further afield if they do not duplicate existing local services, are not widely advertised elsewhere and are likely to be of interest to residents. Acceptance of advertisements does not imply endorsement of the products or services offered. Advertisements **must** be submitted in one of three rectangular sizes:

- 60mm wide x 40mm high (cost: £2.00)
- 60mm wide x 85mm high (£4.00)
- 90mm wide x 65mm high (£6.00)

Artwork should be in black and white only. You can also send plain text for us to fit into an appropriately sized box. If you are advertising a village event you can also present it as plain editorial, i.e. not highlighted in a box, for no charge.

All advertisements should be submitted to the Editor in the first instance, either emailed to editor@blewbury.co.uk as a Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, JPEG or PDF attachment, or typed/handwritten and delivered to **Swallows, Church Road, Blewbury OX11 9PY**. If your advertisement is accepted, please note that payment **must** be received before the Bulletin goes to press. If you require repeat insertions over multiple months, you will be referred to the Advertising Manager to make the appropriate arrangements.

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS We are always happy to receive editorial contributions, which can be submitted in the same way as advertisements – see above. We ask for a maximum length of 500 words (closer to 400 if there is an accompanying photo). Anyone supplying information for publication must be responsible for its accuracy. We require name and contact details in all cases, although if requested these will not be published. The editor reserves the right to reject submissions. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Bulletin.

To see the Bulletin online visit www.blewbury.co.uk.

The Blewbury Bulletin is published at Swallows, Church Road, Blewbury, OX11 9PY. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of published information, the Editor and Officers accept no responsibility for the consequences of any errors. **Problems receiving your Bulletin? Call 01235 850337.**

Editor: Chris Whatmore, Swallows, Church Road, OX11 9PY tel 851055 editor@blewbury.co.uk. **Local Distribution Manager:** Kathy Edmunds, Wayside Cottage, Westbrook Street, OX11 9QA tel 850337 kathy_edmunds@btopenworld.com **Postal & Email Distribution Manager:** Helen White, Southbourne, Bessels Way, OX11 9NJ tel 850483 mail@daisyh.net **Advertising Manager:** Elizabeth Murphy, The White House, London Road, OX11 9PD tel 851244 elizabeth.murphy52@gmail.com **Treasurer:** Rachael Richardson, Robinsons, Church Road OX11 9PY **Webmaster:** Peter Willison, Fleetwith, Nottingham Fee, OX11 9PG tel 850936 webmaster@blewbury.co.uk.