

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

June 2026



Photo by Debra Richardson



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Blunsdon Community Shop & Cafe

A huge **THANK YOU** to Blunsdon Parish Council, The Prestbury Cottage Trust and The Highworth & District Lions for financially supporting the provision of permanent air conditioning units in our café area. On behalf of our Team and all our community, we thank you for your generosity and support.

Have you tried our **Lynwood & Co** breads and pastries on the weekend? We launched these during May and we have sold out every weekend! To avoid disappointment whilst we measure the demand, please place any orders by Monday for the following Saturday. Orders forms are available at the shop till.

We are also pleased with the launch of **@Rosalindjenkinscakedesign** delicious cakes alongside our local **Country Markets** cakes at the weekend.

Have your say – Thank you to everyone that provided feedback in our recent Shop/Café Survey. Your feedback will enable us to enhance our product range and hopefully attract more visitors, whilst meeting the needs of all our customers. Our new Lynwood breads, cakes and deli items are all part of our initiatives to improve your shopping experience with us. You do not need to do your weekly shop with us, but picking up regulars like eggs, milk, bread and then a treat or bottle of wine at the weekend really supports our shop – thank you



Saturday 13th June at 2 pm (outside the shop)

St Leonard's School 2026 Reception Class - Ice Cream Welcome Party. It's a great opportunity for the children to meet their new reception friends ahead of September. Secure your tickets now via the shop

Tuesday 23rd June – 2.30 pm

War Graves – “Gardening the Globe” Tea and Talk with Larry Banda. Tickets are £6.00 and includes a hot drink and cake.

Golden Gatherings in June

Wed 3rd and Wed 17th at 3 pm – feel free to join us!

We are now selling our Summer Raffle Tickets – pop in to secure yours at only £1.00 each for some amazing prizes

Shop opening times are: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat: 8 am - 5 pm, Fri 8 am - 6 pm Sunday: 8 am - 4 pm. Cafe closes 1 hour before the shop.



Parish Council Update – June 2026

June brings the parish into the first true weeks of summer, and with it a noticeable shift in how our shared spaces are used and enjoyed. The longer, warmer days mean more people are out walking, cycling, using the play areas, and making the most of the village's green spaces.

Across the village, you'll see the summer maintenance schedule stepping up — from regular grass cutting and hedge management to repairs, inspections, and preparation for the higher footfall that the season brings. This is also the point in the year when outdoor facilities such as the MUGA, play parks, and open spaces experience their busiest period, so our focus remains on keeping them safe, tidy, and welcoming for everyone. If there are any local tennis teams/clubs that would be interested in using the MUGA during the summer months then please make contact.

June also marks the final stages of the annual governance cycle for parish councils. Following the approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the completion of the internal audit, councils now move into the period of public rights, where residents can view financial records in line with national transparency requirements. With the new council year underway, committees, policies, and priorities have been refreshed, setting the direction for the months ahead.

As always, even if you're not able to attend meetings, we want you to feel connected to the decisions shaping the parish. This edition includes updates on ongoing projects, progress across our facilities, and the work planned as we head further into the summer season.

Planning Highlights

A parish council is a *statutory consultee*. This means Swindon Borough Council must notify the parish council about planning applications; the parish council does not have the power to make the final decision to approve or refuse them, that decision is made solely by Swindon Borough Council. The parish council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise concerns or objections, and represent the views of the community. Its comments are considered part of the decision-making process. Members of the public can view applications, read parish council comments, and submit their own feedback on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Applications Received

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0428 Description: Erection of a single-storey rear extension. #
Site Address: 3 Anvil Street, Blunsdon, SN26 7BT Comments: No objections

Application Ref: S/RES/26/0396 Description: Reserved matters application in respect of
scale, layout, appearance and in relation to approval of outline application reference

S/OUT/20/0549 for the erection of 8 no self-build dwellings. All matters reserved except for access. Site Address: Land East of Woodbine Cottage, Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon SN25 5DL Comments: The PC objected

Application Ref: S/26/0265 Description: Demolition of garage, erection of 1no dwelling (Class C3), detached dwelling and associated works. Site Address: Longways, Front Lane, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7BJ Comments: No objection

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0511 Description: Erection of proposed single storey side/rear extension, two storey rear and associated works. Site Address: Lilac Cottage, Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon Swindon SN25 5DL (Respond by 13th May)

Decision: The PC agreed to support the application, Cllr Jankinson abstained due to interest.

Application Ref :S/26/0143 For: Erection of an external plant room to house heat pumps, erection of a storage building, path and service connections. Temporary removal of a section of wall on the Southern boundary for plant and equipment in a work area.

At: St Leonards Church, Churchway Blunsdon Swindon

Cllr Jankinson had attended a meeting with the conservation officers at the church who provided positive recommendations on materials. Potential issues raised with path and void around church concluded that an archaeological survey would be required.

Decision: The PC agreed to support the application

Decisions Made by SBC

Application S/23/0288TB – Erection of 19 no. dwellings and associated works:

Cllr Gardiner attended the SBC Planning Committee for Phase 3 of the Hills Estate. Although officer recommendation was approval, the Committee agreed to defer the application due to unacceptable construction traffic. The applicant must submit a revised construction traffic management plan.

Application Number: S/HOU/26/0268/JP - Proposal: Proposed rear extension and raised ridge Site Address: 95 Ermin Street, Blunsdon SN26 8AA Decision: Granted

A group of residents with concerns about health and safety during the development of the Rivan planning application recently met with council members to discuss the issues raised. Anyone who would like to read the meeting notes can obtain a copy from the Clerk.

Annual Parish Assembly

The Annual Parish Assembly took place in May and brought residents together to hear updates on parish activity over the past year. As a meeting of the electors, it provided an open forum for the community to raise questions, share ideas, and hear directly about the work taking place across the village.

The Parish Council delivered a summary of key projects from the last 12 months, including maintenance of open spaces, improvements to parish facilities, and progress on ongoing initiatives. Residents also heard about the council's financial position for the year, with an overview of spending, priorities, and the areas where investment has been focused. Local groups and organisations were invited to share updates on their activities, highlighting the contribution volunteers make to village life. The meeting also offered space for

residents to raise matters of interest, from community events to local environment concerns, helping to shape the council’s understanding of what matters most to the parish. The APA is not a council meeting and no formal decisions are made, but it remains an important opportunity for open conversation and community involvement. The feedback gathered will help inform the council’s work as we move into the new council year.

Speed watch Update

We’ve recently completed traffic monitoring on Sams Lane to get an accurate picture of how the road is being used. The equipment recorded vehicle speeds and volumes throughout the day, giving us a clearer understanding of any problem areas. Once the results are reviewed, we’ll share the findings with residents and consider what actions may be appropriate.

Details show in the table carried out by our Speed Check volunteers. A heartfelt thank you to our volunteers for carrying out regular speed checks — the information you gather is invaluable in helping us push forward with improvements for speed concerns within the village.”

Date	Location	Vehicles	Exceeding	Maximum	Speed	Start	Finish	Area
		Counted	limit	Speed	Limit			
				mph				
4/13/2026	Turnpike	69	13	54	30	8:30	9:30	Opp. No 16
4/16/2026	Ermin St	95	12	47	30	10:00	11:00	Minerva Heights
4/17/2026	Lady Lane	459	5	42	30	16:00	17:00	Cycle Track
4/20/2026	Ermin St	225	16	51	30	14:55	15:55	Minerva Heights
2/21/2026	High St	130	16	31	20	16:00	17:00	Heart In Hand
4/24/2026	Lady Lane	262	5	46	30	15:55	16:15	Cycle Track
4/27/2026	High St	212	7	32	20	16:00	17:00	Heart In Hand
4/29/2026	Ermin St	222	7	43	30	15:00	16:00	Minerva Heights
4/30/2026	Broadbush	234	7	46	30	10:00	11:00	Junction with Sams Lane
5/6/2026	Broadbush	287	2	37	30	16:40	17:30	Junction with Sams Lane
5/8/2026	Lady Lane	429	2	38	30	15:25	16:25	Cycle Track
5/11/2026	Broadbush	230	3	40	30	8:30	9:30	The Shrubbery

Grounds maintenance:

Essential tree work was carried out in May within the churchyard to ensure the safety and long-term health of the trees on site. The work focused on removing damaged branches, improving canopy structure, and addressing areas identified during recent inspections. This maintenance helps protect both visitors and the historic setting of the churchyard.

Vandalism and behaviour:

We've had some disappointing incidents recently, including vandalism to the football team's storage shed, which has left equipment like parking cones inaccessible. There have also been reports of poor behaviour by a group of young boys, including disruption to BPC volunteers and concerns about underage drinking.

Please remind young people to respect our shared spaces and the people within the community. The parish belongs to the whole community, and we want to keep them safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Borough Ward Changes for Blunsdon

Following the recent Swindon Borough Council ward changes, Blunsdon now has one councillor for the area. Despite these adjustments, Nick Gardiner remains the Borough Ward Councillor for Blunsdon and continues to represent our community at Borough level. Residents can refer to the updated ward information on the Swindon Borough Council website for full details.

Meet Your Councillor / Staff Member

Each month, we'll be introducing you to the people working behind the scenes at Blunsdon Parish Council.

Meet Kate – Responsible Finance Officer

Kate joined the Parish Council in April as our part-time Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), and she plays an important role in keeping everything running smoothly behind the scenes. She looks after the council's finances, including paying invoices, managing staff wages, sending out hire invoices and following up on late payments. She also prepares reports for the Finance Committee and will help put together the council's budget later in the year.

What Kate supports:

Kate already works with a number of other parish councils as a Clerk and RFO, so she brings plenty of experience and a strong understanding of how councils operate. She has a real passion for looking into things, unpicking problems, and finding practical solutions, and she genuinely enjoys helping processes run smoothly. Kate is looking forward to working closely with councillors and staff at Blunsdon and supporting the parish with her proactive, solution-focused approach.

A few words about Kate:

Outside of work, Kate enjoys knitting and cooking. She is also a child advocate, helping children share their views and be heard. In her spare time, she enjoys walking her dog, although the walks are a bit shorter these days, and going away for weekend breaks to explore new places.

For account/invoice queries, Kate can be contact at: finances@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Well Done

A big well done to the Blunsdon Shop & Cafe for winning 'Community Team of the year 2025/26', the staff and volunteers have put in a lot of work in the running of the facility. It is both enjoyed by local groups, charities and the community – a great central hub to the village and its residents. Keep an eye on their Facebook page for events over the next few months, plus extended opening times.

Dates for Your Diary

Blunsdon Open Gardens returns on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th June, bringing one of the village's favourite community weekends back into full bloom. It's a wonderful chance to explore the gardens of Blunsdon, meet neighbours, and enjoy the creativity and care that residents put into their outdoor spaces.

This year's event includes: Open Gardens Look out for details on how to open your own garden for visitors. Whether it's a cottage garden, a wildlife haven, or a well-loved patch full of personality, every space adds something special to the trail. The much loved scarecrow trail will be running throughout the weekend — fun for families, walkers, and anyone who enjoys a bit of village creativity. We're encouraging households to decorate windows, fences, and garden borders with bees — knitted, painted, crafted, or cut-out. A cheerful way to celebrate the vital role bees play in our environment. The Village Hall will be open with: • Cooked breakfasts • Afternoon teas • Homemade cakes • A warm welcome for all visitors. It's always a brilliant community event, full of colour, conversation, and village spirit. Let's hope the weather is kind and that everyone — residents and visitors alike — feels welcome as they explore Blunsdon in full summer charm.

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:

Full Council Parish Meeting will be on Monday 1st June at 7.30 pm

Finance Parish Meeting will be on Monday 15th June at 7.30 pm

Junes key dates:

6th June: Ward Surgery – 11:30am, *Village Shop*

27th / 28th June – Blunsdon Open Gardens

Did You Know?

June is when Blunsdon's ancient oaks fully leaf out. Some of the parish's oldest oak trees — including those near the Ridgeway and village green — reach their fullest canopy in June, making it the best month to see them in their full summer shape.

. FOOD FOR THOUGHT.
Outside Catering



**Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunsdon,
Blunt Rise from 5pm
Thursday 4th June & Thursday 18th June
If you would like a copy of our menu
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NOTE WE WILL JUST MEET ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

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Blunsdon Community Shop and Cafe
 Unit 1 Blunt Rise , Broad Blunsdon
 SN26 7DA

An opportunity to meet with others over a cuppa and cake to create. Whether you draw, paint, knit, crochet or simply colour, you can bring your own project, or you can use our materials. Or you can just come along for a chat!

JOIN US!

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*******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.

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!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE
JUNE 2026

St Leonard's Church

A Space for All

At the end of April, St Leonard's Church officially launched its fundraising appeal. The appeal is called "A Space for All", and it will help us to modernize the church and futureproof it from closure. In time, the church will also become a space for local groups to use, and the income from this will help to ensure the upkeep of the building. Look out for our appeal logo, shown below, you will be seeing it regularly from now on.



TRANSFORMING OUR CHURCH

The existing carpet and floorboards will be removed and replaced with a beautiful limestone floor. This new, level floor will run right across the church, improving accessibility for everyone who visits.



SPONSOR A LIMESTONE TILE

There will be 400 limestone floor tiles for sale at £25 each. Please consider buying one to support the appeal, or to mark a family connection with St Leonard's. Were you married in the church, or did you sing in the choir? In time, a framed commemorative diagram will record who gave which tile.



OUR FUNDRAISING THERMOMETER

Please look out for our fundraising thermometer, which will soon appear outside the church. It will include a QR code that you can use to donate.



CONCERT SERIES

We are holding a series of three separate concerts this year. Enquiries are welcome at events@stleonardsblunston.com.



CAN YOU HELP?

Leaflets will be posted to every house in the village to tell everyone about our plans, and we will need volunteers to help deliver them. If you would like to get involved, please get in touch at ASpaceForAll@stleonardsblunston.com.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH • BLUNSDON
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The Great Big Green Week

The bells will be ringing on the morning of Saturday 6th June, between 10 and 11am. We will be amongst all the other towers across the country ringing over the weekend to mark the start of the Great Big Green Week.

During the "Great Big Green Week", more than a million people from across the country will come together to take action for their communities, for nature, and for the climate, to make their neighbourhoods better places to live, protect the natural world we love and show politicians and decision makers that people across the UK want positive change.

We play a small part in this and what better way than to use the Lego Club to show how items can be reused into other items.

You can come along and pick up a sheet so you can make your own "bee hotel" (some resources available) - a small step along the way.

For more information visit <https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/>



BLUNSDON WI

About thirty members attended our AGM meeting in May with a very tasty American Supper. Many thanks to our hard working committee that make our WI such a success. And special thanks to Sheila who opens up every month for us.

We have been very busy again over the month with a very merry gin tour at Ramsbury, a walking tour of Cirencester (no gin involved) and nature tour in Highworth (again no gin involved)

A few of us even had time to venture to Oxfordshire WI for an excellent talk on the post office scandal. It was every bit as bad as the TV drama made out.



WI will be providing teas and wonderful cakes each afternoon of the Blunsdon Village open gardens event of 27/28 June from 1.30 - 4.30pm in the village hall.
OPEN TO ALL



Blunsdon WI meet in the large hall of Blunsdon Village Hall on the third Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm (thank you Alison)

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



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for the Nursery into Blakehill Business Park

Notes from the Editor

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

Blunston Village Magazine is available to read online at Blunston Parish Council website: blunstonparishcouncil.co.uk

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

Arlene tel. 07493 978388

ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073

Front Cover: Widhill Lane

Your July Magazine will be delivered from: 26th June

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
July	17th June

***Social Walking from
Blunston Community Shop***

**2nd and 4th Thursday of every month
starting at 10:00am at the Community Shop**

We always start and finish at the shop... coffee and cake afterwards isn't mandatory, but it is highly recommended!

Any queries, please message Alex on 07554 811779

New walkers are always welcome, and welcomed

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)

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

Blunsdon Open Garden and Scarecrow Trail

Saturday June 27th and Sunday June 28th 2026

We are happy to say that our biennial village event is fast approaching and we are planning for the same fantastic weather we had 2 years ago. There'll be a lot to see and do over the weekend so we do hope you'll join us and *bee*-involved.



As well as the activities listed below, we are asking households in the village to display **bees** in their windows or gardens in recognition of all the help these little powerhouses do: helping with food (and flower) production. We would like to include everybody, so even if you don't feel you can build a scarecrow, open your garden or walk around the trails, please consider making a bee and displaying it. Any material or design is welcome; drawn, painted, sewn, knitted, wood ... *whatever takes your fancy*. **Let's make our own Blunsdon Hive!!**

What's On:

10.00am - 12.00 noon Small Village Hall

Before the trails officially open at 12, we'll be serving cooked breakfasts

12.00 noon Saturday

The Church bells of St. Leonard's will ring

12.00 - 5.00pm

- 12 gardens will be open for viewing
- All the scarecrows will be waiting to be spotted.

(Hint: they all begin with the letter T)

1.30 - 5.00pm Large Village Hall

Blunsdon WI will be serving delicious afternoon cakes and teas. There'll also be a "bee"-focused children's activity table, plants and pre-loved gardening books for sale.

12.00 - 5.00pm St. Leonards Church

- Bell ringing and sale of donated Artworks
- Lego-club display
- Bee-trail around the Churchyard: can you find all 10?
- On Sunday there'll also be a Music Marathon with live music performed on piano, guitar and flute.

Available from **Blunsdon Village Hall** from **10.30am** on both days:

- **Scarecrow Trail Map:** £5 per family, includes free squash & biscuit for children.
- **Open Gardens Map and Entry:** £5 per adult for both days.

Proceeds will be split between the **Prospect Hospice** and **St. Leonard's Church**



A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Cherry Tomatoes

We have just been to Spain and of course, like any trip, I enjoyed their cuisine. We had some amazing tapas: pork in tomato sauce, croquettes, patatas bravas, anchovies, aioli, Spanish tortilla; pinchos dishes (ingredients piled on a single slice of crusty bread) were mouth-watering, Pan con tomate and chicken with Spanish chorizo, peppers and tomatoes. Yes, we ate a range of delicious dishes, but no paella this time. I then remembered a recipe that I have made several times at home and we like the fact that roasted tomatoes are the centre of this paella dish.

Roasted Cherry Tomato Paella (serves 2)

2 handfuls cherry tomatoes, halved	½ tsp oregano
Olive oil, to drizzle and fry	1 onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, sliced	100g paella or risotto rice
2 x chicken or vegetable stock cubes, crumbled	
Pinch saffron, optional	Chopped parsley, optional

1. Preheat oven to 180C (160C fan), gas mark 4. Arrange half the tomatoes in an ovenproof dish, cut side up. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and oregano, then drizzle with olive oil. Roast for about 30mins, or until the tomatoes are slightly charred around the edges.
2. While they are roasting, pan fry the onion, remaining tomatoes and garlic in a big plug of olive oil over a medium heat. Season with salt and pepper.
3. After about 10mins, stir in the rice. Continue to cook for a few minutes more, then crumble in the stock cubes and 200ml water and the saffron, if using. Reduce to medium-low and simmer for about 20mins, or until the water has been absorbed and the rice is cooked (add more water when needed, but do not stir too much just let it bubble away).
4. Once the paella is cooked, adjust seasoning, add the oven roasted cherry tomatoes, garnish with parsley, if using and serve.

Uses for oven roasted tomatoes: toppings for pasta dishes, in a quiche, piled on toast or over whipped ricotta or avocado. Mix into quinoa or grain salads. Top grilled chicken or fish dishes. Add to a grilled cheese or BLT sandwich.

Also, you can make a batch in advance as they will keep in the fridge for 4 or 5 days or freeze them to use in stews or chilli con carne.

ENJOY



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BLUNSDON CRICKET CLUB

Recent Results – 2nd (out of ten) Wiltshire League Division 6

A great start for the Foxes and new captain **Harry “Mystery” Roke**.

Keevil – won by 9 wickets, thanks five wickets for **Arul “Mr Average” Ramasamy**.

Chippenham – lost by 1 wicket, despite 39 runs from **Dean “Deano”**

Tomlin and another 3 scalps for **Arul “Mr Average” Ramasamy**.

Blue Brigade – won by 137 runs, which included a glorious maiden century for **Shaun “Dodderly” Dodson**, who could be seen sprinting around the village all weekend in celebration, supported by 99 not out from **Arul “Mr Average” Ramasamy**, followed by 3 mesmerised victims for **Phil “The Welsh Wizard” Jones**.

Upcoming fixtures – Saturday. Play begins at 1 p.m. Home Ground, Sutton Park

30th May – home to Nationwide House

6th June – away at Spye Park

13th June – home to Burbage & Easton Royal

20th June – home to Goatacre

27th June – away to Norton St. Philip

We have a loyal group of regular players and also a small pool of valuable casual players who play when the team are short due to holidays and other commitments. If you fancy playing for your village team, regularly or just on the odd occasion, the club welcomes everyone. Just contact Guy on 07753 446614, or come along and say hello at one of our games.

Golden Gatherings

Fancy a cuppa and chat?



Dates for June: Wednesday 3rd & 17th from 3pm

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BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Blunston finished 6th out of 10 in the Swindon & District Premier League

Recent Results

Cricklade Town League Lost 1 – 2

Cricklade Town Cup Final Drew 0 – 0 Lost 5 – 6 on penalties

Cup Final Penalty Agony for Blunny

Under the blue sky and sunshine of a beautiful May day at the Webbswood, Supermarine, Blunston's dreams of going one better than last season's Cup Final runners up prize, were shattered by the drama of defeat in a penalty shoot-out. A good-sized crowd approaching 300 filled the ground as local rivals Cricklade were on the back foot after a bright start from Blunny. Despite the pressure, there was little quality in the final third and Cricklade began to grow into the game as the half wore on.

The second half saw Town re-appear and much livelier, with Blunston seemingly still in the half-time dressing room, however, an innocuous challenge in the air saw a Cricklade player suffer a badly broken ankle and a long delay to the game.

When play resumed, Blunston at last started to compete, and an attack on goal saw the Cricklade goalkeeper commit a red card foul.

Despite being down to 10 men, Cricklade held Blunston at bay and although there were chances for both sides to win the game, penalties would be the only way these sides would be separated.

There was more drama in the shoot-out, when the Cricklade stand-in keeper injured his shoulder when trying to save the first Blunston spot kick from Lee Toomey. He was replaced by Cricklade's outstanding centre half. The shoot out was the highlight of the game, great finishes, quality saves and blazing misses. Both sides had chances to win it, but the hero was the Cricklade's third goalkeeper who not only scored his penalty, but he also made a great save to win it for the green army up the A419.

It brought an end to another decent season for Franklyn Murray and the Amber and Black. If this is to be Frank's last game in charge, then we owe him a massive thank you for achieving a league trophy, a promotion and two cup finals since the Ressies returned four seasons ago. Maybe Pep fancies a new challenge???

Thank you for your support this season and we look forward to seeing you in September.



It is such a lovely time to be walking round the village, I'm going to throw in another option this month and suggest you take part in the Blunsdon Scarecrow Trail...this year the theme is T and as someone who loves a theme, I've gone with it to for this month's recommendations...

One of my go to authors is T.M Logan, he writes books that will keep you turning the pages in a desperate need to find out what is going on; from *The Holiday* that focuses on a French chateau where secrets and lies threaten to unravel and ruin what should have been a wonderful reunion trip to *Trust Me*; a woman offers to help a stressed young mother and hold her baby whilst she makes a phonecall, only to see her running away leaving Ellen holding the baby and a note asking her to look after her...you will be invested from page 1. Other options could be some classics from Thomas Hardy, or something from the fantasy world of Terry Prachett, if you need a good cry, *Tillie Cole* or murder mystery from Tom Hindle.

Book titles is an easy save with so many The books, *The Name Game*, *The Invitation*, *The Wedding People* to name just a triple! However, if we want to be pedantic, let's look at *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a classic that look at racial injustice from a child's perspective in the American South; told from 12 year old Scout's viewpoint it is an open and honest tale of telling life as it is. Or for something completely different try, *Time after Time* by Louise Pentland. Tabby is stuck in the mundanity of daily life until one meeting of free spirited, Bea and life becomes anything but mundane. She finds her life flitting between the life she knows and the 1980's a time where fun was the key and she finds it suits her to a T. With regards to wine producers, I cannot miss the opportunity to recommend Taittinger. One of the most iconic Champagne houses known for their elegance and finesse; an historical favourite of James Bond in the original Ian Fleming novels, right up until today being the official Champagne of the upcoming Fifa Men's World Cup; let's hope that we can toast English success! The Brut Reserve Non Vintage comes in a Limited Edition design of the colours of the host countries and will certainly be one to keep, it looks fabulous and promises to taste incredible too. It produces flavours of peach, citrus, white flowers and that evocative brioche taste. Created by Taittinger as they believe football and champagne share the same values, passion, freedom, daring and dreams; both evoke intense emotions and create lasting memories.

For a specific wine, try a Tempranillo, I recommend the *Toro Loco* from Aldi. The wine is produced from an early harvest grape meaning that it's red but it's young and vibrant; it's an oak free blend that gives cherry and strawberries an ideal summer red, and it goes perfectly with tapas too.

Enjoy exploring a month of T and particularly seeing what characters you can spot the weekend of 27-28th June will there be a Tinkerbell, Thomas the Tank Engine, Titan?! I wonder if they would prefer Taittinger or Toro Loco?! Explore and read as much as you like but please drink responsibly!

See you next month, when holidays reads and tipples make their comeback!

The Chatterbox – With Regret

In the words of that crooner, Frank Sinatra, I think we can probably all relate to the line in 'My Way', when he sings, 'Regrets, I've had a few' although, fortunately for him, his were too few to mention.

I think I told you some time back about blocking the toilet and flooding the cloakroom as a little girl but I'll just recap. We didn't have an empty toilet roll that I needed to make a Christmas candle in school that day so I tried to be inventive in my solution and dispensed the whole roll of toilet paper down the toilet. Regret was the word that came to mind as I clutched my precious toilet roll while watching in horror as the water rose higher and higher before yelling for my father.

Another occasion saw me wearing a new dress to school – I can still picture its white and pretty coloured stripes on the top and navy pleated skirt below. My mother's parting words that morning as I left the house were along the lines of, "Don't you dare get it dirty!" Unfortunately, however hard I tried, I seemed to be a magnet for dirt and we had painting that day. I ended up with a blob of paint on one of the white stripes, so it was really noticeable. I was beside myself. With my mother's warning ringing in my head, I came up with an idea that only a child or someone without much (or any?) common sense would think was an appropriate solution; I got a pair of scissors from the craft cupboard and carefully cut around the blob of paint on the front of my new dress. The dress now had a considerable hole but was no longer dirty! Regret was again felt, however, when I got home, and for some considerable time afterwards.

As I got older the nature of my regrets was more emotionally charged and were sometimes very painful experiences. I expect there are few of us who don't regret words spoken in the heat of the moment, or words that remained unsaid when the chance to say them was lost forever. There are actions we may have regretted making, opportunities missed that may have taken our lives in different directions. People and situations we wish we'd walked away from. Many, many different scenarios can cause these feelings.

Regret is wishing you'd made a different decision because the consequence of the decision you made brought about feelings of unhappiness and a desire for a different outcome. However, it's also a learning experience and a cause for self-reflection and emotional growth. It's a life lesson and an opportunity to do things differently next time such as thinking of the consequences of an action before you make it. There are positives aspects if we allow ourselves to look on regret in that way, but I can assure you, without a doubt, that cutting holes in clothes achieves nothing positive whatsoever.

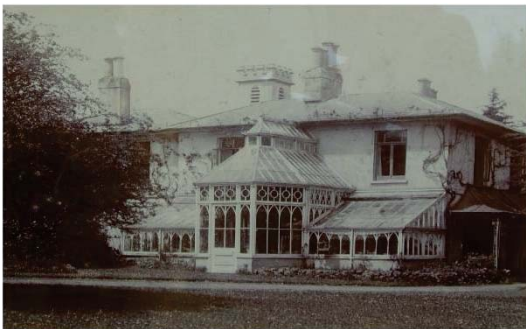
Wishing you a happy month of June with zero regrets.

Dark Secrets at Broad Blunsdon – Part II

It was May 1860, and Mary Eugenia Plummer, aged twelve, daughter of Thomas and Caroline Plummer of Holdcroft House, Broad Blunsdon, had been found guilty at the Old Bailey of Wilful and Corrupt Perjury. Her evidence had led to the conviction and imprisonment of Reverend Henry John Hatch, the ex-chaplain of Wandsworth Prison. She was sentenced to three weeks in prison, followed by two years in a reform school, and taken off to Holloway Prison.

The press had a field day. All the national newspapers had leaders on the case. The *Morning Star* reported that 'Eugenia and her evidence were utterly depraved'. The *Morning Herald* noted 'The horrible case of the wretched child Mary Eugenia Plummer'. The *Daily Telegraph* said 'We don't like Mrs Plummer, we don't like the children ... it was not Eugenia but her ill regulated parent who should have stood in the dock ... justice will not be satisfied until that wretched woman has been put on trial to answer for her own perjury.' It seemed likely that Caroline Plummer, who was clearly drunk in the witness box, had coached the children in their evidence, invented initially by Eugenia because she did not like the sober and disciplined life at the Hatches', and needed an excuse to be taken away. If there was a conspiracy, possibly assisted by John Gay, their decidedly suspicious family doctor, then it took place at Holdcroft House. Such a circumstance was impossible to prove, so despite the opinion of the *Daily Telegraph*, no further action was ever brought against the Plummers.

A week after the trial ended Henry John Hatch was released from Newgate, having spent 191 days in prison. Two weeks after that, Eugenia was also released early under The Royal Pardon on condition that she spend several years away from her family under the control of a strict governess, where it was intended that she should receive some religious and moral education.



Holdcroft House, Broad Blunsdon. (By kind permission of Kirsten Gillett)

After some months of recuperation, Henry embarked on a protracted series of court actions against his solicitors, Lewis & Lewis, for bungling his defence case. James Lewis had arrived late for Henry's appearance in the magistrates' court and *never interviewed Henry's defence witnesses*. The detailed brief Henry wrote for Serjeant Ballantine from prison was sent, unedited, to Ballantine's clerk who was unable to read much of it; it was a

cold December and Henry's handwriting had suffered as a result. The clerk presented a copy to Ballantine with the unreadable parts left blank thus rendering the entire document meaningless.

The first action took place in the Court of the Exchequer and Henry won his case but, because he was deemed partially responsible for his conviction, the jury awarded him just forty shillings! (£2). Two further actions to appeal the verdict failed and, although his reputation was restored, Henry John Hatch never received any further compensation for the dreadful miscarriage of justice against him. Eventually he was presented with the rectorship of Little Stambridge in Essex. While there, he contributed stories and other ephemera to two publications, *The Paglesham Oyster*, and *Logs for the Christmas Fire*. From his stories, it is clear that after all of his misfortunes, he still retained a liberal Christian outlook.



The author contemplates the Plummer memorial at Broad Blunsdon

After the church was deemed beyond economical repair and the parish too small to be self-sufficient, he became vicar of Little Linford in Buckinghamshire, moving there with his ever-loyal wife Essie whom he had met and married while in Australia. He never regained financial solvency and on his death in 1895, his liabilities exceeded his assets by £65. Thus does a moderately unremarkable memorial in a quiet country churchyard offer no clue to the nationwide opprobrium directed towards the Plummer family for the scandal of their persecution (and prosecution) of the Reverend Henry John Hatch, and the turmoil in the family following Eugenia's conviction. Financially at least Eugenia was secure. At the age of 38 she married her 71-year-old GP, Rice Wasbrough; he left her £10,000 when he died. When Eugenia herself died in 1937 she left over £30,000 making her a millionairess in modern money.

Peter Maggs pnd.maggs@gmail.com www.mirlibooks.com

Footnote: I came across the extraordinary case of Henry John Hatch while researching my family history. My gt-gt-gt-grandmother, Ann Hatch, had five illegitimate children and spent some time in the Reigate Union Workhouse. The second of her offspring was baptised by the local rector of Sutton in Surrey, Henry Hatch, MA (Cantab). While researching whether my Ann Hatch and Rector Henry Hatch were related (as far as I can tell, they were not), I came across a record of the trial of his nephew, Henry John Hatch. The research that followed, which started in 1996, resulted in the publication thirteen years later of the full story of Henry John Hatch in: *Henry's Trials*, by Peter Maggs, ISBN 978-0-9562870-0-7 Published by Mirli Books, 2009.

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Mrs Johnson

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