

## Top Tips and Rants

Well, here we are again. This is going to be the final bulletin for 2014 and as we approach the end of the year, it's clear the Biggar landscape is set to change. 'Jimmy's Garage' is undergoing a major transformation and the new museum is shaping up. The building of the new primary school is also underway and the space currently occupied by the old primary will eventually become a car park. The fields on your left-hand side as you head out of Biggar in the direction of Edinburgh have become a massive construction site – and what a sight it is! It's a wonder none of the locals have ended up bashing into each other, gawping as they drive past.

There are very few vacant shops in Biggar these days, so there's lots to choose from if you're into speciality or fun shopping. This, of course, brings me to the Christmas shopping night in Biggar, which falls this year on Friday 28th November. If it's not already in your diary, note the date now! We start early, at 5pm, so why not come on up and start at the top of the town then weave your way down? As usual, we'll have nice hot drinks generously laced with a wee 'pick up' to get you going and some lovely home-made pies and Christmas tree shortbread worthy of Paul and Mary. Drop by and you'll definitely say, '... a perfect bake!'

We'll have bags of shortbread on sale as before and, as you might expect, we'll have a lovely selection of Christmas flower and plant gift ideas – everything from wee extra gifts to presents for special friends. Please remember you don't have to spend a fortune on something nice and pretty – we have gifts for every budget and they can be purchased on the night or ordered for collection nearer Christmas.

What can we rave on about in this report? Well, nothing changes ... We still get endless questions asked of us – perhaps it's our location but maybe we should consider changing to an information bureau. As I've [pointed out before](#) we're either the first port of call as people enter the town, or the last resort as they're about to leave it. Top favourite? Yes, you've either guessed it or remembered it's the toilet. Where is it? Will it be open? Are you sure we can't use yours? How much does it cost? (Twenty pence, incidentally, as someone came back to let us know!)

Then there's:

- 'Why can't I use my phone in your shop?' Because the walls are two feet (100cms) thick, that's why.
- 'Can you give me directions to...?' Of course...

Add comments like:

- 'It's freezing in here', from someone wearing only a t-shirt, shorts and sandals – well, yes, it's a flower shop; and
- 'Are you open really, really early?' – can be. 'Oh good I'll collect then' – open up bright and early and no show till late morning,

and you might pick up on our constant wonder. Passing drivers eat their lunch in the lay-by outside the shop. One 'lay-by' gent munched on his hand-made piece then fell asleep – total time one hour. Another ran out to chippie, ran back, jumped in his van, head bent tucking in, finished, looked up and noticed me watching and drove off hastily.

One thing has changed. The shop has got a bicycle now. No, not for deliveries but for keeping us warm this winter. If you see me cycling round the outside area of the shop, don't worry. We've a cordless phone and can still chat with you or take your order. I (Rosie) am the only one who's planning on doing this – the happy helpers have all scorned the idea of the bike and headed off instead to the 'biccycy tin' in the hope of some inner warmth.

The 'biccycy tin' has 'Cheddars' in it at the moment. Carolyn, [as you might remember](#), does like a sugar fix. She opened the tin, went 'hmmm' and shut it quickly. Don't think Malky would even bother opening the box! As we get nearer Christmas though, we get some lovely edible gifts from customers so the eating starts in earnest and customers and other visitors also come in to sample the goodies.

So another year is nearly over... We're still here and who knows if things are picking up? For some, the future's looking brighter but for an awful lot of others it's still a reality to budget carefully for everything, from treats to essentials and bills. And when Christmas comes, the pressure's really on.

Do remember that the home-made gift or the plant prettily gift-wrapped can be just as special and thoughtful as something larger, more expensive or the 'in-thing' to have.

Soon we'll be digging out the Christmas boxes to remind ourselves of the 'treats' we stored away after Christmas last year. Look forward to seeing you and chatting with you over this xmas season and the new year to come.