



Blagdon Newsletter

on-line ***May 2020***

In the current crisis we are unable to distribute paper copies of Blagdon Parish Magazine. Instead we invite you to read about our community in this on-line newsletter.



**COVID-19
SPECIAL**

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PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR VIEWS

This is the first time we have published this Newsletter in place of the paper Parish Magazine. It looks as if we will be in the current situation for some time to come and probably we will need to do the same next month. Hence it would be very useful to know how well this Newsletter is meeting your needs and where we could improve it.

We would be very grateful if, after you have read this publication, you could answer a few short questions about it -it'll only take a couple of minutes to complete. Please go to to:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SKBY9TJ

or use the QR code

Thank you for your help.

Ken Parsons

Editor





BLAGDON IN LOCKDOWN

We asked local photographer and videographer Gabriel Gilson to share some of the pictures he's taken since the start of lockdown.

"Usually what I do is all about people and movement. I film weddings and interview students, so I'm constantly shouting instructions and running after everyone camera in hand, chasing the best light. But, of course, all that changed on 23rd March. Now with endless time at home, I'm still taking pictures, but it's a very different pace. Instead of rushing, I'm carefully watching the light change from sunrise to sunset. Watching the apple blossom explode hour by hour and seeing lambs mingling without washing their feet. The village has gone quiet, but the hedgerows are still bursting with life. So I'm pleased to be able to share a few of my favourite lockdown shots from the garden and my daily exercise loop, tracking the light across the valley. They are nothing compared with the amazing real work from all the key workers, but it is a small way to say thank you." Gabriel Gilson





LOCKDOWN NEWS

Scrubs by Olive Barnes

I took my package to the post office. It was late and I had had to rush to finish wrapping it up to catch the post – it was urgent. Fortunately, other than the two assistants, The Stores was empty. I went to the counter and passed my parcel to Aggie and asked for Special Delivery. Filling in the requirements on her keyboard she asked for the value of the goods.

“Priceless”, I said “They are NHS Scrubs”.

In my peripheral vision I caught a glance of a shadow passing over the other assistant’s face. Becky knew my daughter, Nicola, from school. Becky knew Nicola was now a doctor. I hastily reassured her that these were not for Nicola but for a friend of hers who was an A&E nurse.

That momentary silent expression which crossed Becky’s face spoke volumes of our human reaction to the situation in which we currently find ourselves. I, like many of you no doubt, had read of the shortages of equipment in the NHS. Some of this has come about because more of their staff are having to deal with far more infectious patients than previously. Hospital staff who are in contact with patients need to change out of their clothes at the end of their shift and put them straight into a washing machine. The Covid-19 virus is killed at 58°C and their clothes must be washed at 60°C. Most modern clothing is not made from fabric which can withstand such treatment. Hence, far more staff need scrubs. Reading that more staff need scrubs is impersonal until you realise you know someone who may be in that situation. The newspaper and television reports then take on a very different hue.

Some years ago when Nicola was doing an A&E rotation as a junior doctor, I was chatting to her on the phone after her day’s work. She mentioned that she had had a grotty time on that shift as one patient had vomited over her clothes at the beginning of the shift. I asked what she did. Visions of being in such clothing for an eight-hour shift didn’t really bear thinking about. She told me she went to the cupboard and got a set of scrubs which she wore for the rest of the day. I recalled this incident when I first read about the shortage of scrubs in the NHS at the present. I phoned Nicola and asked if she needed any. (In the meantime the local Rotary were mobilising their members to sew surgical scrub caps – 350 were needed and in very short time they made 500). Nicola had scrubs but she phoned a few days later and asked if the offer still stood. Her friend Nicky, an A&E nurse, had none.

Cocooned in Blagdon, I was not wholly aware of the problems in some sectors of the economy. I went online to one of my usual fabric suppliers in Lancashire. I couldn’t make their online ordering system work through my account with them. I phoned and got an answerphone. I emailed and got an automated response. This was very unusual for this firm. Normally, phone calls were answered by a real person within a few rings; an email would get an almost immediate personal response. The messages were that they were suffering staff shortages. And then I began to think about this. Were they key workers? Probably not. This meant, probably some of their staff had childcare to manage; some were off sick or self-isolating just in case. And so, short-staffed at a time when groups of needleworkers up and down the country had urgent requirements for fabric ... Under the circumstances I was not surprised to get an email response from the company’s MD at 11:08 one night!



Special delivery (thank you Royal Mail) got my fabric to me within a day of ordering. We downloaded a pdf pattern and Andrew printed it out onto A3 paper. I transcribed it to tissue paper and started cutting. I did a quick trial run and sent that off on Monday – again thanks to Royal Mail for overnight delivery. Then I recruited two more assistants – thank you Pip and Susan. By Friday we had three more sets sewn and ready for posting.

Sewing scrubs is not technically difficult needlework (I hope Susan and Pip agree!) - lots of straight lines during which you can think. As I sewed, I thought of all the girls, now young women, whom I had seen in Guides who are now working in this stressful environment – not just Nicola – Megan (anaesthetist), Helen (doctor on maternity leave), Julia (speech therapist but now “on the wards”), Kirsty (doctor), Laura (physiotherapist, now “on the wards”), Kate (doctor in Perth). Keep safe Girls – and thank you!



BLAGDON COMMUNITY LINK

Blagdon support during Covid-19

01761 462169

Prescriptions

To reduce the number of people going to GP surgeries, where possible ALL prescriptions will be collected for Blagdon residents and delivered to their homes.

Repeat / Regular prescriptions

Pudding Pie Lane, Churchill Surgery

- Order online by Friday for delivery on the following Wednesday and put "Blagdon Lunch Club" in the Where to be Collected From box.
- Order by phone 01934 852906 by Friday for delivery on the following Wednesday and ask for the medication to be put in the "Blagdon Lunch Club box"
- If you are not online but have access to a computer, phone the surgery for the code to register for online ordering.
- The surgery has relaxed the requirement for paper ordering of repeat prescriptions for the duration of Covid 19; please phone the surgery to request a repeat prescription.
- You MUST ring 462169 or email caroblagdon@gmail.com to tell us you are expecting a delivery, we also need to know your address and telephone number and how many items you are expecting.
- Please stay at home on Wednesday until you have received your prescription.
- If you have to leave home and cannot be in for your delivery please call 462169.

West Harptree Surgery

Phone the surgery between noon-1pm any day and request Blagdon Delivery. Please allow three working days. Regular prescriptions will be collected from the surgery and delivered to your house on Tuesday evenings.

One-Off prescriptions

If you have been prescribed medication by the surgery which will not be a regular prescription e.g. an antibiotic, and you need it to be collected for you (because you are infectious or you should be self-isolating etc) please call the Blagdon Community Link line (462169) and we will arrange for it to be collected and delivered to you.

Payment for prescriptions

Payment by card can be taken by both surgeries over the phone.

For those who pay for repeat prescriptions

- Order as normal - i.e. online or by phone for inclusion in the Blagdon Box

- Phone 462169 and inform Link line that a to-be-paid-for prescription has been ordered.
- Link line will give info to volunteer who is collecting on Wednesday
- Volunteer will inform the dispensary of those scripts which require payment
- The dispensary will then phone the patient for card payment

Children's Repeat prescriptions

- Parent or Guardian should phone the surgery and request a prescription for inc in the Blagdon Box.
- If the parent / guardian wishes to move to online ordering of repeat prescription the child, they must ask surgery and they will be guided through the process

Pre Paid card

If you have a pre paid NHS card, and you order online you can state this and the expin on the order in the 'message box' space.

Exemption Certificates

If you need yours renewed, fill in the form as required, post it to surgery for a doctor's signature.

Publication of Blagdon Parish Magazine during lockdown

What you are reading is our first Newsletter, an on-line version of the Blagdon Parish Magazine. We are also taking the same approach for The Link, the parish magazine for Ubley and Compton Martin. Due to current restrictions we have taken the decision to produce an online version of our magazines to protect our distributors but also to continue - though in a new format - having conversations in the community: opportunities to tell our stories and share our experience of life in our neighbourhoods, particularly during this difficult time. Our Editors have worked hard to create this on-line newsletter and produce something that we hope you will enjoy reading.

Please accept our apologies that there will be no printed edition for the foreseeable future. I know most of you will understand why we have suspended the printed version, but if you do have a query, then please get in touch with myself as chair of the production team for the magazine at: priest.bcmu@gmail.com.

About the future of our two magazines. We are experiencing the same issues as other small local printed publications and some national ones too. The production team will be looking at the future of what we can produce, the content, the design, the financial viability and its purpose. With this in mind do please share your thoughts so we can add these to our decision making.

As we do not have email addresses for all subscribers we have decided to publicise the Blagdon Newsletter widely through websites and social media to try and capture as many of you as possible, but please do forward this on to anyone you know who might like it.

Thank you for reading

Revd. Simon Lewis

Buying Food in Lockdown Blagdon



Blagdon Post Office & Stores

To support people who are self-isolating they have introduced a doorstep delivery service covering Blagdon, Butcombe, Burrington, Aldwick and Ubley. Just call before 12noon Monday to Friday, let them know what you need and they will deliver it to you the same day. Phone: 462238.

The shop is still open seven days a week 8am to 8pm, except Bank Holiday May 8th when it will open 10am to 4pm. There is a one-way system and lines on the floor to help customers stay safe by keep social distancing rules.



Fresh Food delivered to your door – freeze it or eat it straight away! They are dedicated to providing our local and neighbouring community with fresh and healthy meals, delivered safely to your door. They use local suppliers and fresh produce and follow strict cleaning and health and safety regimes. And the food is absolutely delicious!

See www.elaineskitchen.co.uk or contact them for more information: 01761 463247 or catering@elaineskitchen.co.uk



A local butchers offering sustainable, pasture fed meat and other local produce. The shop is open for collection only and orders can be placed on 462367 or via the website: www.meatboxshop.com. They also offer a delivery service for customers across the valley and beyond, with local orders over £40 delivered free. As well as individual items, they supply set meat & dairy boxes to make ordering easier.

Enquires to hello@meatboxbristol.co.uk

Shop is open: Tuesdays to Fridays: 10am to 3pm, Saturdays: 10am to 1pm



Grab & Yeo - The canteen at Yeo Valley up Rhodyate has a pop up shop for the sale of items such as yoghurt, butter, milk and bread. You are served from a window as you stand on the deck so social isolation is a breeze – and the view is fabulous.

The shop is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 12noon to 4pm. Card payment only.

Local pub takeaways

All three of our local pubs are offering takeaway menus. For up-to-date details of what is available and their individual opening hours, telephone the pub of your choice.

The New Inn 462475

Queen Adelaide 463926

Seymour Arms 462279

Butcombe Brewery

Will deliver a range of beers for free to Blagdon. You can send a DM on Facebook to get your free delivery code. There is a minimum spend of £50.

For details see www.butcombe.com/shop/

Arthur David

Most people will be familiar with wholesaler Arthur David vans passing through Blagdon. This Bishop Sutton – based food wholesaler is now delivering a wide range of foodstuffs in retail quantities to individual households. Orders placed by 2pm can be delivered the next day. Minimum order value is £25.

For details see arthurdavid.co.uk or phone 0330 333 4441.



Age UK Somerset – for local information and support

Local independent charity, Age UK Somerset, has a new telephone support service and dedicated website available for older residents, to help them through this difficult time.

Our support line number is 01823 345610. If you are at all lonely or isolated and feel a chat would help, you can call, leave a message with your name and number and someone in the team will call you back. You can also email info@ageuksomerset.org.uk

If you would like to be put through to the information and advice team, then call the same number and choose option 1. The Charity offers free and confidential information and advice for older people, their families and carers. You can also email infoandadvice@ageuksomerset.org.uk

The new website ageuksomersetcoronavirus.org.uk has been put together to focus on bringing the latest information and guidance on the Coronavirus, but also brings together useful links and resources for those in self-isolation. It includes information on where to get help in your area, including details of what the charity itself offers, how to stay mentally and physically fit and suggestions of activities to keep people feeling more positive. If anyone needs printed copies of anything on the website, please contact us and we will arrange for this to be sent out to you by post.

Are you Zooming along?

Even if you were on the internet, its quite possible that a few weeks ago you had never heard of Zoom. I certainly hadn't. But now, several times a week I am happily Zooming! You are probably ahead of me – Zoom has been talked about in the papers, on the radio and on television, and you may be using it yourself already. But in case you are not sure what it means : Zoom is an app, which enables you to see and talk to other people on the internet – and it can be quite a lot of other people. The largest group I've Zoomed with was 16 people – but it could be a lot more. Zoom is just one of many apps which can connect us during lock down – there are WhatsApp, FaceTime, Skype, House Party and many others. All will have their own possibilities, and most are free as far as I know – Zoom will allow you 40 minutes without paying, for instance.

So what am I using Zoom for? Family get togethers once a week are great – for all generations - and I chat regularly with friends. Two U3A groups I used to host in my house once a month, now meet every week via Zoom – it's not the same, but it is working surprisingly well. (For this I am paying a monthly subscription so we can talk for longer – but its free for the others in the group) I've used FaceTime to re-connect with friends I was at university with and who now live in Australia – and it is a real pleasure to catch up on almost a life time's news. After the end of lock down – and who knows when that will happen – I think I will still

sometimes be 'meeting' friends and family via one or another of these apps. It's not the same as being able to give someone a hug, or make them a meal – but the internet is a really great way to be able to connect with other people and worth giving it a try. Good luck and stay well!



Jocelyn Ryder-Smith
Chew Valley Connect

For those who have not yet Zoomed

In this newsletter we have several articles all referring to Zoom. How many of us a month ago had even heard of Zoom? The app has gone from something most people had not heard of to rapidly becoming so commonplace it is now a verb, alongside hooovering or googling, as so many of us are now zooming (apologies to the respective trademark holders!). The company behind it is now worth billions of dollars, its value at time of writing supposedly significantly more than long established companies such as Hewlett Packard.

Even prior to the lockdown, many people were using their computers, tablets or mobile phones to have on-line meetings with distant friends and



The alternative low-tech solution

relatives. The lockdown has meant that such contact has become a key part of many people's lives, as we all try to keep in touch. Pub quizzes, remote play dates, playing games – you name it, people are doing it.

Zoom is an app that enables you to use the camera on your phone, tablet or computer to see the people with whom you are talking. The camera on your device sends your picture to the other people involved, whilst in turn you can see what they are doing. Your screen is split so that you can see several people at the same time. Fortunately you also get to see the view of yourself that they are receiving, so you can try to

show your best side – the cameras can be very unforgiving (one hint: men, make sure you have shaved!).

The basic version of Zoom, which is probably good enough for most social activities, is free. You and all the people wanting to join your meeting need to have the software installed on your devices. One of you launches the meeting by generating a link that you send to other participants.. So for example you might send a link inviting your sister and daughter to join you for a meeting at 5pm. With Zoom, a meeting in the free version is limited to 40 minutes, but of course you can come out and go back in again if you have more to say. Or you can pay to upgrade the version you have to remove this constraint.

Of course it is not as good as being together in person, but in these peculiar times it is a good way of maintaining the bonds of family and friendship. FaceTime is an easy to use app that only available for Apple devices. There are a lot of other apps that broadly do the same sort of job. One is Google Hangouts Chat. Another is Skype. Back in the dark ages – say two months ago – then Skype was the platform to use.

HouseParty is an app that most people under the age of 25 will already have used. Rather than formally setting up a meeting, people can drop in and out of a group session. When you connect, to the app, you can see who is “in the house” or you can start inviting people to join in with the group video chats, making very simple to use.

See: www.zoom.us and, www.houseparty.com.

For FaceTime – download from Apple app Store

For further help and advice, see Gadget Busters article below:

Gadget Busters - phone sessions during the Coronavirus pandemic

Organised by Chew Valley Gadget Busters

On-line 1.30 - 3.30 pm 1st May and 15th May

Do you want to communicate visually with your friends and family during self-isolation, but don't know how? Worried about how to order supermarket deliveries on-line? Do you have difficulty using your laptop, iPad, tablet, phone or digital camera?

We will be holding phone sessions on the first and third Fridays of each month until it is safe to resume face to face sessions. Simply E-mail your query and your phone number by midday on Friday 1st May or Friday 15th May to: cvgadgetbusters@gmail.com. One of our friendly volunteers will get back to you during the two hour on-line sessions. Even if you have no specific query, send us your email address and we will keep you up to date with the extra support we are offering during this period.



Thinking it out
Love and laughter,
the antidotes to fear

Dear Friends,

I am in no doubt that as we move into the month of May and continue to be in 'lockdown', the emotions that have built-up within me are much the same as for you. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 we have all been concerned, afraid, numb, unsettled, loving and hopeful: probably we've had other unexpected emotions to. My message is that whatever you are experiencing, it is completely normal. It is how you - your nervous system, with your life experiences - seek to cope with an overwhelming and uncertain situation. Through this letter I offer some thoughts that I hope will help us all as we continue to cope in this anxious time.

The first is to say, speak kindly to yourself; acknowledge the confusion and challenge of these times; and breathe deeply. We are the children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and more of people who came through the Great War, the Spanish influenza, the Great Depression, the Blitz, and the deprivations of World War II and the Austerity of recent years. We are survivors. There is in us a reserve of strength and wisdom that will continue to accompany us through this pandemic. Pause for a moment and recall how you have survived other challenges; draw lessons from your own experience and that of others.

Speaking of others, where do we find our examples of people or communities, who in crises, as we are, find hope? The Bible was created by people who endured great traumas and rose to rebuild their lives and even sing praises to God who made humanity and whose love never let them go. From slavery in Egypt, wandering forty years in the wilderness, to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (what we would call their 'nation capital' and 'nation cathedral') and their Exile, through to the crucifixion of Jesus and the persecution of early *Followers of the Way* - later called Christians - this is the story of a people who knew that the only way through hard times is to cling to God and their communities of faith - their Church families - and to move through the crisis. They accepted the harsh reality of life and leaned into it, doing what they had to do. They are leaders of faith, examples for us today in our crises.

And many times in the Bible people are told "do not fear." They are told it because fear is real and there are dangers. Fear is not a moral failing; it can be realistic, or a warning, or information about the need to tread carefully. We cannot eradicate fear - nor would we want to: it is a part of life. But we can remind ourselves that fear must not have the last word. For me, as someone who has a relationship with God, the empty tomb of the Easter Story, is a testament to the power of love over fear, and love never dies. So when fear arises, breathe deeply and draw on those reserves of strength and wisdom your forbears gave you. I walk the Way of Faith, remembering, as the author of one of the books of Timothy said, "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline" [2 Timothy 1.7].

My prayer for all of us in this extreme time is that we will connect with those deep reserves and will use our power, our love, and our self-discipline to keep ourselves and each other as safe and healthy as possible. The best antidotes to fear are love and laughter. So please, continue to stay connected to loved ones and enjoy the good things in life that are before you; breathe fresh air every day; move; phone a friend or someone who needs one. I would invite you to pray the Psalms, for they act - as they have done for thousands of years - as an open channel to God. There is also this open invitation for us all: speak the truth of your feelings, to the One who holds the world in a wide embrace, and then listen in the quiet of your heart.

Rev. Simon Lewis

Priest



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

10-16th MAY 2020



For Rose,



every last drop of water is precious

[Photo credit: Christian Aid/ Adam Finch]

In Kenya, the rains haven't come. Again. For villagers who farm the land, that means life is getting even harder. Rivers are bone dry, and crops wither in the fields. The drought is starving people of food, water and the chance to earn a living.

At 67 years of age, Rose walks for six hours to fetch water for her grandchildren. She tries hard to give them the kind of life she remembers from when she was a girl: when the rivers flowed with water and the crops bore fruit.

Grandmother Rose shouldn't have to go hungry. A simple earth dam, built with the help of Christian Aid's

partners and your donations, could completely change her life. This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray to stop the climate crisis driving people like Rose to hunger.

**With every gift,
we help Rose, and others,
stop this climate crisis**

Please **GIVE** generously to help Rose and her community build a water dam, providing fresh water to help families survive the drought.

The way we live our lives lately has had to adapt to the Covid-19 virus. **Christian Aid Week** will seem very different this year. **There will be no house to house collections for obvious reasons, so we are asking you to give your donations online at www.christianaid.org.uk.** And our **Christian Aid Tea (for Ubley and Compton villagers) and Christian Aid lunch (for those who live in Blagdon) will be postponed until we can celebrate later in the year.**

Fighting Covid-19 is high on our list of priorities at the moment, but please think of the other emergencies in the world which are still happening.

Christian Aid and its partners have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and will build on this experience if the infection rates start to develop in poorer counties who do not have the healthcare infrastructure needed.

Thank you all for your support in the past, please give generously at www.christianaid.org.uk

Sue Owst, Judith & Jonathan Longhurst
Christian Aid Coordinators
Compton Martin & Ubley

Sarah Parsons & Penny Crawford
Christian Aid Coordinators
Blagdon



Church Link

and reflections for you to consider at home. It also has church news, children's activities and community support details.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/Blagdonchurchlink> for the latest edition at time of going to press.

Please email the Church Office: benefice.bcmu@gmail.com if you would like to subscribe. Earlier editions are available on our website: <https://www.beneficebcmu.co.uk/the-church-in-our-community>

Another newsletter to consider:

Every Saturday St Andrew's e-mails out *Church Link* to anyone who would like to participate. It includes a link to Sunday worship at 10am but also includes readings

A message from our former curate

As many of you know, my plans for moving on after curacy all became a bit uncertain last December but I'm delighted to be able to announce that they are now much clearer!

I have been appointed as Rural Pioneer, Associate Priest (House for Duty) in the parish of Hardington Vale, but with a particular



focus on the village of Rode, which is where I will also be living.

I had my interview via Zoom, which was a new experience, but I was so glad that it could go ahead despite the lockdown.

Obviously, with all the current uncertainty, no date has been fixed for me moving to Rode or for beginning ministering there. As soon as I have details of my service of welcome and licensing, which you are all very welcome to come to, I will let you know.

I'm very excited to be continuing parish ministry alongside studying for my PhD and doing community organising. Please pray for me, the Rector, Caroline Walker, and the people of Rode as I begin to prepare for my new role.



With love and continued prayers, Alex

PEOPLE, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS



Like so many other celebrations that have had to be postponed due to the 'Lockdown', Blagdon WI members were not able to celebrate our 72nd Birthday in April and, of course, we do not know when we will be able to get together again. Our Plant Sale and Ploughman's Lunch – due for 9th May to celebrate VE Day - will, we hope, take place later in the year and don't forget 1945 costume will be required! Perhaps it will 'morph' into a 'Vegetable Sale' with all the lovely vegs you have grown in your gardens during 'lockdown'! Meanwhile, we have been keeping in touch with each

other by email but more often by telephone as it is so important to chat – particularly if you are living alone. We have clapped and cheered with the village on Thursday nights for the NHS, carers and all the wonderful people who keep us going. Keep healthy – keep smiling and hope that we can all meet again soon.

Jane Venner-Pack – Blagdon WI Secretary.



Blagdon Local History Society

75th Anniversary of VE Day

May 8th is the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Covid-19 has obviously put paid to all of the widespread events planned to celebrate VE Day, although the May Bank Holiday has still been moved to the second weekend of the month to coincide with the intended celebrations.

Our view of events 75 years on tends to be very much centred on the big cities, particularly London, where the crowds down Whitehall and in Trafalgar Square very much colour the common view of that day. Who can resist the idea of the young princesses Elizabeth and Margaret being allowed out of Buckingham Palace to mingle anonymously with the crowds? The centre of London was "impassably thick with people; yet this was illusion for the crowd had no centre, no real purpose, and everyone was aimlessly on the move." (Angus Calder).



*Revellers in Trafalgar Square,
the popular view of VE Day*

And as modern historians have pointed out, away from city centres, in the suburbs, smaller towns and villages, there was even less natural focus and the day was often an anticlimax for most people.

This was partly because the country did not know, as we now do, when the on-going war with Japan would end. Newspapers were talking of another 18 months or two years, months in which the

casualty rate could be truly enormous. For the hundreds of thousands of servicemen in the Far East or facing the prospect of transfer there – and their loved ones - VE day was not the end of their fears.

From the Blagdon Parish Council minutes it appears that no formal celebrations were organised in the village for VE Day.

At this time the Parish Council were pre-occupied dealing with the shortage of housing and finding a new burial ground. At their meeting on April 9th, local resident Mr Hope had inquired if any arrangements had been made to celebrate the coming Victory. The Chairman said no, but there would be services at the churches which was the best way to celebrate this event. The death of local dignitary Sir Peter Wills might also perhaps have cast a shadow, his memorial service having been held in St Andrew's on April 30th.

At their meeting a week after VE Day on May 16th, a letter from Axbridge Rural District Council (Blagdon at this time was part of Axbridge RDC) was read asking if the Parish Council could organize a Victory Garden Week and Fete. The chairman felt the village had done and was doing a lot in regard to the Red Cross work during the year and that no further arrangements were necessary. The Council agreed that letters of thanks should be drawn up by the chairman and sent to the king and the prime minister, Mr. Churchill. Further letters were agreed at their meeting on June 12th, to be sent to the various Civil Defence Services: Home Guard, A.R.P. Rescue Party, Fire Service, Fire Guards and Women's Voluntary Service.

In 1945 the main celebrations were saved for VJ Day, August 15th. It is entirely possible that history will repeat itself this year, as at time of writing the 75th anniversary events originally planned for VE Day are currently scheduled to take place on VJ Day, although that is looking increasingly unlikely as time passes.

Memories of the end of war in Europe

I was 20, living away from my home in Surrey and working for Rolls-Royce in the industrial north when the announcement came over the factory tannoy that the war in Europe was over and that the next day was to be a public holiday. So at the end of my shift, I caught a late train to London and slept on a station bench until I could go to Trafalgar Square.

It was an amazing day. Everyone singing, dancing, laughing and talking to strangers yet there was no unpleasant behaviour and I don't remember seeing a policeman or anyone drunk.

We were just all happy and sharing a momentous day in history. However, it should be remembered that very many people there would have lost someone in the forces or the Blitz and possibly even their homes but for that day, we were just rejoicing in the good news that the war was over. There were just a few servicemen, presumably on leave, but my two brothers, one a commando, weren't there.

And the next day, I was back on shift at 8:30am!

Although I am now 95, the memory of that amazing day is as strong as ever and I was privileged to be part of it.

Betty Silburn



How well do you know Blagdon?



Blagdon Village's Instagram account is running a daily quiz. You don't have to have an Instagram account to play and can see the images and questions here: www.instagram.com/blagdonvillage/

Over the next weeks we're going to be posting an image of Blagdon each day at 10am - places and sights you can see when you walk on the roads and footpaths of the village.

We'll be asking questions and you'll have 2 days to enter your answers in the comments. The correct answer will be posted after the third day.

It's just for fun, there's no prize apart from realising how well you know the village. At no point do you need to stare in people's houses or go on to their property,

everything can be seen from our roads and footpaths.



Zooming ahead - Brownies, Valley Voices, Church Choir and YeoFit

By Chris Burton

In these times of social lockdown it is so good that we can keep in touch with each other and still do amazing things together – online!

Blagdon Brownies are getting together on Zoom now on a Monday evening and they so enjoy seeing each other, chatting and working towards their Brownie Badges. The Charities Badge before Easter encouraged the girls to raise money for their favourite charity and the girls did some brilliant things including an online piano recital, a sponsored 3 hour continuous read, 100 pogo jumps and a 10 mile cycle ride. Charities have included the Guide Dogs, the World Wildlife Fund and the Education Endowment Foundation (which helps children living in poverty) and between them in excess of £900 has been raised! Well done girls!

We have also made cards and shared photos of them online. Thanks to Libby who sent one to the “best Brownie Leader.”



Our local choirs – Valley Voices and the Benefice Church Choir have also been meeting together on Zoom, with thanks to Rachel Branston, our choir leader. Here are a few words from Rachel:

“The Valley Voices and the Benefice Church Choir are meeting each evening online, courtesy of 'Zoom'. This is a simple app that makes it possible for large numbers of people to see each other and

have a chat and a laugh. We're finding that it really has made a difference to all our lives. The most important thing is that we 'check in' with one another and have a laugh together but officially we practice songs for Valley Voices on Monday and Thursday evenings; the church choir practices are on Tuesdays and Fridays and on Wednesdays we have poems and stories for people of all ages (our youngest is 5 and our oldest is 86). On Saturdays we have a games night and on Sunday we sing the hymns that people have chosen.

Our aim is to have a reflective come celebratory concert and service when all this nightmare is over and therefore the songs that we're working on will be used in it.

If you would like to join any of our sessions, please email our Director of Music on rachel.branston@gmail.com for the code to log on.”

Keeping fit online! YeoFit is continuing with classes on Zoom. I have been doing Zumba and Pilates and it works surprisingly well – especially being able to do it with other people and talk and laugh with them – thanks to Lynne Joyner. You can sign up through her website. (lynnejoynerfitness.co.uk/contact/)

Just one word of warning – beware of trolls or, as quoted in the Guardian, “zoombombings” – uninvited guests abusing the popular video service to broadcast shocking imagery to all. In a blogpost addressing the rise in zoombombings, Zoom said: “Like most other public forums, it’s possible to have a person (who may or may not be invited) disrupt an event that’s meant to bring people together.” It offered a list of tips blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/20/keep-the-party-crashers-from-crashing-your-zoom-event/ on how to prevent them, such as not posting links on public social media and using a password when possible.

CHERT decided at their recent on-line AGM to disband. We asked their expert archaeologist to tell us about their achievements over the past 20 years.

CHarterhouse Environs Research Team

2000-2020: a Retrospect

By Vince Russett, former North Somerset County Archaeologist

“Everything ends, and that's sad. But everything begins again, and that's happy. Be happy”. - The Doctor

CHERT was a community archaeology project at Charterhouse on Mendip. These projects rely on a group of volunteers, guided by a professional archaeologist, first Penny Stokes, then me, to record the history and archaeology of their local landscapes. Having previously run successful community studies at Downhead and Ashwick, Penny (then of Mendip DC) began a similar study at Charterhouse. After the emergency of foot and mouth in 2001, Penny asked me to take over, and we returned to fieldwork. I was astounded when I discovered that despite how well-known it was, no-one had even surveyed the earthworks of the Roman town before.

Our first work, then, was to collect together all the air photographs that we could, all the previously published (and unpublished) work at Charterhouse, historic photographs, including roads washed away by the 1968 floods, Bronze Age barrow excavations near Tynings Farm in the 1930s, and photographs of the Charterhouse Centre when it was a school in the 1920s.



Causeway collapse 1968

Even in 2002-3, we took an interest in the military history of the area, helping Somerset County Council to survey a uniquely surviving rocket battery site from WW2 near Tynings Farm.



Digging in protective gear: CHERT at the Time Team Big Roman Dig 2005

Our first survey however, was of the ruins of Edith Coles' cottage, in Velvet Bottom, where in 1871 six adults, a teenager and a baby

We rapidly expanded to three or four teams going out surveying each Tuesday, and rituals like the pub lunch (but with laptops!), the summer barbecue, summer coach trips to special sites and Christmas lunches added a social bonus. Eventually, even trips to Europe happened.



Not all hard work: the CHERT summer barbecue 2009

In 2005, CHERT were part of the BBC Time Team's Big Roman Dig, allowing us to excavate in the Roman town, although frustratingly, worries about heavy metal contamination in the soil led to our section being curtailed on health and safety grounds.

Geophysical survey equipment was made available to us through the Council for British Archaeology, which expanded our areas of work: we surveyed the humps and bumps of abandoned buildings, the old Roman town at Charterhouse (showing it was at least twice as big as previously thought), recorded the old boundaries of the land written down in 1181 (which turned out to be much the same as the 19th century boundaries of Charterhouse), recorded spreads of prehistoric flints, post-medieval rabbit warrens, 19th century lead mines.



Steve Tofts and an excavated corn drier, 2009

A special project was to survey the MoD land at the Yoxter ranges, at the top of Cheddar Gorge. Because these had been in military hands since the 1930s, and thus protected from 20th century destructive agriculture, this promised a treat of prehistoric and later landscapes. It was a little galling to find that the area had been heavily mined for lead, and most of the landscape was the result of its being recovered from that in the 18th century.

So what did CHERT achieve in its 20 years? It generated hundreds of surveys of sites, which will become more important as 'points in time' as the years go by; these are now in public ownership in Wells Museum. It raised awareness, both locally and regionally of the importance of Mendip: it directly inspired the then English Heritage to run a major survey of the Mendip AONB, but probably most important of all, it inspired a group of friends to spend many happy days roaming and recording our ancient precious Mendip landscape.

The Blagsaey Group

It's taken us a while to recover from the bees in Eldred's Orchard (a couple of years ago now). It was only intended to be a brief installation but instead took over the whole year, moving to Yeo Valley Gardens and then later at Christmas up to their headquarters. On the way it raised £5,000 for bee related organisations (an unintended bonus) and hopefully a few smiles.

And so now we're back from outer space (it certainly feels that surreal today) to continue where we left off. Like the song says 'people should smile more' and we're going to see what we can do to help.

With all the restrictions in place it's more difficult to plan and set up things, especially in a responsible way, but if you can't beat them join them. And so we've taken social distancing to heart and are, with The Stores permission, regularly drawing the social distances markers outside the shop. We've had dots and planets and flowers and there may even be bees soon.... (aagggghhhh!!)



If you were out walking about on Easter Sunday you may have seen the odd origami Easter Bunny. They visited the churches, pubs and benches around the heart of the village. You may not have spotted all 40 of them but photos of them are available on the Blagsaey Facebook page (facebook.com/blagsaey) if you want to see any that you missed.

We'll keep seeing what we can do to keep you smiling but if you're in need of an instant smile check out the Joke-a-day (not our idea but we love it). It's in a window on Mead Lane opposite The Stores it's hard to stop the corners of your mouth twitching upwards. Definitely an honorary Blagsaey member there!

Blagdon Village Club



It's been interesting. While it's heartbreaking to see all the effort everyone's put into The Club having to stop and hard work closing it down, it was encouraging to realise how many new groups and activities have started to take place. We're hoping that when things improve they will all be back with new vigour.

We can't open up as a social venue but, we are now opening for sales on Thursday and Friday between 4.30 and 6.30 p.m. We've got containers to buy or you can bring your own. It's a one person at a time set-up and we thank our members for observing social distancing while they're visiting. We're finishing off the barrels that can't be returned

but there are also bottles available of the usual beers etc for sale so you won't have to go without your favourite beverage.

Not being open for social occasions hasn't stopped some of our groups. Both the yoga group (07500 880 360) and the Tai Chi class (07749 407023) now have virtual lessons - for more details contact the numbers shown. The quiz has become a weekly event on Zoom with Ben Wiggins, our quizmaster, doing an excellent job with brain-teasing questions, while the rest of us have to remember to mute before discussing the answers. Details of the zoom ID and password are on our Facebook page and Next door after Monday lunchtime and the quiz starts at 8pm - it's open to non-club members too.

We love a good jigsaw and we know you do too. We're looking at setting up a jigsaw puzzle exchange in the entrance hall to the main room. This wouldn't be limited to club members, anyone could drop a puzzle in or pick one up. Once we have finalised it more details will be on our Facebook page and on Nextdoor.

We'd just like to reassure members we're doing everything we can to be back after this. We've shut down everything that we can, applied for everything we can and when we can sensibly spend time in the building we'll be getting on with finishing the decorating / refurbishment before we open up again.

And we've never meant this more...we hope to see you in there soon.

Your committee



Every Monday, 7.30 for 8pm
Online

Free to all

Zoom details available from Monday afternoon
on [Facebook.com/blagdonclub](https://www.facebook.com/blagdonclub) and Nextdoor



Books for lockdown from Blagdon Book Group

Reading during an enforced stay 'at home' seems like the ultimate good idea – but what to read? Books about lockdowns? Travel books? Plagues? Our Blagdon readers have been rummaging on the shelves for titles that might appeal – some of them at any time, and some more relevant now as good reads.

They're in no particular order, no 'best' book – you can judge for yourself which one might come top on your bedtime list!

War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy (1869) has to be the one to try. Our reader says it 'requires time and space' – which we might all have – and also 'it needs time to assimilate. What people often find confusing is the sheer number of characters'. The names can be awkward, too, but there are editions which explain the Russian system and keep you up to speed with who's who. Plus, and it is a plus, the BBC series can be found on iPlayer so you can get a bit of clarity.

Anna Karenina is another one you might like to go

for, especially if we're in for the long haul.

The Truth about the Harry Quebert Affair, Jöel Dicker (2014) Away from Victorian Russia, and into Somerset – but New England, USA, this murder mystery by a Swiss author has been a major best seller and is also a TV mini-series, so look out for it on the net. Marcus is trying to write a book, gets writer's block, goes to visit his old professor, Harry Quebert, and they find a 15 year old girl buried with one of Harry's books on his

property. 'You want to be engrossed', says our reader, and this does it.

Free food for Millionaires (2007) and Pachinko (2017), both by Min Jin Lee are similarly engaging; in the first a young Korean woman in New York in the 1990s is 'struggling to be a modern woman and escape the traditions of her culture and heritage'; the second is 'a huge family saga across generations dealing with love, ambition, sacrifice and loyalty'.

A good way to keep occupied in reading is through book series: here are three that come highly recommended.

Shetland, Ann Cleeves (8 books from 1997 – 2019), well known to all who watch the TV series, features detective/policeman Jimmy Perez, his family and colleagues. Our reader thinks the best ones are those that 'have at their heart an element that could only take place on the Shetlands'.

Donna Leon's Venetian police mysteries set in and around Venice have been capturing readers' imaginations for many years. Again, Venice itself is a key player, alongside Guido Brunetti and his totally lovable family. The best have 'some form of corruption' involved in the story – pollution in the drinking water of Venice, for example, or illegal waste dumping – or those monstrous cruising tower-blocks looming over the lagoon!

Days Without End, Sebastian Barry (2016) is also one of a series with a difference, a random, lyrical saga of Irishmen named 'McNulty' – you can ponder on how all the McNultys are connected. Linking them all, however, is a sense of isolation even in companionship – maybe this also makes them relevant for our times. *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (2010) considers 'dislocations (physical and otherwise) of loyalist Irish during the political upheavals of the early 20th century'; *The Temporary Gentleman* (2014) tells the story of Jack McNulty, whose short-term commission during WW2 leaves him in 1957, sitting in his lodgings in Accra, trying to complete his life story. Thomas McNulty, in *Days Without End* wanders in and out of gender, the American Civil War, Indian Territories, even life and death with his partner John Cole. Eventually they settle in a sort-of-family farm with adopted Lakota girl, Winona, the subject of Barry's most recent novel *A Thousand Moons* (2020).

Independent People, Haldór Laxness (1955) won this Icelandic author's Nobel prize, an 'epic' story of small lives set in the bleak isolation of rural Iceland, where Bjartur is trying to raise sheep in the early 20th century, against all the odds Iceland can throw at him, animal, vegetable and human. You think we have problems trying to get to Waitrose. Laxness has been called Iceland's Tolstoy, and this is another absorbing and thought-provoking tale that 'underlines the connectedness of humanity', not its supposed 'independence'.

The Second Sleep, Robert Harris (2019), if you really want relevance, 'is a work of speculative fiction set in Britain 800 years into the future, after a "systemic collapse of technical civilisation"'. 'Scientism' is suppressed in favour of dogma and superstition ... well, see what you think! www.theguardian.com/books/2019/sep/09/the-second-sleep-robert-harris-review It was broadcast recently on BBC Radio 4, so you might still find it in BBC Sounds.

This is Going to Hurt, Adam Kay (2017) gives us a sometimes-funny view of the NHS outside of the virus, with all its lack of funding, political footballing and minor heroism. Kay trained as a doctor in 2004, becoming a Senior Registrar in 2010: 'What kept him going was the positive feeling he would get after a shift in which he helps patients in multiple ways' – but burn-out left him depressed and he resigned, eventually putting his diary and all his notes into this serio-comic bestseller.

Full Tilt - from Ireland to India by Bicycle, Dervla Murphy (1965) is a travel book! Our reader says 'Absolutely fascinating account of a solo bike journey from Ireland to India, through many countries, then remote, now well-known to us as places of unrest (e.g. Iran, Afghanistan ...)' www.theguardian.com/travel/2018/jan/24/dervla-murphy-travel-writer-interview-full-tilt

And if you want true escape, go for the British Library Crime Classics series of early 20th-century fiction, the best of them written between the wars. It's the period detail that enthralls – the stories are variable, but all good fun and such an easy read if your concentration levels aren't so good in these challenging times.

BLAGDON INFORMATION

Refuse and Recycling in April

Recycling and food waste are both taken every collection day

	Standard vehicle	Small vehicle
5th May	Rubbish	Garden
12th May	Garden	Rubbish
19th May	Rubbish	Garden
26th May	Garden	Rubbish

Mobile Library

The mobile library service is currently suspended

Refuse collections may be affected in the future. Watch www.n-somerset.gov.uk for up-to-date information

Weston General Hospital merges with Bristol Royal Infirmary

In this time of unprecedented crisis in the NHS, a change that may have significant results for people in Blagdon over the long term may have passed largely unnoticed. University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and Weston Area Health NHS Trust merged on April 1st to form **University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust**. (you cannot accuse them of spending too much time coming up with a snappy name, although redoing all the signs could cost a lot with all those letters – let's hope that they use the approved abbreviation UHBW).

Commenting on the final milestone in the merger process, Robert Woolley, chief executive of UHBW, said: "This is a momentous occasion in the history of two proud hospital trusts and one that wouldn't have been possible without the support of our dedicated workforce in Weston and in Bristol. I am immensely grateful for their hard work to help us achieve this merger but particularly for everything they are doing for our patients at this unprecedented time.

"Uniting the Trusts increases our diversity, capacity and resilience, and provides a unique opportunity to bring together the things that make both the Weston and Bristol hospitals great places to work and to receive care, in order to create an even better and stronger organisation for the future.

"It's important to reassure our service users that, while the name of the Trust may have changed, they will continue to receive care from the same staff in the same location that they do now."

The names of the component hospitals, including Weston General Hospital and the Bristol Royal Infirmary, will remain unchanged.



Blagdon Parish Magazine and Newsletter are published by the Parochial Church Council of St Andrew's Church, Blagdon, to provide useful information to the community. We welcome contributions of both local and general interest. Provided that space is available and the material is suitable, every effort will be made to include it. Contributions may be edited. They should be sent to parishmagazine@blagdon.org by the 15th of the month preceding publication. To contact the editor please email blagdonparishmag@gmail.com or phone Ken Parsons on 462371. The views expressed in the magazine are those of the individual contributors and are not endorsed by the publisher. All information is published in good faith and while we try to ensure that details are correct, no liability either expressed or implied is accepted in regard to any statements made.



Blagdon Parish Council News: April 2020

Given the current government restrictions on public gatherings, and to protect the health and well-being of our Clerk, Councillors and residents, physical meetings of Blagdon Parish Council have been put on hold. The Clerk and Councillors continue to work together via email and telephone to ensure all Council business is dealt with.

The Parish Annual Meeting is postponed until the restrictions on public gatherings have been lifted. The Parish Council would like to thank residents for their understanding. Your Parish Councillors can still be contacted in the usual way should you have any questions or concerns.

For the latest information, advice and support available during the Covid-19 pandemic, please visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus or call Blagdon Community Link on 01761 462169.

Facilities and maintenance around the village

Following advice from central government and North Somerset Council, the play area and gym facilities on The Mead are temporarily closed. Residents can continue to use the open space on The Mead for daily exercise, although gatherings are not permitted. The toilets, the cemetery and allotments remain open.

West Country Ground Care continues to cut The Mead and provide ground maintenance around the village and David our Village Orderly continues to maintain the cemetery, public toilets and empty the bins around the village.

The proposed work at the Rocks has been postponed until the government restrictions are lifted.

Parking

There are a greater number of cars parked across the village as many more of us stay at home. This has caused bottlenecks and jams which could delay key workers and essential deliveries from reaching their destination.

The Village Club and Mead car parks can be used by residents as a temporary measure (including overnight) to alleviate parking and to help clear the main access routes through the village. This will be regularly reviewed during the lockdown. Yeo Valley has also offered parking at its HQ.

Planning matters

All new planning applications for the parish can be found the Council's website: www.blagdonpc.wordpress.com/

Contact

Please do not hesitate to contact the Council about any matter of local interest or concern through the post box in The Stores, by email to the parish.clerk@blagdonpc.org.uk or by phone on 01275 349098

To report dog fouling or problems, please contact the NSC dog warden on 01275 888 802