

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

September 2025



Photo by Debra Richardson



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SEASONED FIREWOOD



Wow what an amazing day we had on 30th August for our **Summer Raffle Draw**. With a huge thank you to our generous suppliers and our customers that bought raffle tickets. The money raised will be used to make some improvements to our cafe area this Autumn.

We would like to also thank the support of Swindon Town Ladies Football Team and the Blunsdon U12 Girls Football Team for coming along on the day and supporting our event. You had more luck than Nick Knowles in picking out our winning tickets! Thank you also to RRT (Swindon) for their support in providing a BBQ. We hope you enjoyed the event and we thank you again for all your support in buying tickets! If you are a shareholder, you will have received a personal invite to our 2025 AGM planned for 7 pm on Weds 3rd Sept in the Blunsdon Village Hall. Our accounts were verified and shared with Shareholders during August and we are pleased to share that we made a small Operating Profit and we are starting to replenish our reserves. We are still very much a Community Benefit Organisation in that any profit is invested back in the business and our community. We donate to local organisations this past year and continue to support Community Events.

August saw lots of busy recruitment activity for our Weekend roles. We had 12,500 views on social media and received 48 CVs for shortlisting. We were so overwhelmed by the number and quality of applications we have created a talent bank for future vacancies. The response to our recruitment has reinforced the positive recognition that people see our shop and cafe as a great place to work. Thank you to everyone who applied. Please follow us on social media to meet new team members in early September!


With a new team starting in September that means we are saying goodbye to more of our youngsters that joined us right back in the beginning. Naomi joined us as a weekend assistant in March 2023, as we opened the new shop and cafe. September 2025 sees her leaving us for university. It has been a pleasure to work with you Naomi and see you grow over the past few years. We wish you every success and please stay in touch! Ed, Oscar and Dan, we say goodbye and good luck to you guys too. You are all off to University after a year of fun working in our Cafe. The new team has big shoes to fill!

Dates for your diary:

- Wednesday 3rd September 7 pm: Blunsdon Community Shop AGM (Shareholders only)
- Wednesday 17th September 7 pm: Wine Tasting - Ticketed Event
- Saturday 11th October 7.30 pm: Singalong Bingo 70s & 80s - Ticketed Event

Finally, this Summer saw the Anniversary of Laura joining our team as Manager. We're sure you will all agree Laura is an asset to our shop and cafe, whether she's researching new products, managing our suppliers or identifying ways in which we can further support our "Unity in the Community" initiatives. Thank you Laura!

Shop opening times: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat: 8 am - 5 pm, Fri: 8 am - 7 pm, Sunday: 8 am - 4 pm. Cafe closes 1 hour before the shop.




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**Social Walking from
Blunsdon Community Shop**

**Every 2nd and 4th Thursday
of the month at 10:00am**

We start and finish at the shop.

**New walkers
always
welcome**

**Any queries, please message
Alex on 07554 811779**



Community Shop & Café
BLUNSDON
serving the community

Blunsdon Baby and Toddler Group

We meet every Wednesday morning in St Leonards church from 10 to 11.30am, term time and holidays.

The group includes foster carers, parents and grandparents, so a good mixture and plenty of experience if you wish to pick people's brains!

We ask £1 per session to cover costs, and this includes hot drinks and biscuits.

There might be singing and craft sessions as well so come along and see who we are.



St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon
Connecting with God, each other
and our community

From the Rector's pen

It has been almost two years since I arrived here in the Parish. Sometimes time rushes by and at other times it seems like we are waiting forever at the bus-stop; but yes, we are unbelievably already into September.

The time of Harvest and getting ready for the run down to Christmas. However, as I travelled around the country during August, I noticed that many fields had already been harvested, the blackberries were ripe and apples were falling from the trees. Much has changed over the last two years.

There have been far too many funerals, and an incredible number of Baptisms. Not to mention the Weddings. Foundations are important, I feel that I have put down good foundations here. Jesus talks about building foundations on sand and on rock (*Matt 7:24-27*). Without good foundations nothing can be built that lasts. Although the seasons change, and time moves on, I remain firm in my trust in God. Over the last few months, I have taken to wearing my FROG bracelet. I first had it as a new Christian. It reminds me that I need to be "Fully Reliant On God" (Isaiah 41:13) I commend this idea to you. In times of trouble, concern and anxiety, God is the foundation that will not be moved.

God Bless

Rev Phil Goodey



OUR REGULAR EVENTS AND SERVICES AT ST LEONARD'S

- **Baby & Toddler Group every Wednesday 10am-12pm**
- **Lego Club 1st Saturday 9.30-11am**
- **Men's Breakfast 2nd Saturday 9am in the shop**
- **Coffee & Book Sale 3rd Saturday 10am-12pm**
- **Community Prayers Monday 10-10.30am Fortnightly**
- **Bell Ringing every Friday 6-7pm**
- **Communion Service 1st & 3rd Sunday 10am**
- **Morning Worship 2nd Sunday 10am**
- **Breakfast Church 4th Sunday 9am (with breakfast!)**

Everyone welcome!



. FOOD FOR THOUGHT.
Outside Catering



**Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunsdon, Blunt Rise
from 5pm**

Thursday 4th and 18th September

Thursday 2nd and 16th October

**If you would like a copy of our menu,
please email grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com or
WhatsApp 07515 288414
Pre orders welcome by WhatsApp or text 07515
288414.**



BLUNSDON WI

No traditional meetings in August, instead we've had a trip to Aston pottery arranged.
The next meeting is on September 17th at 7.30 in the large hall of Blunsdon village hall and the speaker will be Ruth Baker discussing Extraordinary Wiltshire Women.
Book club will be discussing 'Three Hours' by Rosamond Lupton (warning : upsetting topic)
And the next film club will be discussing "United Kingdom" which is available on iPlayer.
Future trips planned include Kelmscott, and the Everyman theatre.
We hope to shortly launch a lunch club too.

To find out about our WI call Anna on 01793 706392 or visit our
website jackie707.wixsite.com

Parish Council News – September 2025

The long summer hols are over and the kids will soon be back at school (sigh) and we'll be eyeing that thermostat and sorting through our sweater drawers...

August was a great month for Community involvement and as you can see below, we have a team of volunteer litter-pickers who have done a fantastic job around the Village and want to do it on a regular basis and they gave us this message...Thank you to them.

The team had a successful litter pick yesterday morning, they collected around 10 bags of litter, an old carpet and a tent.

We are planning to arrange other sessions on Saturdays, if anyone is willing to join us, we'd be very glad of their help, if they could email to swindon.uk@rrtglobal.org, also if anyone has specific areas they'd like us to focus on, we'd be very happy to hear from them.

We plan to reward anyone who helps with the litter pick with a bacon sandwich.

A few photos below.....



As a result of a great idea from **Hazel Wakefield**, we are looking at collaborating with Dial-a-Ride and the Village Shop to provide an opportunity for those who have difficulty getting out to bring them to the shop for a 'cuppa, a cake and a chat'. This is designed to help with tackling loneliness and isolation in the Parish. If you are interested or know of someone who might enjoy this, call Hazel on 07974 150250 or email goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com or contact Claire the Parish on 01793 705617 or email contact@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Also, in August I was nominated by our North Swindon MP, the Right Honourable Will Stone, for a recognition award for my **Commitment to the Community in Swindon North**. I was flattered and very pleased and collected my award on Tuesday 28th August.

Don't forget you can meet up with your Borough Councillors at their monthly surgery in the **Village Shop and Café on the first Saturday of each month at 11:30 to 12:30.**

Village Caretaker Vacancies

I am pleased to say that we will have appointed two new Village Caretakers, by the time this is published, and after their induction one will start straight away and the other will start a little later once we have the Multi Use Games Area underway during this month.

Resident Feedback Welcome

Recently, we've been encouraged to engage more closely with residents regarding parish matters. As you'll see from this newsletter and Facebook, we do regularly share updates about ongoing and upcoming projects. However, we're always keen to hear your ideas and feedback directly.

If you have suggestions about what projects the Parish Council should consider, please let us know by using the **Contact Us** page on our website: blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk/page/contact You're welcome to submit your thoughts anonymously—simply enter NA in the name and email fields if you prefer not to provide those details. Alternatively, please pop your comments in an envelope and post it in the Village Hall post box marked for the Clerk's attention.

Linley Road Refurbishment – Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) (indicative image)

The site is now almost completely finished – we are waiting for our modular office to be delivered and set in place- and will soon be available to book through our Parish booking site. I must say that it is finished beautifully and is well equipped. The extra parking should help significantly with peak demand and we will finally have a Parish Office!!

There are two five a side pitches (31m x 16.6m each plus a 6m x 2m goal area) with a dividing curtain, and for dedicated times yet to be agreed, two full size tennis courts. Please watch our Parish Council Facebook page for start dates and hire prices. We already have enquiries for football, walking football and tennis.



Antisocial Behaviour

Already! Even before it is operational, we have had some dangerous vandalism at the MUGA. Two primary school age boys were chased off because they were throwing stones and debris over the fence on to the pitches, nearly hitting the low level lights. This could lead to serious injury to any users.

Village Hall

Claire our Assistant Clerk has reminded me that there are still some slots available for long - term bookings, so please call her on 01793 705617 or at Claireboles@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk to ask for details. (she works Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) Or you can look on our booking system on the website www.blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

We had lots of participation at the PC meetings last month for the discussion of the Rivan Chemical Gas Production Plant planned for Little Rose Lane, Blunsdon. Thank you to all the concerned residents for your comments and contributions. The Parish Council submitted a 12 page objection to this application and await the decision of the Borough Council Planning Officer.

S/25/0570 Erection of 2no detached self build dwellings (Class C3) and associated works.
Land At 26 Turnpike Road Blunsdon SN26 7EA

S/HOU/25/0920 Conversion of loft to include increased roof pitch to rear section of existing roof, insertion of roof lights into side roof slope, associated works and erection of 4 bay wooden carport to driveway. 72 High Street Blunsdon SN26 7AE

PLANNING DECISIONS

S/HOU/25/0785 Erection of side dormer window and enlargement of existing dormer window. 24 Sutton Park Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7BB. Application Withdrawn

S/25/0688 Change of use from Residential (Use Class C3) to a mixed use as residential and for day care of dogs including use of existing outbuilding/summer house for the housing of dogs. 39 Ermin Street Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. Application Granted (the PC were assured that everything was in place for the welfare of the residents and guests so withdrew our objections)

S/HOU/25/0672 Erection of single storey rear infill extension to include alterations to the existing conservatory and existing side rear extension. 108 High Street Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7AB. Application Granted

S/HOU/25/0690 Erection of a new roof to facilitate first floor, 2 no. dormer windows to front and rear and erection of a single storey rear extension. Rockley Hillside Way Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8BU. Application Granted

S/HOU/25/0748 Erection of single storey side and rear extensions. The Old Police House 38 Ermin Street Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. Application Granted

S/HOU/25/0561 Erection of a two storey side extension. 12 Ceres Road Swindon SN26 8AF. Application Granted.

S/LBC/25/0761 and S/HOU/25/0760 Erection of a timber framed conservatory replacing existing conservatory to rear elevation, replacement flooring. 45 High Street Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7AG. Applications Granted



Your Speedwatch Needs You! We have a new volunteer and she is going through her training currently. Thank you for your commitment to road safety in the Parish. Our hardy volunteers are out regularly helping with road safety in the Parish. This has led to many

prosecutions by local Police for those abusing the law. Here are a few more...

Hello Brian and Team Blunsdon!

I carried out sessions on 11 and 18/08/2025 on Tadpole Lane and **5 vehicles** have been issued with notices of intended prosecution for excessive speeding.

The roads monitored are 30 MPH and the fastest vehicle was captured at 44 MPH

Depending on previous convictions and history

4 Drivers will be offered a speed awareness course.

1 Driver will face £100 fine and get 3 Points.

Proceedings will now be undertaken to ensure the most appropriate outcome for the offenders takes place, which includes checking for MOT, Insurance & Point Totters.

Captured footage will be analysed for other offences like seat belts and mobile phone use.

Scott Garcia 9990 - Speed Enforcement Officer, Road Safety - Neighbourhood Harm Reduction. Thanks again Scott, keep slowing them down.

Date	Location	Vehicles	Speeding	%	Maximum	Speed Limit	Start	Finish	Area
14/07/2025	High St	116	15	13%	34	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
17/07/2025	Ermin St	258	14	5%	50	30	15:55	16:55	Minerva Heights
18/07/2025	Lady Lane	362	10	3%	42	30	15:25	16:25	Cycle Path
25/07/2025	Ermin St	89	0	0%	n/a	30	15:00	16:00	Minerva Heights
28/07/2025	Lady Lane	212	12	6%	44	30	08:15	09:15	Cycle Path
01/08/2025	Ermin St	100	5	5%	42	30	16:00	17:00	Minerva Heights
05/08/2025	High St	95	13	14%	29	20	15:55	16:55	Heart in Hand
08/08/2025	Lady Lane	536	3	1%	39	30	16:00	17:00	Cycle Path
11/08/2025	High St	123	27	22%	32	20	15:53	16:53	Heart in Hand
14/08/2025	Ermin St	124	7	6%	41	30	14:55	15:55	Minerva Heights
16/08/2025	Tadpole Lane	274	2	1%	39	30	09:00	10:00	Telephone Box

Parish Council Meetings –

The regular Parish meetings will be on **Monday 1st** and **Monday 15th September 2025**, at 19:30 in the Village Hall. If you want to come along, please let us know, details are on the Parish Council, notice boards, Website in the Blog section and on our Facebook page.

Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk – 07702 684281

Parish contact details – Tel: 01793 705617 – clerk@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

BLUNSDON SURGERY Tel 01793 721254

Phone lines are open to book appointments from 8am Tues, Thurs and Frid and from 3pm on Mon and Weds. **EMERGENCIES – Call NHS 111** (outside surgery hours)

OPENING HOURS

Day	Doctor Times	Reception
Mon	3.10pm - 4.40pm	3pm-6.15pm
Tues	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Weds	4pm - 7.10pm	3pm - 7.15pm
Thurs	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Frid	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm



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Dr David J Reed BA MSc MBA AuD RHAD



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Notes from the Editor

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

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

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

Arlene tel. 07493 978388

ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073

Front Cover: Summer floral display on Broadbush

Your October Magazine will be delivered from: 26th September

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
October	17th September 2025
November	22nd October 2025

Community Messaging

- Yve Benwell of Berton Close would like to thank everyone for their cards and messages of sympathy on the recent passing of her husband Len.

Over £1000 has been raised in his memory which will be shared between the Firefighters Charity and Prospect Hospice.



- Lorraine, Jacqui and Steve would like to thank everyone for their kind messages of sympathy and cards of condolence after Dad, Malcolm Hobday, sadly passed away at the end of June.
Thanks also to those who attended his funeral and made donations to our chosen charities and to Darren and the team at the Heart in Hand for putting on a lovely spread and helping us to give Dad a wonderful and fitting send off.
- I have forty-three volumes of Encyclopaedia Britannica which I would like to dispose of in one lot. They are all in very good condition and compose of:
29 volumes of 15th edition (1991)
Indexes A-K and L-Z
Guide to the Britannica
1991-1996 Book of the Year, Science and the Future 1993-1997
I would happily give these free to anyone who would collect all 43 books.
Please call me (Helen) on 01793 729982 if you are interested



Blunsdon Village Garden Club

As the long hot very dry Summer comes to an end, the temperatures are already becoming more comfortable as we move into early Autumn. Our gardens and farmland are now very much in need of rain and hopefully this will start to happen very soon.

Although we love the warm dry weather the need for rain is becoming a desperate situation for the farmers and anyone growing fruit and vegetables. Even though many plants, especially the roses have survived the extreme heat unfortunately many have succumbed to the extremes.

We have a varied programme of talks and activities throughout the year but our next meeting at 7.30pm on 11th September will be for members only as we enjoy a social evening with a quiz, nibbles and drinks.

Jenny 07949087317



Save the Date! *Christmas Crafties*



Wednesday December 3rd 2025

Where: Blunsdon Village Hall 7-10pm

Tickets: available from

Saturday 1st November at the Community Shop

Book early to avoid disappointment-mince pies,crafts, mulled wine and lots of fun guaranteed.

BLUNSDON VILLAGE QUIZ 2025
????????????????????????????????

Friday 14th November 2025

Large village hall, starting 7.30pm with doors open at 7pm

Entry £5 per person, payable in advance

Teams max 6 people

All proceeds to St Leonard's Church, Blunsdon

Please drop entry forms (see below) to 34 Malthouse Close,
Blunsdon,
SN26 7BG,

Enclosing cash or cheque,

(made out to St Leonard's Church PCC please).

RAFFLE – please bring cash for this!

Bring your own drinks and snacks!

SEE YOU ON THE NIGHT- START YOU REVISION TOMORROW!

ENTRY FORM FOR BLUNSDON VILLAGE QUIZ 14.11.25

TEAM NAME.....

NUMBER OF TEAM MEMBERS.....

Monies enclosed.....

Email address.....

Phone number.....

PLEASE DELIVER TO 34 MALTHOUSE CLOSE, BLUNSDON, SN26 7BG

Fundraising for

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**



Coffee morning with Book Sale

St Leonard's Church

In conjunction with the village shop

**Saturday 20th September
10am-12**

**Please come along and browse / buy
books, have a coffee and support
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Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity
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**21st November is our Christmas craft event at St Leonard's and we want
YOU.**

We have run this successfully for many years, each time it gets better. This is down to the
enthusiasm and creativity of our community

We welcome past contributors and are excited at the prospect of new talent .

To secure a place please contact Jane at jane_ockwell@hotmail.com
and for more details .

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 or email GoldenGatheringsBlunsdon@gmail.com



BLUNSDON CRICKET CLUB

The title charge bubble has burst and Foxes are currently in 3rd place.

Recent Results:

Royal Wootton Bassett – lost by 7 wickets, despite 62 runs from **Harry Mystery Roke** and an unbeaten 56 from **Arul Mr Average Ramasamy**.

Swindon 4ths – lost by 106 runs, with 3 wickets and 34 runs from all-rounder **Arul Mr Average Ramasamy**.

Goatacre – lost by 2 wickets, in a close 500 run thriller with a first ever century (116) for **Harish “The Windmill” Kumar**, a further 55 runs for **Arul Mr Average Ramasamy** and 3 wickets on debut for **Joel Hillier**.

Keevil – lost by 79 runs, with a welcome return of 3 wickets for **Danny Country Rhodes** and another 55 runs for **Arul “Fifty Five” Ramasamy**

Saturday 30th August – FINAL GAME away to Swindon Super Strikers at Croft Sports Centre



A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Rich Pickings

This is the season of plentiful fruits and so enjoyable in this hot weather. As usual we have an abundance of eating apples raining from our tree – apple turnovers, stewed apples for the winter, pies, crumbles and chutney have been made. But now I am going to forage for some free food from the hedgerows – blackberries. We are lucky living in Blunsdon because we have access to a lot of footpaths and fields to gather this luscious fruit. One of the best things about blackberries is that to freeze them they just need a wash first, box/bag up and label. But some will be for this recipe, a Blackberry and Lemon Upside-down Cake, a perfect summer recipe. Sweet and tart blackberries on top of a fluffy lemon flavoured sponge.

Blackberry and Lemon Upside-down Cake (serves 8-10)

175g unsalted butter, softened

175g caster sugar

3 eggs

115g self-raising flour, sifted

½ tsp baking powder

75g ground almonds

2 lemons, zested

250g blackberries, washed and dried

1. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas mark 4.
2. Grease a 20 cm springform cake tin or line a 20cm cake tin.
3. In a bowl beat together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Then one by one beat in the eggs.
4. Fold in the flour, baking powder, almond and lemon zest. Mix to just combine, don't overwork it.
5. Place into the blackberries in the bottom of the tin and squeeze over the juice of half a lemon. Lightly crush the berries then pour over the cake mix and smooth the top.
6. Bake for 45-50 minutes until the cake is golden brown and springy to the touch.

Delicious when served warm with cream, ice-cream or crème fraiche. Or cold with a cuppa.

Enjoy

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The Chatterbox – The Written Word

An old school friend recently asked me if I still like to write as she could remember how I was always writing stories and poems when I was much younger. The answer is a resounding YES! I can't imagine not writing, although what I write these days tends to be just letters to keep in touch with friends or gathering my thoughts and feelings. Aside from creating stories as a child, whereby I'd usually either run my own riding school or own the best showjumper in the world, there were two main things that inspired me to write. The first was a long-running American television series which many people of a certain age will know called, 'The Waltons'. This wholesome, warm and gentle series consisted of mother, father, seven children and one set of grandparents living under the same roof in the mountains of West Virginia. The stories featured the highs and lows of a hard-working family during the Great Depression and World War II. The eldest son, John Boy, was an aspiring writer and each episode concluded with his reflection and rumination on what had occurred in that episode. Those few minutes before the credits ran kept me rivetted. I loved how he used that time and those words to sum up the conversations, mediocre meetings and greetings, daily chores and ordinary occurrences into something quite beautiful, captivating and thought-provoking. Reflecting on the day's events was an opportunity to find meaning, experience emotional growth and understand the consequences of our own and others' actions on any given day. To an impressionable young girl, it seemed that writing could help me make sense of the world, which still feels true today. All credit to John Boy Walton!

The second thing that encouraged me to write as a means of expressing myself was brought about by reading the book, 'The Diary of Anne Frank' as a young teenager. Anne's terrible fate is well-documented, but it was a revelation to me how she used a diary as a friend and confidante and I, too, started writing a diary after reading it. Obviously, her situation of being hidden away during a terrifying period in history is both deeply moving and disturbing and she found some comfort in writing to Kitty. I wrote to Emmy and poured my heart and soul into those pages. I make no comparison between my life and Anne Frank's as mine was safe and ordinary - the minutiae of the school day, getting told off by a teacher, arguing with a parent, talking to my best friend on the phone is all there. My diary was a place to unload and an opportunity to say what was really on my mind, in private.

Writing has often been used as a tool in dealing with traumatic incidents. Putting the experience down on paper, turning feelings into words can be powerful and healing. Many have written about harrowing experiences such as being held as a hostage in a hostile country or surviving a natural disaster, for example. Focusing on the emotions and writing down the experience brings it to the fore rather than pushing it back down.

I feel incredibly lucky that I have this outlet here to express the things that pop into my head, whether it's something I've seen on TV, a memory that's cropped up or maybe an emotion I'd like to share. Thank you for reading the words that I write. I hope the month ahead is a good one for you.



Reading with Wine

What a glorious summer we have been treated to this year, including a summer of incredible sport and it's not over yet.

I like to do my background reading and then celebrate with a glass of bubbles afterwards. My related wine recommendation for this month is the Beyond the Wicket collection from cricket legend, Stuart Broad. The six bottle case from Laithwaites has something for everyone; and the wines are all based on what he learnt whilst on tours playing for England. He has combined his memories of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand to showcase the quality of these homegrown grapes, before adding an English Sparkling Wine. It is a vintage from 2019, which also happens to be a great vintage year for English Cricket! My pairing recommendation for all of these bottles is England Cricket, the Biography by Simon Wilde; another expert in his field and taught me all I need to know in order to enjoy these wonderful wines- and when I attended my first local cricket match! And talking of raising a glass of English fizz; mine goes up to the inspiring Lionesses; the epitome of never give up! There is a huge variety of books you can learn more about these gamechangers, from Ella Toone's Not so Secret Diary of a Footballer for younger readers to Beth Mead's, Lionesses; my journey to glory, a real look at mental health and emotions that will inspire you even if you are not a football fan. If biographies aren't your thing, there is plenty of sporting fiction from Off Track; an F1 based love story to Behind the Games; an Olympic dreams story to The Cheat Sheet- a dancer and an American footballer find more in common than they first thought. I've also thoroughly enjoyed a new series called Pitching Up, by Deborah Aubrey; based on a group of unlikely friends that bond during a camping trip. Its light hearted but also wholesome, and in some places downright hilarious; if you've ever put up an awning you'll understand this completely! I loved Brian and Faye, they are the classic parents of the campsite with all the knowledge and everything stored somewhere in their van. Mark and Olivia play their roles perfectly and each begin to find themselves in the Cotswolds countryside...I wonder what they would make of Blunsdon?! My favourites though are Tel and Sophie, they shine through as all the gear with no idea and I could see myself during our early trips! In terms of drinks pairings, it's Sophie's choice that inspires the best pairing. She enjoys a good bottle of bubbles, and also a glass of gin so why not combine them? Our local Arkells shop, the Grape and Grain have you covered with GinKing; it's a blend of London Dry Gin, English Wine and complemented by natural botanicals; perfect for Pitching Up in the countryside!

So, the theme this month appears to be my hobbies behind the scenes; please let me know any books or wines that match your hobbies via @reading_with_wine Read about as many sports and hobbies as you like, but please drink responsibly.

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