Blewbury Bulletin

Number 691 November 2026

ALAN AUSTIN 1951-2026

Alan passed away peacefully at home on 6th October surrounded by his family and friends. Many of you will have known Alan from his time living in Blewbury, but many more of you would have known him for the food he cooked for our business Creative Catering, so even if you did not know Alan personally, there is a very good chance that at some point during the last 34 years you would have tasted the food that he had cooked. His funeral will be held on 6th November at South Oxfordshire Crematorium at 11am, and following the service the wake will be held at Blewbury Village Hall. If anyone who can't make the service would like to come for a drink and a bite to eat at the village hall they would be very welcome (from 12.15). Alan will be greatly missed by all who knew him. *Sheila Austin*

SKATEPARK OPENS

The Blewbury Skatepark was finally officially opened on 4th October. The sun shone and over 50 people came to toast the skatepark and show off their moves on a selection of scooters and skateboards. There was even an attempt to use a wheelbarrow; it didn't go well, we wouldn't recommend it! Sheila Austin gave a lovely speech and then Dermot Mathias, who led the subcommittee of the Parish Council that worked to deliver the project, cut the ribbon and declared the skatepark officially open.



We used a fantastic local company, Bendcrete, based in Abingdon, who got the design process off to a great start with some brilliant ideas. From there, the plans were shaped and refined with valuable input from villagers of all ages at our community consultation meeting. It was a real team effort, and we're grateful to everyone who got involved. Bendcrete then worked tirelessly to bring the plans to life, delivering the skatepark right on schedule and budget — despite some exceptionally hot weather along the way! The Parish Council would like to thank the following people and community groups, without whom nothing would have been built: FCC Communities Foundation, The Blewbury Village Society, Savages Garden Centre, The Blewbury Players, The Tony Loy Trust, Blewbury WI, anonymous donors and local residents. Special thanks to Paul Whitehead who spent hours filling in grant application forms, very much appreciated.

Cheryl Raynor, Grant Manager at FCC Communities Foundation, said: *"FCC Communities Foundation is delighted to have supported the development of the new Blewbury Skatepark. This fantastic facility has been driven by community ambition and collaboration, creating a safe, inclusive and exciting space where young people and families can be active, develop new skills and spend time together. It's wonderful to see the project completed and already being enjoyed by local residents. We are proud to have played a part in helping bring this valuable community asset to life."* We look forward to seeing you all there soon! *Sarah Parkin*

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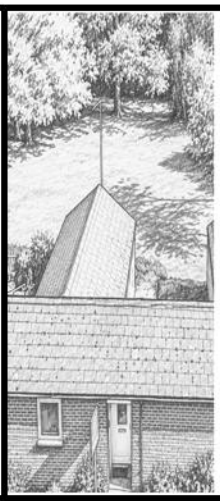
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Members of the Royal British Legion are asked to assemble outside the Church at 10.45 am. Other organisations in Blewbury and Upton are cordially invited to join the Service and to gather at the War Memorial in London Road for the laying of wreaths immediately afterwards

POPPY VOLUNTEERS WANTED

As well as the service and online donations, the Royal British Legion mounts a house-to-house collection in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Sunday. This year we are short of volunteers; anyone who could help out, please contact Bill Gore at billgore@hotmail.co.uk.

SCHOOL NEWS

Blewbury School's Harvest Festival was wonderfully well attended, with families and the wider community coming together to celebrate the season and give thanks for the harvest. A huge thank you to everyone who donated so generously—your kindness and support are greatly appreciated. Below are some Autumn haikus and a Harvest Prayer, written by some of our pupils.



Robert and Colton with the donations which went to Didcot Foodbank

Birds sing beautifully, squirrels start to hibernate, Autumn fills the air – Sam W

On a rainy day, the clouds swish on top of me, leaves circle around me - Millie

The colourful crops, they filled the flowing fields, farmers ready to pick – Amelie

Dear God, I want to say a massive thank you for all of the food in my life – it's made me flourish and grow. All of the farmers who get the healthy food and help us live a healthy life. I want to say a giant thank you to the foodbanks that help the people who need food because food is a big thing in our lives. Amen – Samuel. *Jo Reeder, Executive Headteacher*

AND SPEAKING OF THAT…DIDCOT FOODBANK

This month's Foodbank dates are Saturday 31st Oct to Monday 9th November: drop off at the Old School House or the Post Office; local supermarkets also accept donations. Please ensure all food is within its sell by date. Foodbank cannot accept alcohol, razors, medicines, or homemade preserves. The Didcot Emergency Foodbank is still a vital source of help to many local families and if you can give even one item every donation is hugely appreciated. Cash donations, however small, are also very welcome: https://didcotbaptist.churchsuite.com/donate, click Foodbank.

FRIENDS OF ST MICHAEL'S AUTUMN FAIR 7TH NOVEMBER

On Saturday 7th November we are holding an Autumn Fair in the Church, 10 AM – 1 PM, with local stalls of gifts, crafts and food, pre-loved books and local books. Plus Blewbury 2027 Calendars (see advert on page 17).

Come and join us for tea, coffee & homemade cakes and pick up some lovely gifts & goodies. Please note that not all stall holders will have card machines; please bring some cash so you don't miss out!

ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR, EAST HAGBOURNE

On Saturday 21st November there will be an Arts and Crafts Fair at St Andrew's Church, East Hagbourne, 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Free admission; refreshments available (all proceeds to The Friends of St Andrew's). See advert on page 4 for more details. *Linda Benton*

ROADWORKS UPDATE

There will be single-lane working with traffic lights on the A417 between Blewbury and Streatley, near the Astons, between 27th October and 6th November.

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Arts and Crafts Fair

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Sat 21st November 2026, 10:30 to 4:00

- Meet local crafts people, artists and writers.
- Free admission
- Refreshments available all day, (proceeds in support of The Friends of St Andrew's)
- Ample parking at the Village Hall



Payments by cash or cheque please (due to limited internet signal)

Further information: Linda Benton, 01235 817891, Linda.Benton@live.co.uk

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO GHANA'S CHILDREN



You may remember that I was fundraising this time last year for St. Miracle Works Educational Foundation (SMWEF) in Ghana – a registered charity, working in partnership with Ghanaian social services and the government to identify and rescue exploited children, and give them a future. Thanks to your generous contributions and to Compton Primary School's donations of its old school uniform, the SMWEF orphanage in Senya Beraku has just received 10 large boxes of clothing, toys and books.

I am working on organising a school trip for Year 12s next summer to volunteer at the orphanage, helping with teaching the children and construction work on the bedrooms and schoolrooms. If anyone would like to make a donation to support the charity and its work, please contact Rose via WhatsApp on 07918 970626. Together, we can change lives. *Rose Wanstall, UK Ambassador for SMWEF Ghana*

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE MALTHUS TRUST

The Trustees once again welcome applications from any Blewbury resident of any age for help with the current financial pressures. Applications to other sources for help will not prevent you from being eligible for help from us. Please note that this is separate to our educational grants which are only considered each September.

The application process is totally confidential and, with this in mind, application forms are being made available from inside both Church porches, just call in and pick one up! The forms are available from **Monday 26th October.** If you are stuck at home and unable to collect a form, please feel free to call one of our Trustees on (01235) 851789 and a form can be delivered to you. Alternatively, please email us on MalthusTrust@gmail.com and a form can be emailed to you. The closing date for applications is **Saturday 21st November** and the return addresses will be shown on the forms. We plan to distribute funds in early December. *Jo Napper*

POSADA



An unfamiliar word, perhaps, but this is the name of the Mexican tradition when Mary and Joseph go on their journey to Bethlehem! In Blewbury, this happens through the days of Advent: 29th November (Advent Sunday) to Christmas Eve, when they arrive at the Crib Service in Blewbury Church. Each night they will stay at a different house in the village. We hope many of you will put your names forward to host our knitted crib figures for one night, together with their donkey. They travel safely in a basket. Children particularly enjoy looking after Mary & Joseph, but this is open to everyone in Blewbury. You receive the Posada from the previous host, and make arrangements to take it to the next house. Full instructions are given. Please contact Revd Louise Butler soon. She is making the schedule during the first half of November: 07837 009730.

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BLEWBURY VILLAGE SOCIETY

A huge thank you to all who helped at and supported the Blewbury Beer Festival – especially to our sponsors, all our fantastic musicians (who performed free of charge), and the PTA for running the food and soft drinks stall! As a result of everyone's hard work and drinking skills, we will be sending £1500 each to the UNICEF Ukraine appeal and the Blewbury Village Hall solar battery fund. The BVS has also agreed a further £1400 donation to the Village Hall battery fund from its core funds.

Fireworks Night, Saturday 7th November

The BVS Fireworks Night will be held on Saturday 7th November in Tickers Folly Field. We have a spectacular firework display planned, and the bar and baked potato stalls will be back, under our marquee. Gates will open at 6:00 pm, the bonfire will be lit at 6:30 pm and the fireworks will start at 7:00 pm.

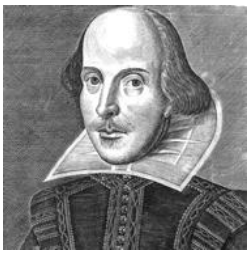
Entry is **£6 for adults and £3 for under 16s** – cash or card accepted (card preferred). The entry fee **includes a baked potato**, so it's a great value family night out! As always, we need lots of volunteers for this event – especially with wood collection and potato baking beforehand, and with setup and refreshment serving on the night. If you can help, please email us at the BVS email address above. We'd love to hear from you!

We will have the usual wood collection for the bonfire with a small collection fee. We are working on transport, but spaces may be limited, so please email blewburybvs@gmail.com or phone Alex on 07831 692331 if you would like your address to be included on the rounds. The deadline for a request for wood collection is **Friday 30th October** so that we can plan the route. We politely request that you only put out reasonably clean firewood and remove as much metal and plastic as possible. Unfortunately, if you do not adhere to this, we may need to refuse to pick the wood up, so thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Dates for your diary

Don't forget to put the regular Blewbury events in the diary: Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve (24th December) and the annual Boxing Day walk (26th), as well as the Roger Cambray Memorial Walk from Blewbury to The Bell Inn at Aldworth (1st January 2027). More details to follow in next month's Bulletin and on the BVS Facebook page.

LOVE SHAKESPEARE? YOU'LL *REALLY* LOVE EMMA SMITH!





For the third year running, Blewbury's Shakespeare fan club **The Motley Crew** plays host to the internationally renowned broadcaster and Oxford academic Professor Emma Smith. This year she'll be bringing her unique combination of wit, irreverence and scholarly insight to bear on Shakespeare's cross-dressing heroines: Rosalind from *As You Like It*, Viola from *Twelfth Night*, Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*, Imogen from *Cymbeline* and Julia from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. As anyone who attended Emma's previous talks will tell you: whatever you think you know about Shakespeare now, you'll come out of this event knowing more – so grab your tickets now!

*Professor Emma Smith appears at Blewbury Village Hall (OX11 9QQ) at **8pm on Tuesday 3rd November**. Tickets are £8.50 each (a fraction of what you'd expect to pay at a literary festival) and include a glass of liquid refreshment. They can be purchased now at Blewbury Post Office or can be reserved by emailing admin@themotleycrew.org.uk.*

COFFEE & KIDS

Please remember: we are starting earlier to help families who are dropping off older children at school and pre-school. So that will be **9am - 11am** on **Monday 2nd November** in the Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall. Do join us at a time that suits you. We welcome all bumps, babies & toddlers, along with parents, grandparents or carers.

AND - an extra trial afternoon session: **Wednesday 18th November 1.30pm - 3pm.**

Some families might find this a better day and for those with older children, we finish near to school pick-up time. We are trying to find the best time, so let us know what is most convenient for you. At both sessions you will find a warm, friendly and safe place to enjoy the company of others and have some refreshment as the little ones have fun with toys, learn to play together, do some craft activities and sing together! A donation of £2 is appreciated towards our costs. Mothers' Union hosts look forward to welcoming you. Any queries, text Louise on 07837 009730.

ARTISTS AND NATURALISTS: THE BULLETIN NEEDS YOU!

Would you like to design the cover for the Christmas edition of the Bulletin this year? If so, please get in touch at editor@blewbury.co.uk. Many excellent artists have contributed over the years (and one of them will get tapped on the shoulder if no-one volunteers) but we welcome new ones.

Meanwhile, Glen Meadows, who has produced many wonderful, informative and inspiring Nature Notes columns for the Bulletin, will be laying down his pen after Christmas. If anyone would like to take this on (it's not compulsory to produce a column every month), please let the Editor know.

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PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING - REPORT

Sustainable Blewbury hosted a screening of The People's Emergency Briefing in Blewbury Village Hall on 6th October. About 80 people attended, including visitors from neighbouring villages. The 50-minute film has now been seen by over 4000 groups across the UK. It brings together a panel of independent experts to highlight the causes and impacts of our changing climate and to show examples of solutions that can be taken globally and nationally. They call for the UK Government to hold a prime-time televised emergency briefing on the climate and nature crisis. After the screening, participants gathered in small groups to discuss reactions to the film, to share responses to the issues raised, and to suggest actions that can be taken nationally and locally. Most people found the film powerful, providing a good summary of the main themes, and a bigger picture of the causes and challenges facing us all.

Reactions varied from surprise or despondency to purpose and determination.

"The film was rational and fact-based"

"*The film is not as shocking as I expected"*

"It's so immediate, I'm surprised"

"A feeling of bleakness for humanity with a strong possibility of collapse of civilisation"

Audience members felt that some themes were missing, including carbon capture, the impacts of transport, the consequences of high levels of consumption, ultra-processed foods, and the potential impact of the AI industry on water supplies.

There was consensus that politicians need to be urged to work across parties and think about the long term both globally and domestically:

"The scale of the problem demands big changes in society and government"

"Government focuses on cleaning up rivers but not giving sufficient thought to water supply in future"

"Directions need to be stronger from Government"

Discussions yielded a variety of suggestions for collective actions in Blewbury and other villages including spreading the positive messages in the film, working together to store water, planting wildflowers, village-wide action plans for solar panels, heat pumps and EV chargers, and encouraging young people to identify projects relevant to them.

More immediately people committed to:

"*Walk to Savages"*

"Support all societies in Blewbury to do at least one thing to be more sustainable"

Sustainable Blewbury will continue to provide a positive space for us all to share experiences and explore solutions. We're delivering a series of follow-up events over the coming months, starting with a talk on the impacts of climate change on water by local resident and expert Paul Whitehead. This will be on Monday 16th November at 8.00pm in the Melland Room (see page 19 for more details). Meanwhile, if you'd like us to plan a second screening of the film, or have other comments and ideas, then please just log in to the People's Emergency Briefing section of our website, https://www.sustainable-blewbury.org.uk/. *Anne Millman*

BLEWBURY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

BlewTube continues in the Vale Room on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm with our season of classic films, please come and join us, tickets on the door £6; tea, coffee and biscuits in the interval. The November movie, on Thursday 12th, is *As Good as it Gets*, starring Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt.

The solar panels are being installed at the beginning of November (2nd – 4th); we hope for minimal disruption to the hall users, but please take care while the work is underway, there may be restrictions around the building. The EV charging stations are being well used, we ask that people don't park in the charging bays.

The hall user meeting was held early in October, thank you to everyone who came, we had some great feedback and suggestions, which the trustees are trying to put in place. The door codes have been changed, you should have an email, please contact Evi if you haven't.

The village hall Christmas Market is on Sunday 13th December, 12 noon until 3pm, a proper village Christmas event. There will be stalls selling a variety of different goods, outside food vendors and village charity stalls, we still have a few spaces available, please email; karencbrooks@gmail.com. Please come along and support our local small businesses and community groups.

Did you know we have a new pickleball group? They are looking for new players on Wednesdays, 5pm to 6.30pm. No experience needed, contact Evi (see below).

To book the Village Hall, Vale Room or the committee room, please ring Evi on 07398 919992, email blewburyvillagehallbookings@gmail.com or go to the website http://www.blewbury.co.uk/venues/village-hall.

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Written by Steve White

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On sale from Savages & Blewbury Post Office or www.blewburyplayers.co.uk (for mail delivery only)

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BLEWBURY PRE-SCHOOL – A REFLECTION

Blewbury Pre-School has been at the heart of this village since it opened its doors in 1971. Initially established as a playgroup, it responded to legislation setting out the basis of education for early years with the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the requirement for Statutory inspection by Ofsted and the need for qualified staff, and evolved over the past 55 years into the most wonderful educational provision for our youngest learners aged from 2½ to 4½ years old. As parents have told us, 'It has been a magical place for our children to play and learn'.

We have always been passionate about giving every child the best start in their education, ensuring their happiness and wellbeing are at the forefront of everything we do. We get to know each child's interests and abilities, their likes and dislikes; we plan for their individual learning needs and reflect this in how we deliver the curriculum, to make sure each child fulfils their potential with us. We have always had a whole-family approach and we have cared for and supported every family who has come to us through all the highs and lows of family life.

We have had the privilege of being a small part in the lives of many children and families in Blewbury and beyond, and had the pleasure of watching them grow up and find their own way in life. Working here for so many years also means that we have welcomed children of children whom we taught here!

Over the years, we have taken part in some special village events, including a Royal Procession around the Village dressed as Kings and Queens to celebrate the late Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee in 2002, created displays for the Blewbury Village Garden Association, won awards with the Blenheim Palace Children's Art Competition twice and had tea with two generations of the Duke and Duchess, entertained the village with our Pancake Races and Sports Days on the Play Close, dressed Scarecrows for the Village Festivals, and had a visit from the Oxfordshire Lord Lieutenant's office to present a grant to us for our new raised bed. We have won awards with Oxfordshire County Council for our inclusive practice and even received a Lottery Grant to redesign our building. Along the way we have been supported by some very special organisations and people, including The Malthus Trust, Blewbury Parish Council, the Blewbury VPA, The Tony Loy Trust, Blewbury Post Office, the Red Lion and The Blueberry, Marianne Suhr for all her wise advice on our building (especially the design of our mezzanine), Blewbury WI, Betty Bloom Dance, St Michael's Church PCC and many others. We thank all the parents on over 30 different Management Committees who have worked hard to help us through the years. We also thank the parents and friends who have given their time and shared their talents with us in so many ways, from those who have helped to mend, clean, unblock, repair and maintain our building to those who arrived from the North Pole each year in time for the Christmas Party (you know who you are!). Finally, a massive thank you to YOU, the wonderful people of Blewbury, who have loyally supported us with your time, expertise and kindness as well as contributing to our fund-raising to help us keep going over the past 55 years.

Blewbury Pre-School will close its doors to children and families for the very last time in December as we hand the baton onto Blewbury Primary School. We wish them every success in creating and sustaining the magic of young children's care and education that we have achieved here. We have planned an opportunity for all those who have loved and treasured our village Pre-School to come along to a choice of two Open Afternoons on **Sunday 15th November and Sunday 22nd November from 2.00 to 4.30pm.** We will have all the photographs out so that you can look through the archives and marvel at the photos of you as a child, relive your happy memories of being involved here and say farewell. Light refreshments will be available and we would love to see you all again.

With best wishes, *Mrs Edwards, Mrs Phillips and Mrs Cheswick, the staff of Blewbury Pre-School.*

PRE-SCHOOL LOTTERY

The winning numbers for the **Blewbury Pre-School Lottery** were: 1st – 061, 2nd – 007, 3rd – 082. The prize fund of £152.50 was shared (50%/30%/20%) between the three winners and £152.50 was raised for Blewbury Pre-School. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all our members for your continued support.

SAFETY REMINDER

As the clocks change, and the evenings get dark earlier, please remember your bike lights actually need to be switched on! Also pedestrians and dog walkers really need to wear light-coloured clothing or reflective jackets, as it's incredibly dangerous walking or cycling in dark clothing without them. We know it's not cool or trendy, but neither is getting run over by the vehicles that seem to speed around the village going far too fast!

Karen Forman

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News from St. Michael's

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

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

Services at St Michael's Church in November

† Sunday 1st November	**All Saints' Day**	
	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.30 am	All Age service
	3.00 pm	All Souls' service
Thursday 5th	*7pm*	*Time for quiet and reflection: Lady Chapel in Church*
† Sunday 8th November	**Remembrance Sunday**	
	10.55 am	RBL Remembrance Sunday Service with Blewbury Brass Band
Wednesday 11th	*7.30 pm*	*Fellowship by the fire, Charity School House*
† Sunday 15th November	**2nd Sunday before Advent**	
	10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
	6.00 pm	Talk by Julia Saunders: *Christian themes in A Christmas Carol*
† Sunday 22nd November	**Christ the King**	
	~~10.30 am~~	No service in church due to the play
Wednesday 25th	*7.30 pm*	*Fellowship by the fire, Charity School House*
† Sunday 29th November	**1st Sunday of Advent**	
	4 pm	Benefice Advent Carol Service. *Please note, no 10.30am service*

In addition to the services in Church, we continue to have an **online service at 10.30am 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. We would also be delighted to arrange for home communion for those who are unable to attend a service.

All Souls' Service – St Michael's Blewbury – 1st November 3pm. All are very welcome at our annual service of commemoration, which includes the lighting of candles and the reading out of names of loved ones we have lost. Limited disabled parking available at the Benefice Office. Anyone who would like to have a loved one remembered at this service is welcome to send names to Elaine in the Benefice Office by October 29th.



Royal British Legion Remembrance Sunday Service: 8th November with Blewbury Brass Band
Please be seated by 10.55. Please join us for this special Parish Service of Remembrance. Following the service the congregation will walk up to the War Memorial.

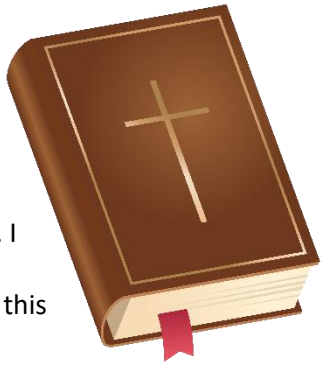


***A Christmas Carol* in Church!** You would've seen that the Blewbury Players will be putting on *A Christmas Carol* in Church. Dr Julia Saunders will give a talk on the Christian themes of A Christmas Carol on **Sunday 15th November at 6pm**. In order for the set for the play to be built and for equipment to be stored, the **church will be closed from Thursday 18th November until our 4pm service on Sunday 29th November** meaning no service on 22nd November.



Advent Carol Service: Sunday 29th November at 4pm. Advent, which means "coming", starts 4 Sundays before Christmas and we focus on waiting, hope, and preparation for both the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and his promised future return. All welcome at the joyous candle-lit service!

"A wholesome and strengthening influence"



As you read these words, you may well be wondering to yourself: where do these words come from? Who wrote them? To what do they refer?

The words come from King George VI, and they appear at the front of the bible given to all who were serving in the Armed Forces during the early years of the 2nd World War. I have a copy of one of these bibles, given to a certain John Hudson on 8th November 1940. I don't know if John survived the war, but his bible did, and I have it in front of me as I write these words. The bible issued by the King contains only the books of the New Testament – this kept the book small and easily portable.

The King's message in full reads as follows: "*To all serving in my forces by sea, or land, or in the air, and indeed, to all my people engaged in the defence of the Realm. I commend the reading of this book. For centuries the bible has been a wholesome and strengthening influence in our national life, and it behoves us in these momentous days to turn with renewed faith to this Divine source of comfort and inspiration*." These words are dated 15th September 1939 – right at the very beginning of the war.

Many have found the bible to be indeed a source of "comfort and inspiration". It is a book for everyone – and not just a book for people who happen to believe in God. Everyone can benefit from engaging with it, just as everyone can benefit from experiencing a bit of Shakespeare. But, like Shakespeare, it can be a challenging text. If you are interested in exploring the bible further, I recommend having a look at the excellent resources provided by the Bible Society (www.biblesociety.org.uk) . I would also recommend coming along to one of our church services, especially the 6pm service every Sunday at St Andrew's Hagbourne, where there is usually plenty of opportunity to discuss (and debate!) passages from the bible in more detail.

The bible is indeed a "wholesome and strengthening influence" – but only if we are prepared to engage with it, and bring an open and inquiring mind.

Father Jason

CAMPAIGNING by MU members comes to the fore in November. For many years our charity has joined forces with others to support the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. This runs from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25th, to December 10th, International Human Rights Day. Special meetings and prayer events are held during this 16-day period, but MU works alongside communities to help end domestic abuse and gender-based violence and to support those affected by it, 365 days of the year. MU is very much aware that men as well as women can be victims of domestic abuse. Some branches in the Oxford Diocese give practical support to Women's Refuges.

Particular to Mothers' Union is the RISE UP campaign:
R – RESPOND appropriately to disclosures
I – INFORM; become more knowledgeable
S – SUPPORT those who have experienced abuse
E – EMPOWER; become strengthened to act where possible
U – UNITE with the Holy Spirit and
P – PRAY

We encourage and welcome you to join us for a half hour prayer service during the 16 Days, on Saturday 5th December at 10am in Blewbury Church. This issue touches many lives and is often hidden.
Our monthly Holy Communion service followed by refreshments at Upton church will be on **Thursday 19th November 10am at St. Mary's Church, Upton**. All are very welcome. Join us and Join in.

Revd Louise Butler 07837 009730, leader, Churn MU branch

Date for the diary - Village Carol Concert – Thursday 17th December
Please make a note in the diary of this year's Village Carol Concert on Thursday 17th December, 8pm.

Food Bank Collection Saturday 31st October till Monday 9th November

Thank you for your continued generosity to the Didcot Emergency Foodbank. Please help if you can! Drop off items at the Old School House between the dates above or at the Post Office anytime. - St Michael's Action Group

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POST OFFICE & VILLAGE SHOP NEWS – NOVEMBER

As we head into November, Christmas is just around the corner, and we're getting ready for one of our favourite times of the year at Blewbury Village Store and Post Office!

Post Office Opening Hours

Our usual opening hours are: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 3pm, Wednesday: 9am – 12 noon.

Christmas Stamps

It's never too early to get organised for Christmas! Christmas stamps will be available to purchase from Tuesday 3rd November, so whether you're sending cards to friends and family across the country or further afield, you can get a head start on your festive posting. We encourage everyone to post early, particularly for international post.

Bell Ringers' Christmas Postal Service

We're delighted that our wonderful Bell Ringers' Christmas Postal Service will be returning again this year. From the end of November, our special Christmas post box will be available in the Post Office, allowing you to send Christmas cards to Blewbury, Upton and North Moreton for just 30p per card. It's a lovely local tradition and a fantastic way to spread some Christmas cheer while supporting our village bell ringers. All proceeds go directly to the bell ringers, so please do make use of this wonderful community service.

Santa's Post Box Is Returning!

We have some exciting news for our younger customers! Santa's little helpers will once again be delivering his special post box to Blewbury Post Office at the end of November, ready to collect all those important Christmas wish lists. Children can pop their letters into our magical post box, where they'll be sent completely free of charge, directly to the North Pole! Even better, every child who posts a letter will receive a personal, handwritten reply from Father Christmas himself. We can't wait to see all the wonderful letters arriving this year.

In the Shop

As we get ready for the festive season, we'll be stocking a lovely selection of Christmas cards, wrapping paper, gift tags and little gifts to help you get organised. Our beautiful handmade crochet collection also makes a wonderful choice for Christmas presents, with children's clothing, cosy blankets, cardigans and adorable stuffed toys. Each piece is lovingly handmade, making them extra special gifts for little ones. You'll also find our usual selection of greetings cards, crystals, local honey, fresh free-range eggs, sweet treats and everyday essentials.

Thank You

As always, thank you so much for supporting Blewbury Village Store and Post Office. We're incredibly grateful to be part of such a wonderful village community. We look forward to welcoming you throughout November and helping you get ready for the festive season! *Sarah, Karen & Andrew*

CROQUET CLUB: BLEWBURY QUARTET WIN REGIONAL LEAGUE

Plenty of other players helped get Blewbury's team to the inter-divisional final of this year's Southern Croquet Federation (SCF) GC Handicap league, seeing off opposition ranging from High Wycombe to Winchester. But it was (unusually) a team of 4 Blewbury villagers - Sarah Donne, Andy Evason (capt), Deirdre Cochrane, and David Long - who brought home the silverware, in a closely fought match against Eynsham.

We'd love to have more Blewbury residents join us - currently only a quarter of our membership come from OX11. And there's never been a better time. Our courts are in magnificent shape, thanks largely to our new borehole. And we've a winter recruitment offer on: join now, and your annual fee covers you to end-March 2028. Our main season may be through the summer, but the above trophy was won in the rain, and we try to keep our courts open all year. Beginners are welcomed, coaching is available, & you don't have to play competitively: it's great just spending time socially on the courts on a sunny winter's day. Let me know if you want a free trial session (we provide everything, and only ask that you wear flat shoes), or come along to our AGM to find out more (Wednesday 25th November, 4:30pm in the Melland Room). *David Long, secretary@blewburycroquetclub.org.uk, 07484 360169*

BRIGHTEN UP YOUR AUTUMN EVENINGS AT BLEWBURY TABLE TENNIS CLUB!

With the evenings drawing in earlier and the cooler weather setting in, it's all too tempting to hibernate indoors. Why not shake off the chill and brighten up your week by joining us at the **Blewbury Table Tennis Club**? Whether you are a seasoned player looking for a competitive rally or a complete beginner just wanting a fun knock-about, a warm welcome awaits you. It's a brilliant way to stay active, chat with friendly faces, and beat the winter blues.

- **Where:** Blewbury Village Hall
- **When:** Tuesdays between 5:30 pm -7:00 pm
- **Who:** All ages and abilities welcome — bats and balls provided!

Come along and give it a try—we'd love to see you on the table. For more information, session times, and club updates, check out https://www.blewburytabletennisclub.co.uk/.

A

VACANCY - Kitchen Assistant

Blewbury Primary School

Kitchen assistant needed to help with food prep, serving meals and kitchen cleanliness

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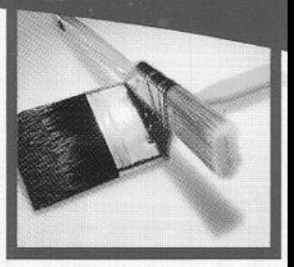
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BLEWBURY PLAYERS

Dickens' timeless A Christmas Carol comes to life in the atmospheric setting of St Michael's Church with ghosts, drama, live traditional carols and 75 minutes of Christmas magic.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens adapted by Myf Laugharne. Directed by Jo Laugharne and designed by Loraine Fergusson. **St Michael's Church, Blewbury, 25-28th November** at 7.30 pm and 3pm on the Saturday. Box Office opens at 9am on 30th October @ www.blewburyplayers.co.uk. Adult £15 Child £8, recommended age 7+.

Myf Laugharne's adaptation stays wonderfully true to Dickens' original novella, with a few twists along the way. Along with ghostly characters and dramatic events we will have a band enhancing the action with traditional carols. We have been given permission to hold our production in St Michael's, a wonderful performance space which will be true and even add to the atmosphere which Dickens originally created. We are extremely grateful to Father Jason and the Parochial Church Council for this fantastic opportunity.

This is a performance that will transport you to Victorian London and you will leave with Christmas spirit. We may be a little early with our performance in late November, but we want to inject a little piece of Christmas spirit for everyone to take away with them, as Advent begins.

Auditions for *An Absolute Turkey* from Georges Feydeau's *Le Dindon*. Translation by Sir Peter Hall and Nikki Frei. Directed by Paul Clayton. 14-17th July, 2027 at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre.

A Summer of Farce – Come and Join the Fun!

"I'm absolutely delighted to be returning to the Blewbury Players in the summer of 2027, when we'll be taking a glorious journey into the wonderfully chaotic world of French farce with An Absolute Turkey. There'll be misunderstandings, mistaken identities, doors opening and closing at precisely the wrong moments, and all the delicious madness that makes farce such a joy to perform and to watch. But first, we need a company!" *Paul Clayton*. Paul plans to make the auditions welcoming, enjoyable, lively and above all fun. Whether you're an old hand at farce or someone who's always fancied giving acting a go, he'd love to see you. Let's begin our journey towards a fabulous summer of farce! Auditions are on 9th and 10th January with call-backs on 16th and 17th January. Please contact us at blewburyplayers@gmail.com to book an audition or find out more.

BLUEBERRY PUB EVENTS AND UPDATES

We have our ongoing pop-up cuisine dining with Tikka and Tadka Indian supper club (reservations only), Choi's fantastic Chinese on Monday and Tuesday evenings. Turkish nights to come and Stakd Smash Burgers.

Our original wood-fired stone-baked pizzas Tuesday to Sundays and available for takeaways and dining in.

If you are looking for a place to hold your works or family Christmas party, ask about using our restaurant area free of charge. We can arrange party buffets including charcuterie meats and finger foods. Why not make a party of it and use our karaoke or bring your own playlist. Are you a Chef or perhaps you run a cuisine business and would like to host a pop-up night at the Blueberry? Speak to Kevin if you are interested and qualified.

Don't forget we now serve breakfast on Fridays 8am to 11.30 am, Saturdays and Sundays 9am to 1pm.

Fridays Deal - take away Bacon Roll and Coffee for just £5, so why not pop in if you don't have time for a sit-down breakfast feast. Thank you as always for your support. Best wishes, *Caron and Kevin.*



BLEWBURY WI NEWS

On Wednesday 25th November we meet in the Vale room of the Village Hall at 7.30pm. Our talk this month is "Stories for Christmas". We welcome back Jaye Windmill who will present five Christmas themed stories, all different and suitable for the Christmas season, including some original material. We hope it isn't too early to mention the "C" word. Have you finished your festive shopping yet?

For all matters to do with Blewbury WI, ring our Secretary, Joy, on 07803 697809 or email blewburywi@gmail.com.

Mondays	2.30pm	Mah Jong	Sharon
Monday 2 November	7pm	Scrabble	Joy
Friday 6 November	10.30am	Coffee morning	Trish
Friday 6 November	7pm	Craft club	Karen
Wednesday 18 November	9.30am	Walk	Jenny
Thursday 19 November	2.30pm	Rummikub	Jan

BLEWSHED

BlewShed Meetings: Guitar maker and player Jason Foster, guitarist with the space rock band 'Lunar Kites', demonstrates how he makes (and plays) electric guitars at BlewShed's evening meeting, on Tuesday 27th October. So the music you hear that evening might not be from the band practice room!

24th November will be BlewShed's AGM, followed by Blewbury Bulletin's editor Neville Hargreaves, talking about 'The challenges of editing and producing the Blewbury Bulletin'. All welcome.

Community Projects: The Jerry Faulkner memorial bench repair after it was vandalised is almost complete and should be back in service soon. Several new swift boxes are ready, but BlewShed desperately needs more 1/2" (12mm) thick plywood boards to make these boxes, so if you have any that you don't need, we would be very grateful. Even small pieces can be used.

Collaboration with Sustainable Blewbury continues with another session of sharpening summer season-blunted secateurs and repairing electrical items at the Repair Café on 1st November.

BlewShed opening times: Monday 2-4pm**,** Tuesday 1.30-4pm, Thursday 2.00-4pm, Friday 2-4pm and Saturday afternoons 1.30-4.00 pm.

Everyone is welcome to club nights on the **fourth** Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at BlewShed. *Mike Wrottesley, BlewShed secretary*. secretaryblewshed@gmail.com, https://blewshed.home.blog/news/

OLLY GLOVER MP

Recently, my focus has been on ongoing issues with Thames Water and the structure of our water industry. I spoke in a debate on the public ownership of the water sector, after 866 constituents signed a petition calling for a referendum on this. I have also recently written to Thames Water's Head of Engagement, Land and Consents, urging her to share the feedback they have received from the public about the SESRO - or White Horse - reservoir. Local communities deserve transparency, especially while public trust in Thames Water is so low.

I have continued engaging with local businesses and community groups, such as Tokamak Energy in Milton Park, who showed me their work on advanced fusion devices, and St Andrew's Church in East Hagbourne, who welcomed me for a Climate Q and A panel event. I visited Oxford Manor Care Home, during a community evening showcasing their work and facilities. Wigod Way Family Centre in Wallingford showed me the amazing support they provide to families, and I joined children and the Headteacher from Cholsey Primary School for an inspection of walking routes to their school. I have also had a productive meeting with Whittington Crescent residents, to discuss issues residents have been facing with the company managing their new estate.

I was honoured to lay a wreath at the Wilding and Andrew Service on September 13th: an important date in Wallingford's calendar, in memory of the RAF Servicemen who gave their lives, ensuring their damaged aircraft during World War 2 crashed away from residential areas. I was also honoured to attend the BBC Make a Difference Awards in Oxford, celebrating The Earth Trust winning an award!

In other news, many of you will be aware of new proposals for a large Solar Farm impacting the constituency, and I will be meeting with the Cearn Solar Farm proposers to understand their plans and raise community concerns with the developers directly. I have also welcomed a recent central government decision regarding special educational needs funding, where it has been confirmed that £121.8 million will be received by Oxfordshire County Council to cover the funding gap for vitally important services across Oxfordshire.

As always, if there is anything I can help with, please contact my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk or leave a voicemail on 0207 219 7657. *Olly Glover, MP for the Didcot and Wantage Constituency*

Repair café. Sunday 1st November, 2 to 4pm in the Melland Room at Blewbury Clubhouse and in BlewShed. Bring your household, clocks, watches and gardening articles for repair or sharpening, clothes for mending and bicycles for fixing for free (except chargeable parts). This will be your last chance before Christmas. Refreshments available; donations welcome to cover costs. Arrive early to avoid disappointment (only two items per person can be sharpened). Come and see what we do and enjoy a cuppa and cake.

Volunteering at the Nature Reserve, Sat 14th Nov, 10.00 to noon. We will need to continue scything as well as doing some hedge and other maintenance. Bring your own protective gloves and a drink. Meet at the Reserve. We will also be doing some conservation work at Chalk Pits on some Sunday afternoons: contact the secretary for dates.

SB Talk: the impacts of Climate Change, Mon 16th Nov, 8pm in the Melland Room. In the first of this new series of winter talks Blewbury resident Prof. Paul Whitehead will discuss the impacts of Climate Change on water, pollution and sustainability. Paul brings over 35 years' experience of research on water quality and pollution issues. He will talk from both national and international perspectives on a subject that affects the quality of our day-to-day lives. One of the biggest effects of climate change will be on freshwaters, altering the distribution on local, national and global scales. Raised temperatures enhance evaporation rates generating changed cycles which impact flooding, droughts and the sustainability of agriculture and natural habitats. We face damage to water quality as well, although there will be winners and losers, depending on location, habitats and water distribution.

Tickets: £8 (includes a drink) available on the night (door open 7.45pm) or book in advance on the SB website.



Save the Swifts project update. Thank you to everyone who has expressed interest in having a Swift nest box. We have started to install them, teaming up with an expert from Harwell. We are working through the list of people interested to determine which houses are suitable for boxes. If your property is not suitable for Swifts we are recommending alternatives.

If you would like to be considered for a Swift box, please email Sarah Bennie sarahabennie@gmail.com or Conor Mackenzie at conormackenzie91@gmail.com.

BLEWBURY FREECYCLE FREE ITEMS TO A GOOD HOME	E-MAIL	TEL NO.
3 tier wooden shoe cabinet, teak coloured. 124cm (h) x 64cm (w) x 24cm (d)	Susan Tilbrook susantilfg@gmail.com	07752 129185
Breville 2-slot toaster with instruction book; several garden ornaments (no gnomes or brightly coloured items)	Lyn Blackie blackies10@btinternet.com	07733 334484
Trampoline, 12 ft diameter outer measurement, 10ft bouncing surface. Needs new bumper and safety net. We will help deliver and assemble locally.	Marianne Suhr Marianne@oldhouseconsultancy.co.uk	07808 287507
To freecycle your item please send a short description, email & phone number to Lydia Inglis (lydandmuz@gmail.com)		

If you want to know more about Sustainable Blewbury and become a supporter who receives occasional newsletters, email secretary@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk.

DO YOU NEED A HELPING HAND THIS CHRISTMAS?

United Charities
of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury

The festive season can be a joyful time of year, but it can also be an anxious time of year if your family is struggling financially. At United Charities, we can help individuals and families with additional costs at Christmas if money is a bit tight, particularly if you are already stretched paying the bills.

We offer support to people of all ages living in Blewbury, the Astons and Upton by providing a one-off payment which can help pay for unexpected expenses, the weekly food shop, or other day-to-day living costs. If you, or someone you know needs help, please do get in touch. There is a short application form to complete which can be picked up from the North Porch at St Michael's Church, or requested by email to unitedcharities@outlook.com. We can help you fill in the form if needed. All applications are dealt with confidentially.

United Charities of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury Registered Charity No: 203538

CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

Canada marks September 30 as **National Day of Truth and Reconciliation** (also known as Orange Shirt Day) which was initiated in British Columbia in 2013 and has been recognized as a public holiday in most Canadian Provinces since 2021. The orange shirt symbolizes the loss of culture, freedom, and self-esteem that many Indigenous children experienced. This day reminds us that **"**Every Child Matters". There were 140 federally run residential schools in Canada that operated between 1867 and 1996. Survivors advocated for recognition and reparations and demanded accountability for the intergenerational impacts of harm caused. Canadian residential schools forcibly separated over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children from their families and communities—operating under the explicit state and church-run goal to "kill the Indian in the child" and erase Indigenous cultures. Students had their hair cut short, were stripped of traditional clothing, were assigned numbers or Euro-Canadian names instead of their own, and were beaten or punished for speaking their native languages. Thousands of children never returned home. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented over 6,000 student deaths, though total mortality estimates, compounded by unmarked and undocumented graves discovered at former school sites, are significantly higher.

Several other nations observe dedicated remembrance days, notably **South Africa** on 15th December since 1995 to foster national unity and heal the scars of apartheid, following the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In **Australia,** National Sorry Day, on 26th May, honours the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families by government agencies. More than 40 countries around the world including Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, South Korea and Taiwan, have initiated formal Truth and Reconciliation Commissions to investigate historic state atrocities, though they choose to mark these reckonings through memorials or localized remembrance rather than a specific statutory holiday. And the United Nations has instituted 24th March as the International Day for the Right to honour victims of severe human rights violations and recognize the importance of the right to truth and justice worldwide.

Colonialism has a lot to answer for; but at least today's indigenous children in Canada have equal opportunities, and their heritage is now being recognized for the invaluable contribution it has made to modern-day Canada.

Angela Hoy (ahoy2343@gmail.com)

U3A
Learn, laugh, live

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. **17th November - Jennifer Cowling** on 'The extraordinary things we say'. Are you the kind of person who happily uses phrases such as "a turn of the screw" "a turn up for the book" "cupboard love" or been "taken to the cleaners" in your everyday conversations? Maybe you are oblivious to the fact that many of your listeners have no idea what you are talking about. A light-hearted look at figures of speech. For details email membership@didcotu3a.org or visit https://didcot.u3asite.uk/.

BRIDGE CLUB

First some club news. This year's Wessex League season started on 1st October *(apologies, this should have gone in the October issue – Editor).* Blewbury Bridge Club has an evening team in Division 1 (strong opponents) and a daytime team in Division 3 (gentle and relaxed). We try to give a game to as many people as possible. So, if anyone's interested in playing, contact us! See https://www.bridgewebs.com/blewbury/ for more information.

Onto the quiz. You've been picking up rubbish all day, e.g. these hands! Also, with today's partner, you're playing a 15-17 1NT and five-card majors. (You've agreed that 1D promises a four-card suit, so 1C might be a doubleton.) What do you bid?

HAND 1 = partner opens 1C... whoops, possibly a doubleton.

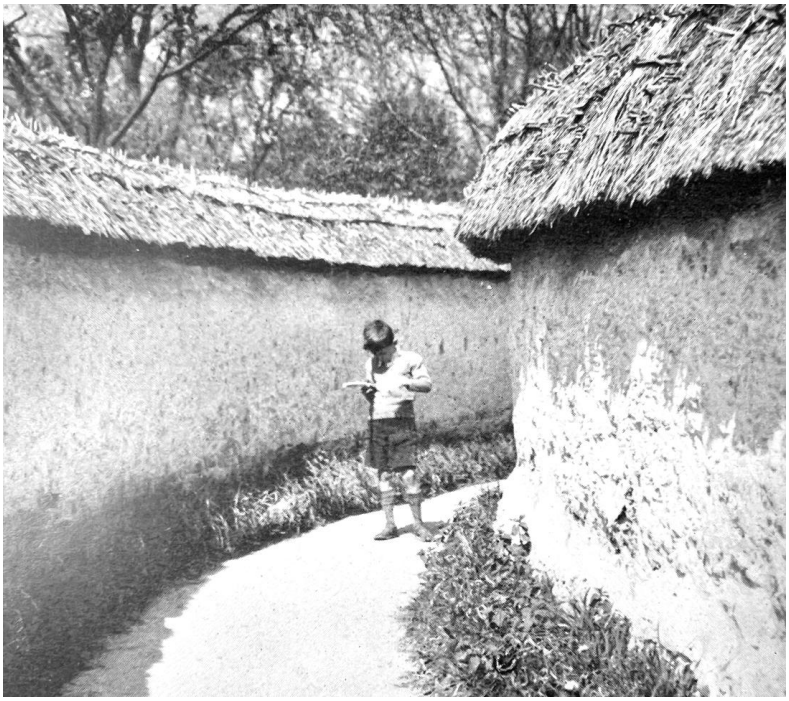
HAND 2 = partner opens 1C again and South doubles. You scrape up a 1D response and partner leaps straight to 3NT. Again, South doubles.

HAND 3 = partner opens 1H. You scrape up a 1S response and partner rebids 1NT, showing a weak (12-14) balanced hand. You're vulnerable and quite possibly in deep trouble, but at least you haven't been doubled yet.

Answers on page 22.

HAND 1	HAND 2	HAND 3
♠ Q109	♠ 865	♠ Q1096
♥ 103	♥ 4	♥ 9
♦ Q10972	♦ J109873	♦ 1096
♣ 932	♣ J42	♣ J8764

CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY THIS BOY?



I was in a second-hand bookshop recently when I stumbled upon 'Murray's BERKSHIRE Architectural Guide', edited by John Betjeman and John Piper, published in 1949. It included a great photo of a little lad on his way to the Red Lion…doing the maths, I am guessing the boy was born around 1939. I wondered if anyone might recognise him? Here's the extract from the book, with a particularly nice reference to us residents…

"BLEWBURY. A village under the Downs in their barest and most open section. Rolling cornfields surround it, and to the east is Blewburton Hill crowned with a camp that is, on this side, heavily ramparted. The village, owing to its open site, some old but unpretentious buildings, and its picturesque lay-out, has for long attracted refined and retired residents, but it also has some racing and many agricultural connections. There are several seventeenth-century houses in the main village street. A farm north of the church is moated and has old features, but the most distinguished building, apart from the church, which it is opposite, is the Malthus School-house, whose Queen Anne façade, with its casement windows and original roof, has a tablet with the date 1709.

The church, plastered without, has a plan which will interest antiquarians. It was originally a twelfth-century cruciform building with a central tower, to which a north aisle was added in the fourteenth and a south aisle and western tower in the fifteenth century. At this time the central tower was demolished and the present Perpendicular west tower was built, and the timber roofs of nave and south aisle were made. The varying styles of the centuries may be seen in the internal mouldings, capitals, arcades and window tracery. But the church is beautiful as well as interesting, especially when seen from the west end. Great Transitional arches whose piers supported the twelfth-century tower, give a view of a long twelfth-century stone-vaulted chancel of two bays, the altar approached by flights of steps. This spacious long-drawn interior must have been the inspiration of Gilbert Scott's work at Bradfield parish church. The furnishings are mostly undistinguished Victorian. There is some old grisaille glass in the east window and a fifteenth-century wooden parclose screen. Brasses.

Not many cob and thatch orchard and garden walls, characteristic of all chalk valleys of England, survive. The best are at BLEWBURY." *Marianne Suhr*

NATURE NOTES: PINEAPPLE WEED

Nestled between compacted gravel, farm tracks and well-trodden gateways grows pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*), a modest plant that thrives where many others struggle. Its small green-yellow flower heads lack the white petals of its chamomile relatives, yet a gentle rub of its leaves releases a surprisingly sweet aroma, reminiscent of fresh pineapple, giving the plant its common name. Originally native to north-eastern Asia and parts of North America, pineapple weed is now widespread across Britain. It is particularly at home in disturbed ground, flourishing in places regularly subjected to foot traffic, bicycle wheels and car tyres. While many plants require rich soils and protection from disturbance, pineapple weed has evolved a low-growing, flexible structure that allows it to tolerate constant trampling. The finely divided leaves hug the ground, reducing damage from passing feet and helping the plant persist in even the busiest locations.

Its success in dry conditions is equally remarkable. Pineapple weed commonly appears on compacted, stony soils where water drains quickly and summer drought can be severe. The plant's modest size reduces water demand, while its rapid growth enables it to complete much of its life cycle before prolonged dry periods take hold. As a result, it often remains green and productive long after surrounding vegetation has wilted.

Ecologically, pineapple weed is an important pioneer species. By colonising bare ground, it helps stabilise soils and provides nectar and pollen for small insects, including hoverflies and solitary bees. Although rarely dominant, it contributes to the biodiversity of pathsides, urban environments and disturbed habitats that might otherwise support little wildlife.

Historically, pineapple weed has been used in a similar manner to chamomile. Herbalists prepared infusions from the flower heads to ease digestive discomfort, mild anxiety and sleeplessness. Its pleasant fragrance also made it a popular ingredient in herbal teas. *Glen Meadows*

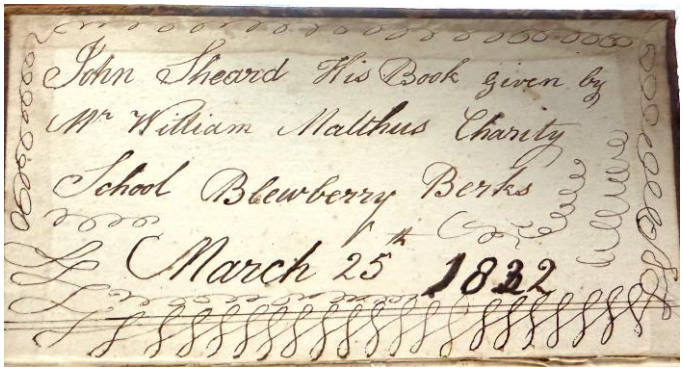
LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Among the interesting artefacts in our collection, one that came into the possession of the Group recently is a Bible presented to John Sheard by the Mr William Malthus Charity School on 25th March 1822. The Sheard family history reveals a link with Esther Sheard, whose sampler is also held by the Blewbury Local History Group. The family goes back several generations in Blewbury and nearby. The painting "The Gossiping Gaffers", which hangs in Oxford Town Hall, was painted by Thomas Frederick Mason Sheard who may well be related to the Blewbury Sheards.

John Sheard documented his family events in his Bible. He was born on 19th December 1808 to Jonathan and Hester Sheard, the youngest of four children. He was baptised by Morgan Jones (a.k.a. The Blewbury Miser) on 27th December of that year. His father Jonathan is found in the 1841 census living in Cholsey, a widower aged 77 years. We know from the Bible entry that Hester, John's mother died 25th January 1827 aged 72 years. As this was before civil registration of deaths, no cause of death is known, but we know that Jonathan who died on 11th February 1844 aged 80 succumbed to "Old Age".

Jonathan and Hester had been married by licence in St Michael's church on 11th October 1794 by Morgan Jones who was the incumbent at the time, witnessed by William Robinson and Martha Humfrey Robinson. Both signed the resister with their mark since they could not write. Jonathan had previously married Ann King by banns in 1791 but she, sadly, died in 1792, aged 22.

John Sheard married Charlotte Gunter, whom the Bible records as having been born in 1812, on 15th February 1834 also in St Michael's Church. In the censuses from 1841 to 1881 John was variously an agricultural labourer or shepherd and the family lived in Nottingham Fee. John and Charlotte had 6 children all of whom are mentioned in the Bible: Charlotte (1835-1918), Jonathan (1837-1914), John (1841-1931), Caroline (1844-?), Deborah (1849- 1922), Albert (1854-1931). John Sheard died on 8th January 1883 of bronchitis, the death being registered by his daughter Caroline, who had married Charles Parsons.

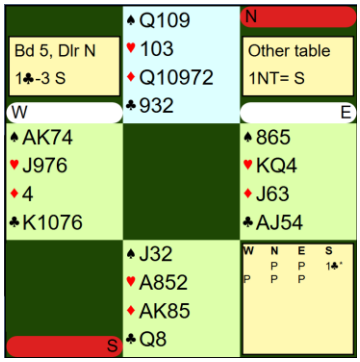


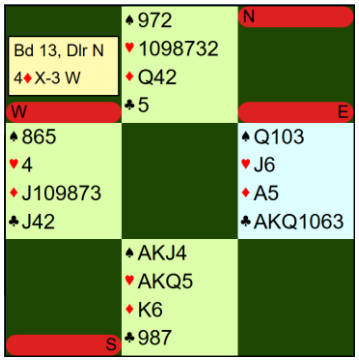
Esther Sheard was born and baptised in Blewbury in 1826 and she was John Sheard's niece, being the daughter of his older brother Jonathan, who was a shepherd. She made her sampler in 1840, when she was a 14-year-old pupil at the William Malthus Charity School, stating

"Plant, and root and fix in me / All the mind that was in thee; Settled peace I then shall find / Jesu's is a quiet mind"

Esther married Henry Ford, an agricultural labourer, in 1854 and had 4 children with him, having had one child Edwin in 1853 whose father is not recorded. The end of Esther's life was sad as she was admitted to the Berkshire County Lunatic Asylum in Cholsey on 8th April 1881, where she died of paralysis on 2nd February 1882.

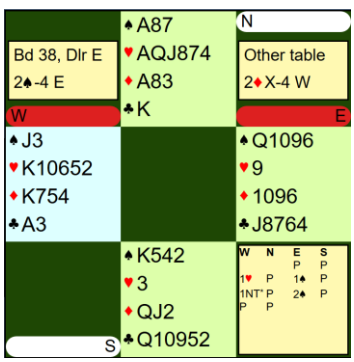
BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS (QUESTIONS ON PAGE 20)





HAND 1. Responder passed when this hand came up, leaving opener in 1C with a sub-optimal 3-2 fit. This went three off vulnerable. REPLY 1D ON THE NORTH HAND. Personally, I think it's good tactics to respond on hands like that anyway, regardless of system, but it's particularly important when playing a short club.

HAND 2. Having made a super-weak response to 1C (which I agree with), West didn't want to pass 3NT doubled. Also, they were playing the common modern treatment that opener's leap to 3NT didn't promise 19 balanced points but instead a long solid minor (obviously clubs). West thus bid 4D, costing 800; cheaper than 3NTx-6 for 1700, but a better bid had been available. West has a singleton and 3-card support for partner's long, solid clubs. Had he rescued in 4C, that can't go more than two off and in practice could've managed -1 (a great result).



HAND 3. I was East and rebid a whimsical 2S. I expected to go off by miles, but these were desperation measures to avoid a double. It's like the situation when partner opens a 12-14 1NT and you hold garbage. (Discussing the hand afterwards, my partner and I disagreed on whether it would have been safer to pass, see if a double appeared and then take action. Would South have bid a take-out double? We'll never know...) *Finn Clark*

PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of Blewbury Parish Council's meeting: 7pm, **Wednesday 21 October 2026**, Melland Room, Blewbury Clubhouse. **Present:** Sheila Austin, Andrew Calder, Andy Evason, Anne Millman, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders (chair) and Mark Shayler. Also, present Michelle Taylor (clerk) and county councillor Rebekah Fletcher.

Apologies from: Sarah Parkin, Ben Scott, Iain Wood (lengthman) and district councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne.

Local news – If you have a permit for a brown garden waste bin, you can leave out up to 4 additional standard-sized (60L) black refuse-style sacks of natural garden waste for the normal collection on 6th November. You can also leave out any pumpkins next to the bin. Please make sure you remove any candles or decorations that were in / on them. Part of Westbrook Street will be closed from 2nd-4th November for Thames Water Utilities works.

District and County Council news

Have your say on our plans for buses across Oxfordshire until 17th November. The public consultation for OxBus 2040: Plan for Bus is now live on Let's Talk Oxfordshire! View the documents and complete the survey online following this website: https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxbus-2040-plan-for-bus.

To promote the consultation, County Council officers will be holding Public Consultation Drop-In Events in Banbury, Oxford, Witney and Didcot. At these events officers will be available to answer questions and listen to concerns. The Didcot event is in the Cornerstone Arts Centre on Friday 13th November: 1000-1400 and 1500-1900.

Planning Applications

Enquiries regarding planning in the parish may be sent to blewburypc@gmail.com. All Blewbury planning applications, decisions and BPC responses, including items under consideration, can be found in the planning section of the Vale of White Horse website. This has full details and plans for all applications.

Responses to the District Council

P26/V1429/HH: 12 London Road OX11 9NU. Proposed side and front extension to the existing house. No objection.

P26/V4305/HH: 46 Eastfields Blewbury Didcot OX11 9NS. Loft conversion including rear dormer window and front rooflight. No objection.

Decisions from the District Council

P26/V0323/FUL: Downside Farm Woodway Road Blewbury OX11 9EX. Erection of extension to existing workshop to form an office. Granted 13th July 2026.

P26/V2153/HH; P26/V2154/LB: Nottyngham Fee House Nottingham Fee Blewbury OX11 9PG. Installation of EV charger and repairs to rotten window frames. Granted 7th August 2026.

P26/V0584/HH: Penny Chase, Bessels Way Blewbury OX11 9NH. Demolition of loose boxes, rear extension with room in the roof. Granted 18th August 2026.

P26/V3348/HH: Buttonmead Bessels Way Blewbury OX11 9NH. Erection of a two-storey side extension incorporating a carport at ground floor level and a bedroom above. Granted 29th September 2026.

P26/V3434/FUL: Downside Farm Woodway Road OX11 9EX. Erection of storage barn. Granted 12th October 2026.

Need to contact your parish councillors? In the first instance, contact the clerk, Michelle Taylor, 07968 772935, clerk@blewburyparishcouncil.gov.uk; she is then able to organise contact or meetings with the relevant councillors. Your councillors are: Sheila Austin, Andrew Calder, Andy Evason, Anne Millman, Sarah Parkin, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders, Ben Scott and Mark Shayler who all live in Blewbury.

Next parish council meeting: 7pm on **Wednesday 18 November 2026**, in the Melland Room at the Clubhouse.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (EXTRACT)

Oxfordshire County Council is ramping up its Highways Winter programme. In April this year, we visited every gully in the division to clean, assess and improve drainage. We've now evaluated the results and established that there is a £30 million backlog of gully repairs, dating back around 10 years. The council is top in the country for climate action, and we have already invested nearly £9.5 million in drainage improvements, but will now invest a further £4 million over the next two years. We've also repaired nearly 8,500 potholes, resurfaced more than 25,000m² of carriageway and cut verges at 420 sites across the county. While there is still a huge amount to do, I'm hopeful that we are entering winter better prepared than in previous years. That said, I'm continuing to press for action at flooding hotspots, including between Blewbury and East Hagbourne.

Good news on support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Oxfordshire was one of only 20 councils nationally to have its SEND improvement plan fully approved by the Government. As a result, we will receive £4.9 million to recruit more specialist staff, expand support within mainstream schools and provide more joined-up local services for families. We have also improved timelines for Education, Health and Care plans (from 29.1% delivered in a timely manner Jan-Jun 2025, to 96.3% Jan-Jun 2026).

For some young people needing home-to-school transport, a combination of reasons meant some arrangements were not in place when they should have been. Both the Cabinet Member and the cross-party Education Scrutiny Committee are carrying out a thorough review to ensure lessons are learned. *Bekah Fletcher*

Autumn Leaves: Bingo Sessions in the Vale Room, Village Hall at 2pm on 10th and 24th November. For further information, or to join Autumn Leaves, call Cilla Maguire on 01235 851966 or contact Maureen Knapp, Club Chairman - maud24a@gmail.com. We would welcome any new members.

Astons Online CIC supports people who want to be digitally confident on the Internet, with smartphone apps or online services like health and banking. Events and support are free of charge and open to everyone. www.astonsonline.uk**.**
Tech help café in Aston Upthorpe Village Hall (OX119EQ) on Tuesday 17 November from 10:00 to 12noon for problems with devices, email, internet and online services. Book one-to-one in-person or remote help appointments with digital helpers by email theastonsonline@gmail.com or by phone 07780 958249.
Didcot based charity, Getting Oxfordshire Online, would love to have your unwanted laptops, tablets and smartphones to distribute to others who are not able to have their own. Contact us by email or phone as above.

BLEWBURY FLYING SQUAD is a volunteer hospital car service for Blewbury residents. We cover appointments in hospitals, doctors' surgeries, dentists, opticians, chiropodists, physio etc. As the Flying Squad is a voluntary service which relies entirely on people's personal time and vehicle availability, we need as much notice as possible to arrange a driver. Please note that journeys to the Horton Hospital in Banbury are not available from the Flying Squad.
To make a booking, telephone **07891 768197**. If the Flying Squad telephone holder is not available, you will be prompted to leave a voice message. Wait for the beep at the end of the BFS phone message then give your name and telephone number. Please speak clearly. You will be phoned back as soon as possible.

BLEWBURY POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS
Monday, **Tuesday, Thursday, Friday**: 9am-3pm. **Wednesday**: 9am-12 noon.

			VILLAGE DIARY for November 2026	**Page**
Sunday	1	2 - 4 pm	Repair Café, Melland Room and BlewShed	19
Monday	2	9 - 11 am	Coffee & Kids!, Vale Room	7
Tuesday	3	8 pm	Prof. Emma Smith talk on Shakespeare's heroines, Village Hall	7
Saturday	7	10 am - 1 pm	Friends of St Michael's Autumn Fair, St Michael's Church	3
Saturday	7	6 pm	Fireworks Night, Tickers Folly Field	7
Tuesday	10	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	24
Tuesday	10	7.30 pm	Local History Group meeting, 9 Westbrook Green	22
Saturday	14	10 am - 12 noon	Volunteering at the Nature Reserve, Nature Reserve	19
Sunday	15	2 - 4.30 pm	Pre-School Open Afternoon, Blewbury Pre-School	11
Monday	16	7.45 pm	Prof. Paul Whitehead talk on climate change and water, Melland Room	19
Tuesday	**17**	**7.30 pm**	**Editorial and advertising deadline for December Bulletin**	**-**
Wednesday	18	7 pm	Parish Council meeting, Melland Room	23
Sunday	22	2 - 4.30 pm	Pre-School Open Afternoon, Blewbury Pre-School	11
Tuesday	24	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	24
Tuesday	24	7.30 pm	BlewShed meeting and AGM, The Shed, Recreation Ground	18
Wednesday	25	4.30 pm	Croquet Club AGM, Melland Room	15
Wednesday	25	7.30 pm	WI meeting and talk: Stories for Christmas, Vale Room	18
Wed-Sat	25-28	7.30 pm	*A Christmas Carol*, St Michael's Church (also 3pm on Sat 28)	17

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. Display 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)
All advertisements should be submitted to the Editor at **editor@blewbury.co.uk**. 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 arrangements.

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS We are always happy to receive editorial contributions, 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

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