

The Blandford Bugle

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL THINGS GOOD IN
BLANDFORD: GOOD HOMES, GOOD NEIGHBORS, GOOD FUN.

“Where everyone knows your name, and a safe place to raise a family.” *Terri Haynes Roach*

Back to our roots and branching out...

Bicentennial Oak

The Blandford Bicentennial Oak Tree located on the Town Commons opposite The White Church of Blandford is marked by a wrought iron fence and a small plaque. The White Oak and its enclosure were presented to the town by Dr. Lawrence R. Boise of Minneapolis, Minn. who was a descendant of one of Blandford's first families.

The town was originally planned for development in 1732 and settled in 1735 by people from Hopkinton (a town east of Route 495) and the tree came from a farm owned by one of those pioneer families. In 1935, that farm was owned by Harry Cheney who, although not connected to Blandford's pioneers, he was interested in history and according to reports of that time, through his “interest and generosity the tree was made available” and planted on October 20, 1935.

Memorial Day picnic

The Annual Memorial Day Picnic will begin immediately following the parade. There will be burgers and wieners grilled by Blandford's best



chefs. Please bring a side dish to share: salad, casserole or dessert. Plan on a pick-up ball game!



The Bicentennial Oak at Town Commons

Bicentennial Oak

When Eden was embowered
With fruits and flowers fair
To finish his creation
God planted great trees there;
Among them all in majesty
The oak and pine tree stood,
Symbols of strength and beauty,
Twin monarchs of the wood.

These trees were man's first temple
In the early dawn of Time,
Their branches formed great arches

Where twig and leaf entwine;

Their tall trunks towering heavenward
Were spires of nature's own
And over all the canopy
Of sun and stars was thrown.

When our fathers reared their temple
On Blandford's hill-top high
They found the pine tree growing here
Upreaching to the sky.
On the soil of this old common
By their faith and valor won,
We plant today beside the pine
This sturdy oak from Hopkinton.



Long may they stand together
As in olden time they stood,
Symbols of strength and beauty,
Twin monarchs of the wood.
Long may they tower above us,
Long may their branches twine,
This sturdy oak from Hopkinton
With Blandford's stately pine.

By Dr. Howard A. Gibbs for the occasion

Hats off!



- To Blandford's High School Graduates! Congratulations Class of 2015.
- To George Reichert for the new American Flag at Veterans' Park at Town Commons.

To Maureen Costello whose shop "Sheepgate" will celebrate it's 25th anniversary on the weekend of July 11th and 12th.

- To Mike Wojcik for years of dedicated service to our Town on the Board of Health and for designing the best Transfer Station in Western Mass.

Honor our veterans

Blandford's upcoming Memorial Day parade and service will be on Monday May 25. The parade will start promptly at 11:30 a.m. at the Town Offices and end at Veterans Park at Town Commons. This year the parade will feature the Gateway marching band along with scouts, little leaguers, classic cars, horses and fire departments from Blandford and surrounding hilltowns. The Recreation Committee will be sponsoring the annual Memorial Day picnic directly following the parade at the Town Hall. They will provide hotdogs and hamburgers, please bring a dessert or salad to share. There will be sign-up sheets at the Store, Library and Town Hall.

Parade watching at the Historical Society



Fathers' Day

Fathers' Day is June 21. Celebrate your father! Victor Hugo wrote, "Son, brother, father, lover, friend. There is room in the heart for all the affections, as there is room in heaven for all the stars."

Automatic 911 notification

If you are not already on the call list for the town's Automatic 911 notification telephone calls, please call the Police Department at 413-848-2020 and leave your name and telephone number and request to be included on the list.

The town uses this automated system, AKA Robo Calls, to keep residents informed about emergencies, road closings, severe weather and special town functions.

Junior Golf

Summertime means Junior Golf at The Blandford Club. The Blandford Club is the only golf club in the area that keeps the course closed to play so that young golfers have the unfettered opportunity to have lessons, learn the game and play.

The program runs most Tuesdays in July and August. Please call Golf Pro Francis Kringle at 848-2443 for more information.



Russell Pond Tags

Applications for Russell Pond tags and parking decals are on the Town of Russell's Recreation Department website at www.townofrussell.us. The swimming area will be open to all hill town residents beginning June 28.

WiredWest Vote Passes

At the Annual Town Meeting in May the vote to join in the broadband initiative through WiredWest passed 120 to 13. The next step is to reach our goal of having 40% of residents sign up online at www.wiredwest.net.

We currently need 100 more households to reach our goal!

Please contact Cara at (413) 552-9600 or selectmensecretary.com with any questions and I will do my best to either answer them or point you in the right direction.

First Annual Great Blandford Flea Market

The First Annual Great Blandford Flea Market will be Saturday, July 11, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Blandford Fair Grounds, with FREE ADMISSION AND FREE PARKING. There will be food vendors and restrooms available on site.

If you would like to participate as a vendor: with a donation of \$10, participants can be sheltered in the Presidents' Building (limited spaces so sign up early) or in an outside pull through site, leaving treasures on their own trailer. A reasonable \$5 gets you access on Saturday morning to an outdoor site. There is a \$2 donation for early bird set up on Friday July 10 from 4 to 8 p.m., please note, there is positively NO EARLY BIRD SHOPPING.

Indoors or out, all vendors will need to provide their own tables and if using an outside site, vendors have the option to bring their own awnings or umbrellas.

To reserve a site or get more information, please contact either Linda Barnard at 413-848-0154 or Kate Fletcher at 413-848-2487. Leave a message on the answering machine please, or by email at greatblandford-fleamarket@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

The Blandford Fair will present a horse show on the same day.

Display *Old Glory*

June 14 is Flag Day. Please fly or display your American Flag.

**The Baseball Field needs refurbishing: bases and backstop fencing top the list. You can contribute to the Baseball Field Fund by sending your donation to the Recreation Committee at Town Offices
1 Russell Stage Road
Blandford, MA 01008**

Any amount will help! Thank you.

COA Walking Challenge

The Blandford Center for Active Adults will join the Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA) 1st Annual "Go the Distance" 1-Mile Walking Challenge.

The walk will take place at Stanly Park in Westfield on Saturday, June 6. We will meet at the Blandford Town Hall at 10 a.m. and carpool.

All walkers with varying speeds and abilities are welcome to participate in the challenge. MCOA hopes that over 100 communities will join in this statewide celebration of walking, the key to personal independence and physical well-being.

Walking has a direct link to sustained independence and better health. In fact, it could be called a "wonder drug" for many of today's most common medical problems. If it were recognized as a drug, then a doctor's prescription would read: Take a Walk. Recommended dosage is 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Side effects may include weight loss, improved mood, improved sleep, better balance, stronger muscles and bones, prolonged independence as well as looking and feeling better. Biking, swimming, dancing, gardening, sports, jogging and aerobics work equally well, but three factors make walking the most effective treatment: 1) low or no cost; 2) simple to do for people of all ages, incomes and fitness levels, and 3) walking is Americans' favorite physical activity.

People are more likely to stick with a walking program than with other fitness prescriptions. Please register in advance by contacting Mary Brainerd at 848-2332. Members of the community of all ages are welcome to participate. We will provide water bottles. All walkers who complete the mile will earn a certificate and be entered in a statewide prize raffle.

Please Help!



THE BAIRD TAVERN: 247 years

- Kate Fletcher

I don't normally consider myself a time traveler but I recently visited the year 1768 and what a fascinating time it was. OK, so I didn't actually time travel but I did enjoy a leisurely visit with Carolyn Taylor, at her home on Old Chester Road. Many townsfolk will recognize it instantly as "The Baird Tavern", originally opened by the Baird family in 1768.



It's said that Hugh Black was the first settler to arrive in the fall of 1735 and James Baird came shortly thereafter. Back then there were as many as 26 licensed taverns in the town of Blandford.

One of the first things I want to clear up is the difference between the historic version of the

word *tavern* and the modern version. People generally consider the modern tavern to be a place to stop in and have a beer or cocktail maybe something to eat and then off to finish the rest of their day. In the historic version, a family of travelers or a single traveler, using the *Boston to Albany Turnpike* which ran right next to the Baird Tavern, would be able to feed, water and stable their horse for the night in the families very large barn, then walk across the road to the Baird home and get something



to eat and drink and enjoy a safe, comfortable room for the night. Keep in mind that the 170 mile trip from Boston, Mass. to Albany, N.Y. could take anywhere from a quick ten days to a brutal multiple week trip, depending on the weather and other factors. HoJo's and The Best Western hadn't been in-

Let's start with the enormous three story chimney and its massive foundation in the basement which supports the original kitchen fireplace. The actual opening measures 82 inches wide by 53 inches high. Those measurements do not include the mantle or brick surround, that's just the opening. In the back wall of that fireplace is an even deeper, smaller space called a beehive oven.

This is where the bread, cakes or pies and such would be baked. There were no safety features back then, the floor of the fireplace was a continuation of the kitchen floor. One had to be very careful that the embers and coals didn't accidentally roll out onto the floor. Inside the fireplace is the thick, heavy swinging metal arm which the cast iron cooking pot would have hung on.

I was intrigued to see all of the antique cooking implements that she has displayed nearby. The four or five foot handle on an item shaped like a paddle was used to add or remove items from the beehive oven. What a great safety invention, now a woman didn't have to step into the fireplace to remove the pie, she could just reach in with the flat paddle and scoop up the hot dish and move it to the table thereby reducing the risk of setting the hem of her dress on

fire. Seeing how hard it must have been to do large scale cooking by wood makes me grateful for my temperature controlled, push button stove. The home has two other fireplaces as well, though neither one as large as the kitchen one.

It was a delight to be allowed to ramble from room to room and discov-

er the wonderful time period treasures. Every door uses an iron, latch and catch, hardware set. You have to lift the latch out of the catch in order to open or secure the door, how cool.

In the second floor hallway hangs a collection of family photo's with one that dates back to the Civil

War. Just down the hall from the portraits is a simple set of cabinet doors that hold the linens, access to the chimney and the rumor about the Underground Railroad era and of a secret passage that led to the attic.

The attic looks like most attics when you enter the main room; you see the framing of the roof and walls and the top section of the enormous chimney.

As Carolyn was pointing out the original square nails and spikes used by the Bairds in con-



struction of their home, I couldn't help but notice a very thin Birch tree sapling that is about an inch and a half in diameter and eight feet long suspended horizontally off the rafters by two strips of leather.

Legend has it that this was original to the home when it was built in 1768 and was a talisman of good luck. It was there when Carolyn became steward of the tavern in 1973 and has kept the home safe for 247 years, so there the sapling remains.

Venturing behind the talisman and the chimney I was pleasantly surprised in the discovery of a small room filled with sunlight, finished floor, walls and ceiling.

A view of the hundreds of daffodils that fill the yard is visible through the original bulls-eye glass pane windows. It was originally added as a playroom for her children but I could envision it as a wonderfully quiet place to slip away to with a good book and cup of tea.

After the attic, we strolled down to the first floor and entered the addition that was built in 1810. This is where her "modern kitchen" is now, complete with gas stove and wood stove...because

some needs never change in Blandford.

Cross the kitchen, through another door and we again enter a timewarp. An open and airy two-story shed with exposed, hand carved post and beam construction, a flagstone threshold and 18 inch iron hinges on the door. The tale is told that one of the previous owners tore down a 100-foot barn, and this shed and smaller barn was built using the wood that was salvaged. I believe it, the wood is so thick and sturdy that while standing inside, a quiet peacefulness, reminiscent of a large barn, sinks soothingly into your bones.

The roots of the Baird home begin in 1768 and ran through 1810 when the tavern closed to travelers but remained in the family.

In the intervening years its been home to different families and venues but it seems to have come full circle when in 1988, Carolyn re-opened it to road weary travelers as a Bed and Breakfast.

If you'd like to see pictures of her home and gardens, please visit bairdtavern.com

The Garden Club at work...



Garden Club members Jerry Hamel, Pat Lucas and Eileen Gates tackle the weeds at Bicentennial park.

Many hands make light work, and many gardeners swap plants, ideas and trade secrets. The group meets at the Porter Memorial Library on the third Tuesday.

Please call Eileen Gates or Barb Blair for more infor-

Meet the Kanner Family

Sabrina and Chris Kanner are new neighbors in Blandford, having moved to their house on North Blandford Rd. in the middle of our long winter.

Sabrina is mom to two girls, Olivia, 10 and Sophia, 4, and works from home as a floral designer. (Remember this when you need wedding arrangements, shower flowers or a Christmas wreath.)

She has deep roots in the soil, though, having been farm manager at Ray's in Westfield for 15 years and running a roadside vegetable stand. Chris, an avid fly fisherman, is a dispatcher for Westfield Gas and Electric.

Both Sabrina and Chris grew up in Westfield and, prior to the move to Blandford, lived in Chester.

When they began to look for more land they wanted to stay in the hilltowns and after searching, found, lost and found again the perfect house and garden.



They love the country, small town atmosphere, the friendly neighbors, the easy commute to Westfield and the continuity of having their girls remain in the Chester Elementary School. Sabrina credits Cara Letendre, Secretary to the Board of Selectman and fellow mom of two daughters, with doing a fine job of "selling" the town to her when they were house hunting.

So far, their expectations have been met and exceeded. They were offered help during the long, snowy winter days, had a welcome basket delivered to their door, made friends at the town library and enjoy the availability of local farm stands.

All in all they find themselves fitting in well to their new surroundings.

Give them a wave in the mornings as Olivia waits for the school bus or when you see them around town. And be sure to welcome them and all our new neighbors to Blandford.

Heroes: Every Hero Has a Story

Summer Reading 2015 at Porter Memorial Library will be exciting, inspiring, and fun. We will begin Wed., July 15 and meet each week with the finale on Wed., August 12.

Our guests will include our own hometown heroes who are the volunteer firefighters, police officers, and military personnel. Heidi Taberman and Gwynn Caswell will join us to talk about their efforts in New Jersey last year to help rebuild homes after Hurricane Sandy.

We will also be building birdhouses for the Blandford Community Garden and this project is in conjunction with the Center for Active Adults.

Multicultural storyteller Diane Edgecomb will be with us as we close the program on August 12.



We will use the same format this year in that we will be tallying total minutes read versus the person who reads the most books. Last year, we read a total of 20,409 minutes! New this year, we will be looking for sponsors that will be willing to make a commitment of \$.25 for each 5,000 minutes read. For example, if the entire summer reading tally is 20,000 minutes read, you would be responsible for \$1.00. All monies raised will be donated to the Habitat for Humanity organization.

All programs are free and all ages are welcome! The Summer Reading program is sponsored by the Blandford Cultural Council, Porter Memorial Library and The Board of Trustees, Massachusetts Library System, the Boston Bruins, and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The Blandford Club

The Club is open for public golfing during May; please call 413-848-2443 to reserve a tee time.

There is a Community Day/Open House on Saturday, May 30 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The public is invited for free golf, tennis voucher, free lunch and tours of the clubhouse and grounds.

A bit of Blandford history and nostalgia and what happens there today

There was a time when you could see Greylock and Ma-nadnock from the hill where The White Church sits today, across the street from the site of the original Blandford Meeting House on North Street. That site is marked by a granite boulder.

The first church organization, dating to 1735 in Hopkinton, was Presbyterian, but yielded in 1800 to the Congregational trend and became the First Congregational Church of Blandford in 1801.

The time has changed, the view is different. The structure's spire can be seen from the Skyline Trail in Chester, but now only when the leaves are off the trees.

The Blandford Historical Society now owns the building, deeded to the society in 2006.

The building that is preserved is the "Church on the Hill" built in 1822 by Capt. Isaac Damon of Northampton. It is a landmark for miles around and is one of the three remaining churches Damon built.

Damon, the architect, also designed the former First Congregational Church in Springfield on Court Square and the third is the Southwick Congregational Church.

On June 22, 1822, Damon laid the first cornerstone of the White Church. Today, the White Church of Blandford is on the town's seal and can be seen on the town's flag, crafted by Sue Racine, in the Great Hall at the State House in Boston.

In 1985 The White Church became listed on the National Registry of Historic Buildings by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 1990, the restoration process began. With the groundbreaking on September 14 of that year, \$40,000 was invested to raise the building on blocks to shore up the foundation.

A grant for \$1,000 for architectural services was secured from the National Trust in 1993 and the restoration began in earnest.

The Restoration Committee kicked off the major fund-raising campaign with a *Back to Blandford* weekend in July 1993. The weekend brought many former Blandford residents and summer residents back to town for picnics, tours, historic displays and an auction. The events brought back memories and at the same time, aided the restoration project financially. The weekend included a rededication of The White Church.

The Scottish Festival soon followed, a major fund-raising event, which included for the first four years, programs in the White church. That way people could see restoration progress.

The Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation, Inc. awarded a \$50,000 grant for the project, for matching funds. The initial \$12,500 was matched at the time for the *Back to Blandford* weekend.

Projects that have been completed include the basics: septic, electric and water systems, painting inside and out, window repair and plumbing. The steeple has been refurbished and the bell leveled. About \$300,000 has gone into the restoration.

The restoration aspects have been largely completed and what remains is now the preservation of the structure.



*The village church stands on the hill
With stately grace, a voice, tho' still;*

...
*Toward heav'n she lifts her lofty spire,
A thing of beauty to admire.*

*Excerpt from The White Church
by Ida M. Mesner*



Ms. Plonka



Mr. Arbjornsson



Maestra Queler



Ms. Leonard



Mr. Viscardi

Under the aegis of the Blandford Historical Society, The White Church Steering Committee serves as the steward for on-going work and fundraising efforts which include the Opera Performance and parking on the grounds during Labor Day fair weekend.

An Endowment Committee now takes the lead in fund-raising by establishing a permanent fund for the preservation and maintenance of the building.

The White Church of Blandford is once again a building of pride for the whole community and will celebrate its 200th year anniversary in 2022.

The historical building is open by appointment in the summer and available for rental for weddings, memorial services, performances, etc.

This summer, there will be multiple performances, beginning June 28 at 3 p.m. with a return recital by pianist Liam Kaplan. July 25 at 7:30 p.m. Seth Farber hosts a second CD Release Concert. Tickets are \$15 per person. Sunda Aug. 16 at 3 p.m. pianist Marcia Eckert with her ensemble will present *Serio Divertimenti*. Tickets are \$15 per person.

You will want to save the date for the 21st annual Bel Canto Opera performance presented by Conductor Eve Queler.

This year the Bel Canto performance is set for August 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Maestra Queler and pianist Douglas Martin will bring exciting new voices to grace The White Church of Blandford for the great enjoyment of all.

Performers are Jami Leonard, Soprano, Ewa Plonka, Mezzo Soprano, Thorstein Helgi Arbjornsson, Tenor and John Viscardi, Baritone.

Maestra Queler said, "We will perform arias and duets and a trio from Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Donizetti's *La Favorita*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Rossini's *Cinderella* and lots more."

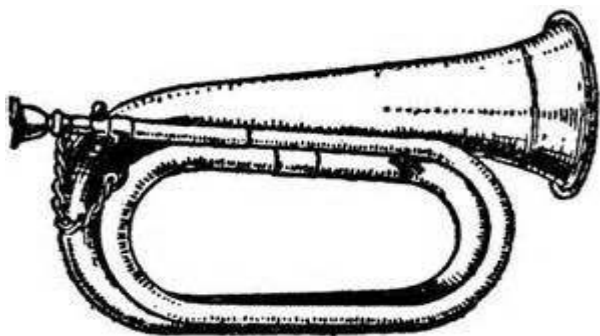
Tickets are \$35 per person. Send ticket requests, withcheck to *White Church Preservation Fund*, Blandford Historical Society, P. O. Box 35, Blandford, MA 01008.

The Blandford Bugle
P. O. Box
Blandford, MA 01008

PRSRT STD
Blandford, MA
Permit No. 2
ZIP CODE 01008

All Blandford things you need to know

Postal Patron
Blandford, MA 01008



The Blandford Bugle

Send all communication to:
The Blandford Bugle C/O Recreation Committee
Blandford, MA 01008
Or, Drop in the town box outside town hall
Or, Email us at blandfordbugle@hotmail.com

Published quarterly by The Blandford Recreation Committee with help from Porter Memorial Library
Deadline for September/October/November issue is August 15.

Editor: Cara Letendre
Contributing Editors: Mary Kronholm & Kate Fletcher
Editorial Board: Kate Fletcher, Mary Kronholm, Cara Letendre, Lori Bocon, Cindy Montanaro