

BLUNSDON VILLAGE MAGAZINE

December 2021



Photo by Debra Richardson


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Current Opening Hours

Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm
Saturday: 8am – 3pm
Sunday: 8am – 12pm

A request to the Community

If you are a regular or an ad-hoc shopper at the Blunston Community Shop, you will know that it plays a very useful role in our community and as 2022 fast approaches, so do exciting times in its development.

The foundation of the success of the Community Shop over the last 19 years has been its enthusiastic large group of volunteers, who, week after week, rain or shine, have ensured the shop has remained open. In most recent times since Covid struck, their stalwart support to the community has gone far and beyond to help ensure those more vulnerable members of our community did not go without the daily essentials they have needed.

Looking forward, with the rise in Blunston resident numbers and plans for the new location for the Community Shop well underway, we are seeking to recruit a volunteer marketing professional to support the promotion of the shop.

Communication to a wider audience as to what the Community Shop offers will be at the heart of the role. Initially it is envisaged that the role will include the creation and implementation of a social media strategy, as well as the promotion of product lines and the opening of the new shop, both in local printed media and online.

So, if you have marketing experience and some spare time to help the Community Shop, do consider joining the group of volunteers; we would love to hear from you. In the first instance, please email volunteer@blunstoncommunityshop.uk or call Hazel on 07974 150250 to explore how you too could help shape the future success of the Blunston Community Shop.

Recently, we created the new voluntary role of Volunteer Coordinator. This has been filled by a new resident Hazel Wakefield, who has experience of working in charities and organisations that are reliant on the support of volunteers. She would love to hear from anyone who is interested to learn more how their skill-set could support the Community Shop into the New Year when it moves location. With the addition of a café and a myriad of other new services being planned, the volunteer force will remain as important as ever to ensure this successful transition.

So, if you are a marketing professional or someone who would like to offer their own skill-set to volunteer and support the development of the Community Shop into 2022 and beyond, we eagerly await to hear from you.

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

Thursday 23rd Dec	08:00 - 17:00	Friday 24th Dec	08:00 - 13:00
Saturday 25th Dec	CLOSED	Sunday 26th Dec	CLOSED
Monday 27th Dec	09:00 - 13:00	Tuesday 28th Dec	09:00 - 13:00
Wednesday 29th Dec	09:00 - 13:00	Thursday 30th Dec	09:00 - 13:00
Friday 31st Dec	09:00 - 13:00	Saturday 1st Jan	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd Jan	08:00 - 12:00	Monday 3rd Jan	08:00 - 17:00

**1st Blunsdon Scout Group –
Scouts' Christmas Post
is back!**



- **Scout Christmas stamps for sale in the village shop NOW – only 30p each**
- **Special green post box in village shop**
- **Last time for posting 4pm**

Swindon Scouts can deliver your Christmas cards in Swindon and surrounding villages for just 30p each.

Scout Christmas stamps are for sale in the village shop. Cards must be posted in the special green Scout Post Boxes and ours will be in the village shop until **4pm Tuesday 14th December**.

This is one of our major fundraising events and one that all our members, from little Beavers to big Scouts, can get involved in so thank you for your support.

Steve Iles, Group Scout Leader, 07885 188079, iles.swindon@gmail.com



Are you aged 14-25 years?

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon would like to hear young people's views and opinions. These opinions are all anonymous and will help shape and inform policing in Wiltshire and Swindon.

The Wiltshire Swindon Youth Commission are working hard to gather the voices and opinions of young people across the region on 6 priorities.

It's really important that we reach as many young people as possible.

All surveys are anonymous and the results will form part of findings which will be fed back to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Wiltshire & Swindon police.

The surveys have been posted to Broadcast Blunsdon Facebook page.



Parish Council News – December/January 2021-22

The leaves are finally falling as we softly slip into Winter, the colours are beautiful on their way to stark empty bushes and trees and crisp frosts, and you never know, maybe a white Christmas. Let's hope it doesn't get too cold as we are struggling to get the boiler in the Village Hall replaced. Hopefully, it will be done by the end of November as, to keep the huge space warm enough it is costing the PC and the environment.

The Parish Council would like to wish all the residents of the Parish a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year. Let's hope for a far better break than last year.



Help!

We are coming up to the time when we must consider expenditure for next year and create a sensible budget that does the things we have to do and maybe things we would like to do. This is where we need your help with ideas for any projects that you think we might be able to afford and are needed across the Parish. Please can you send them via contact@blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk or post them in the post box at the Village Hall. We must finalise the budget by the end of January 2022.

Help Again

We have just been informed by Swindon Borough Council Transport Management that licences for an additional 31 HGV vehicles to operate out of 21 Turnpike Road have been granted, although we have objected through our Ward Councillors. As you can see from the Community Speedwatch results below, this is consistently the worst performing area for speeding in the Parish. Will those of you who live on Turnpike Road please give us some feedback on what you think we might ask SBC to do to improve the road safety along this stretch of road. Please can you send your thoughts and ideas via contact@blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk or post them in the post box at the Village Hall – thank you.

Planning Applications

S/21/1529 - Erection of 2no. dwellings and associated works. Land At Burytown Lane Burytown Lane Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7DQ.

Planning Decisions

Erection of 1no dwelling and associated works (Variation of condition 2 of S/20/0635-drawings).

Osmanton Kingsdown Lane Blunsdon Swindon SN25 5DL. - **Granted**

S/21/0932 - Erection of a livestock building for the housing of sheep. Upper Burytown Farm Burytown Lane Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7DQ - **Application Granted**

Speedwatch Results

Here are this month's Community Speedwatch Results from our dedicated team from Blunston. Thank you to them for their important work in keeping the roads around the Parish safer. As you can see Turnpike Road is still very much the worst area, in our Parish, for the most speeding vehicles.

Date	Location	Vehicles Counted	Exceeding limit	%	Maximum Speed mph	Speed Limit
12/11/2021	Turnpike	89	18	20%	49	30
29/10/2021	Lady Lane	301	45	15%	49	30
03/11/2021	Lady Lane	337	37	11%	48	30
14/10/2021	Turnpike	73	6	8%	48	30
01/11/2021	Lady Lane	326	26	8%	52	30
15/10/2021	Lady Lane	477	35	7%	47	30
21/10/2021	Ermin St	269	17	6%	40	30
09/11/2021	Broadbush	337	18	5%	44	30
15/10/2021	Broadbush	354	15	4%	48	30
10/11/2021	Broadbush	513	17	3%	47	30
19/10/2021	Ermin St	136	4	3%	41	30
20/10/2021	Lady Lane	641	16	2%	42	30
27/10/2021	Broadbush	718	10	1%	40	30
13/10/2021	High St Opp The Ridge	196	2	1%	45	30
11/11/2021	High St Shop	177	1	1%	27	20
19/10/2021	High St Opp The Ridge	96	0	0%		30

Blunston Village Hall

We have had a user cancel their session in the Hall from 17:00 – 19:00 on a Monday. Anyone interested in using the space at that time please contact Rachel Smith at rachelblunston@gmail.com or on 705617.

Community Building - Hayfield Site, Sams Lane.

As you may know the Parish Council have agreed to lease the new building to the Community Shop. The predicted date to take possession of that Community Building is May 2022. To help improve the building the PC have agreed to fund the addition of a canopy at the rear.

Parish Council Meetings - The next Parish Council meetings will be at the Village Hall and on Zoom on the 6th and 20th December 2021 and the 3rd and 17th January 2022 at 19:30. Access details are on the Parish Council Website in the Blog section and on our Facebook page. – Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunstonparishcouncil.co.uk – 07702 684281

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!





St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon

Connecting with God, each other
and our community



News from the Pews..... Jane Ockwell

And so it is Christmas - I hope you have fun

Before I'm in breach of any copyright, I'll stop there - you get the message!

We began our season of good will with the annual leaf sweep that took place on 13th of November - no leaf was immune to the rake or the brush. The uniformed children, parents and leaders all gathered to give a helping hand to make the graveyard look tidy for Remembrance Sunday. This is an annual event and anyone is welcomed.

Don't be shy!

We look forward to a Christmas that may not be quite as normal but will be different to last year. As you receive this edition look out for the Christingle service, join the children as they experience the wonderful concoction of oranges and sweets with a very special meaning.

Not to be forgotten will be the book sale, if you missed November's there's still December and January to look forward to - be part of the green revolution by buying a pre-read book for a Christmas present.

The quiz evening, a slightly pared down occasion raised a grand amount for the church coffers - well done to the team that pulled it together and commiserations (oops) to the winning team (no paring down of brain power there).

Our usual mix of services are tailored to give everyone a memory of things past, a warm feeling that seems to be just what we need. And the Carols and music just lift our spirits, we can all be Adele or Aled for a moment in time!

Explore the Christmas story anew; see it through the eyes of a child. Forget the headline that it could be cancelled! Jesus is, was and will be the best gift ever, whether there are enough lorry drivers or closed borders. And - he's free!

This all brings us to our Breakfast church service in January where we will say 'farewell' to the Rev Geoff Sowden as he retires from his life as a team Vicar. We wish him and his wife and family the very best as he heads off to pastures new.

The curate Emily Swinerd will be 'in charge'. We pray for her and the future of St Leonard's as we go into an interregnum.

We are the best at pulling together here in Blunsdon, so it'll be onwards and upwards don't be strangers because we've had 2000 years of practice.

Have a very special Christmas and peaceful new year.

Jane Ockwell, Church Warden

??? Village Quiz ???

St Leonard's Church PCC would like to thank Anne, Trevor and family for the fantastic quiz they did in November. It was great to be back in the hall and we look forward to next year's quiz organised by "The Better Halves". Congratulations! You know who you are!



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



From the Vicar's Desk....

CHRISTMAS IS CANCELLED!!!!

So screamed the headlines last year. Plans had to be abandoned or changed due to the ongoing pandemic and I will admit I was upset and frustrated at not being able to visit my aged parents in Essex, have my son over for Boxing Day or spend New Year with my sister who had lost her husband to cancer 3 months earlier.

But Christmas wasn't really cancelled – it may not have been the Christmas we had all wished and planned for, especially after the tough year we had already been through. But that miracle of Jesus' birth some 2000 years ago, that can never be cancelled.

And after all, that is the reason for the season.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:11

Jesus can never be cancelled, He is still here now, He lives on in our hearts.

And for those who love and believe, He is the hope for the world, that with Him we will endure with love in our hearts and joy in our lives, no matter what trials are sent to try us.

I pray that this Christmas you get to share time with family and friends, that you share the love and hope that Jesus brought to a dark world all those years ago, He is needed now more than ever. He is here, never cancelled.

I wish you a blessed and joyous Christmas.

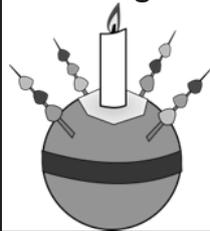
"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15

Kathryn Dack

Licensed Lay Minister

Our Vicar, Geoff Sowden, is retiring at the end of January 2022. He has been in Highworth and thus Blunsdon for 20 years. His last service in Blunsdon will be on 23rd January. We have invited Geoff and Muriel to our Breakfast Service so please come along and have a bacon bap, porridge etc and help us say thank you and good bye. More details to follow.

Christingle Service



This is on the first Sunday, **December 5th at 4pm** in church. It is a great way to start the festive season with a service by candlelight in aid of the Children's Society. If you would like a collection candle, there are some spare ones at the back of the church.

If you would like to help prepare the Christingle oranges the day before, please come along to church at 10am.

Services at St Leonard's in December

Sunday 5th December	10.00am Holy Communion 4.00pm Christingle Service
Sunday 12th December	10.00am Morning Worship
Sunday 19th December	6.00pm Carol Service
Christmas Eve	3.00pm Cribb Service 11.30pm Midnight Communion
Christmas Day	10.00am Holy Communion
Sunday 26 th December	No service



Book Sale, Coffee, Cake and Chat

Saturday 18th Dec 10 am - 12 noon

St Leonard's Church



BLUNSDON WI

Blunston W I met up on 16th November in the Village Hall, and we had a very enjoyable talk by John Pemberton on "Life in the Royal Chelsea Hospital". He showed plenty of slides with amusing anecdotes. It was also nice to welcome several new potential WI members.

The WI Book Club is also flourishing - it has been in existence for 14 years during which time we have read 117 books - some better than others!

We also had a collection of donated food items for the Harbour Project in Swindon.

The December meeting will take the form of a Christmas meal in the Heart in Hand.

The January WI meeting which will be on the 18th January will be on the subject of Cellars, Tunnels and Towers in Swindon by Jon Ratcliffe. This will be held at 7.30 in the Village Hall.

For more information about Blunston W.I. please contact Anna on tel: 706392 or check out our website: www.blunstonwi.co.uk

A life in the day of Blunsdon Community Shop Project Manager and Volunteer

This month I can bring you an interview with Maggie Banda (pictured below). Maggie is project managing the move to the new shop and also volunteers at the shop.



1. What interested you in getting involved with the shop?

I took redundancy from Nationwide after 26 years' service in 2018 and I was enjoying being a "Lady of Leisure" when my husband and Nigel (Chairman, Blunsdon Community Shop) "hoodwinked" me in to volunteering to project manage the move from the current portacabin to the new location being gifted by Hayfield Homes on Sams Lane. I innocently went to a meeting with Nigel for a chat and came away with the job! It wasn't how I planned to spend my time, but with lockdown and the excitement of creating something new from scratch, it has been a brilliant opportunity and has certainly stopped me from getting bored. I had plenty of experience from my career

in Nationwide, so I was confident I could deliver this for Blunsdon.

2. What are the main roles and responsibilities of the Project Manager?

The scope has evolved as the project has progressed. It went from negotiating with Hayfields in the early stages, applying for a Post Office Licence, to negotiating with suppliers to get the best price and quality for our fixtures and fittings. I have had meetings from local cafe owners to our local MP Justin Tomlinson to present ideas and gain valuable advice and guidance. I quickly realised I needed the support of experienced cafe/shop people, so earlier this year I set up a Steering Committee with local experts to help shape and mould our new shop and cafe. Their advice and guidance has been pivotal in creating the right shop/cafe for our community from the look and feel of the fixtures and fittings, to getting the cafe set up. Feedback from the community has also been great, via the Bacon Butty Event last July and our online questionnaire launched at that event.

3. What's been the biggest challenges with the Project Manager's role?

Applying for the Post Office License was complicated and time consuming. We got to the final interview stage and then the Post Office withdrew because of lack of budget. Then as a committee, following bad publicity with the Post Office and the increased security risk to staff/volunteers, we decided to walk away from them. It was the right decision, but at the time it felt like I had wasted several months of hard work. The other challenge is not letting the role take over my life. I pride myself on delivering a great outcome and I sometimes find it hard to switch off. I am constantly thinking about the project and picking up ideas or thoughts to run by my Steering Committee or feedback into my project plan. I have to remind myself that this is voluntary work and that I still need to enjoy time with my family and friends. The Shop will be delivered next Spring, so hopefully I can relax a bit more then.

4. You also volunteer at the shop, what do you enjoy the most about this role?

I'm a new volunteer at the shop. My son was working a lunch time slot during the Summer before heading off to Uni in September. I didn't want to leave the shop in the lurch and I thought it would be good to meet some of the community and get an understanding of the workings. I am finding my time in the shop very rewarding; you get to meet so many people from all different ages. It is lovely talking to the

customers and wishing them a good day. For some customers it's their only interaction that day, so I like to think I am bringing a little smile to their day. I'm not an early morning person, but over the last couple of weeks I have even covered the 8 - 9 am slot and really enjoyed it. Though it was awkward the other morning when the card machine stopped working and I had a queue of customers waiting. Everyone was very understanding not sure you'd get the same response in a supermarket chain!

We will be needing more volunteers for the new shop and cafe, so I cannot recommend enough to signing up and volunteering even for just an hour. If you are interested, please pop into the Blunston Community Shop or drop us a line via our website. We currently have 15 regular volunteers and have just appointed a new committee member, Hazel, to support the recruitment of more volunteers. It would be a great opportunity for young people in the village to get work experience or use it as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

You don't have to be an expert at running the till or making a coffee in the new shop/Cafe. With larger premises we will need volunteers on the shop floor/cafe area supporting the operational side of things, whether it is stocking the shelves or clearing tables we would be grateful of your support.

5. *What difficult decisions have the Shop committee made?*

The past 18 months has been challenging for all of us. The Blunston Community Shop supported the community during both lockdowns from providing personal deliveries to those in need, to having a queue of 30+ out the shop doors to ensure our community could buy daily essentials. We made decisions on how to keep the shop open whilst keeping everyone safe. We could not have achieved this without the support of all our staff and volunteers.

Going forward and into our new premises, we need to be sure that we are spending our community funds wisely and appropriately. We continue to raise funds through our shares and block paving and any profit from the Blunston Community Shop. We have applied for local grants too. Providing the new fixtures and fittings is expensive and we have approached local businesses and negotiated the best prices, by keeping in mind that we are spending the community's money and we cannot afford to use it unwisely. As part of my role, I have had to present 3 quotes for all purchases and provide an overview of the spend to obtain approval from the committee for the expenditure. The committee is very thorough and not afraid to ask questions to ensure they are making the best decision and that is exactly how they should operate.

6. *What's the best bit of being the Project Manager?*

I think the best bit will be seeing it all come together on the morning of our Launch Event next Spring. Seeing all my hard work and that of the Steering Committee with the support of the Blunston Shop Committee and Parish Council will make it all worthwhile. I will have given something back to our community and I hope to see the Blunston Community Shop and cafe busy, booming with business and being the success the Committee empowered me to deliver when they first talked about moving to a new location. Yes, I am nervous about getting it right, but I am confident with the support I have currently and the support of the community going forward, we can achieve this together.

Notes from the Editor



The Village Magazine committee wish all our readers a ***Merry Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.***

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

EDITOR: Please email all items for the magazine to blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com Arlene tel. 01793 727306

ADVERTS: To place an advert in the magazine, please contact Penny on 01793 722073

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

Front cover photo: The Ridge/High Street

Your February Magazine will be the next Village Magazine, delivered from: 28th January 2022

Deadline for items for inclusion:

Magazine issue	Deadline
February 2022	19th January

Apologies if your Magazine is delivered a little later than scheduled. Unfortunately, our local village printing company have had ongoing challenges with their printers and meeting the Magazine's deadline for printing has been tight. We wish them well, thank them for all their efforts and hope they are up and running again soon.



Walks in Blunsdon – An update from Mike and Brian

You may recall we have two intrepid walkers who had narrated (and cleared) 3 paths in the Village and these details and maps have been in recent Magazines.

Mike and Brian will take a bit of a rest over the winter months now and hope to be back with more suggestions for walks in the Spring.

Thank you both.

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THE CHATTERBOX It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

I have a confession to make. I LOVE Christmastime. I love tinsel, Christmas jumpers, cheesy, festive films, brass bands playing carols and eating tins of Quality Street (other chocolates are available). I don't really mind that Slade's "Merry Xmas Everybody" has been on repeat since October. It's all good by me.

In years gone by I would have branded those who don't appreciate the festive season as the Bah Humbug type and thought they were miserics. However, maturity and the fact that I've experienced a few traumas in the last few years has made me realise that aside from the festivities and frivolities, Christmas can also bring or accentuate difficulties and it isn't always the season to be jolly.

Irrespective of our religious beliefs, Christmas in its simplest form can be thought of as the season of goodwill. Perhaps if that is where it started and ended, it may be an easier time for many. Instead, it's often a challenge as we are bombarded with scenes of unachievable perfection. Adverts on TV show smiling, happy families beaming with joy as they open beautifully wrapped, indulgent gifts. Tables are laden with sumptuous food. Snow falls, angelic children play happily together. It's the most wonderful time of the year, isn't it? Reality is usually a very different story. With Honda closing, along with many other companies and businesses over the last couple of years, Christmas will be a financial strain for many. People don't always have perfect family set-ups. More frequently we live considerable distances from our immediate family circle and some may be estranged from their families. Christmas can be the loneliest time of the year. The past two years have meant separation and loss due to Covid, meaning precious time which would have been spent together was lost, in some cases forever.

The first Christmas without my father was one of the most difficult times I can recall - from seeing cards in shops for Fathers which I would never buy again, to seeing my mother's grief at an empty chair at the dinner table on Christmas Day.

Perhaps if we could strip Christmas back to being the season of goodwill, although it wouldn't eradicate problems, it may ease the pressure to live up to some impossible expectations and put a little joy back into the season, whatever the circumstances. It could help people reconnect, feel appreciated, and make us more appreciative in return.

Instead of buying a present, I remember a late, great aunt of mine used to bake us the most beautiful cherry and almond cake each Christmas. What I wouldn't give to receive one of those now! It was simply a cake but it left its mark in its gesture and thought (and taste!).

My mother can remember as a child making paper garlands at home to hang on the ceiling for Christmas. Again, a simple thing, but a hand-made decoration means a more personal Christmas and the time spent making them brings back happy memories. As a little boy in the 1940s, my father once had a tin of Ideal Milk in his stocking. Christmas with a large family can be difficult in any era but this tin of Ideal Milk was just for him, he didn't have to share it and it was a favourite treat. That memory stuck with him throughout his life.

Neighbours would visit each other's houses and toast the season with a glass of sherry.

Somebody would receive a hand-knitted jumper which didn't fit but it was always received with thanks for the care and thought that had gone into making it. This is what Christmas should surely mean; giving without expectation and with a generous heart, receiving with gratitude and sharing your goodwill. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hope your festive season is filled with warmth and kindness. The Chatterbox.

EYE SPY in BLUNSDON



Did you correctly guess that last month's Eye Spy? It's the grass roller in the playing field at Sutton Park.

Have a go at this month's photo on the left – where have you seen this in the village?

There are no prizes for getting the correct answer, it's just for fun.

The answer will be in next month's Magazine with another photo.

BLUNSDON VILLAGE QUIZ

Congratulations go to the winning team, The Better Halves, who won the 2021 Village Quiz which took place on Friday 12th November in the Village Hall. The evening raised £536.00 for St Leonards Church and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their support with the raffle: -

The Heart in Hand

Blunston House Hotel

The Village Shop

Ogbourne Golf Club

Andrews Butchers, Highworth

Bloomfields

Cotswold Farm Park

And most of all to the residents of Blunston for their many contributions.
Ann and Trevor Andrews and family.

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A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Here's hoping this season will be better than the last and be shared with lots of family and friends. Magazines are full of glossy pictures and Christmas recipes to suit all cooks. I have decided to put in a couple of recipes you can make or have the ingredients ready as standbys. Ready for those friends or family that call in for a cuppa or when you are in need of an extra 'quick to make' dessert.

Pitcaithly Bannock (a shortbread with extras).

100g very soft unsalted butter
50g caster sugar
200g plain flour
25g blanched almonds, finely chopped
25g mixed peel, very finely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/gas 3.
2. Put the butter and sugar into a bowl and work them together with your hand until thoroughly combined and very creamy. Sift the flour into the bowl and mix in, still using your hand. When thoroughly combined, but not yet formed into a dough, work in the chopped nuts and peel. **OR** you can put the first 3 ingredients into a food processor, blitz to crumbs, add the nuts and peel (much easier!)
3. Tip the mixture into a 8inch/20cms tin and press it in making sure the top is level. Prick with a fork and score into 12 pieces.
4. Bake for about 35mins until firm and barely coloured. Sprinkle with caster sugar, gently cut through the score lines and leave to cool completely before removing from the tin. Store in an airtight container.

My 'go to' Chocolate Mousse Recipe

These ingredients are **per person**, I make it for 4 and fill 6 espresso cups as it is scrummy rich!

25g plain chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
10g butter
1 egg, separated

1. Break up the chocolate and put it in a basin over a pan of simmering hot water. (Don't let the basin touch the water.) Let it melt but do not stir.
2. Remove the bowl from the heat and leave to cool slightly before adding the egg yolks. You can stir it now.
3. Whisk the egg whites in a large, very clean basin until quite stiff. Stir one spoonful into the chocolate mix to slacken and then gently fold in the rest of the egg whites.
4. Put the mixture into a bowl or espresso cups and refrigerate until serving.
5. Serve sprinkled with cocoa powder (optional).

Hope you enjoy all your seasonal foods celebrating with family and friends.

BLUNSDON NOTES by Richard Radway

Preparations for Christmas Day

Recently, there were panic headlines in some newspapers about possible shortages this Christmas, both in popular children's toys and many of the luxury foodstuffs we all expect to see at Christmastime. This made me start thinking about Christmases I remember from when I was a child, just after the Second World War.

How different things were then for most people. My Mum always made her own Christmas Puddings, which all the family helped to stir with a big wooden spoon. Mum used her own recipe, which seemed to include all sorts of dried fruit as might be available to spare, lots of spices and a goodly amount of Guinness for mixing it all together. The mixture was put in three white basins, which were cased in muslin cloth and tied up with string. The three puddings, one a taster, were then boiled in our gas copper in the kitchen and they seemed to be steaming away all day with drops of water dripping from the ceiling on everyone's heads. Not long after the Christmas cake was made and after helping, I was allowed to clean out the bowl. I'd have a second treat later on when Nan, who lived next door, made her Christmas cake. She always left me a bigger dollop in the bottom of her mixing bowl. Soon after it seemed we went to Swindon market to buy a tree with roots. Then all the tree decorations were found in the loft kept in several ancient cracker boxes together with the old tree lights with old coloured and ridged bulbs with long points. All the old papers came down too, together with the concertina crepe paper balls, Father Christmases and bells that decorated mirrors and pictures.

The lights never worked first time and Dad always had to replace several bulbs. We also had a collection of coloured metal clip candleholders for the tree with red and white rope twist candles but these were only lit under strict supervision and I remember distinctly the wonderful smell when striking the old Swan Vesta matches.

Our dining and sitting rooms were festooned with crepe paper swags cut in strips and crimped on the edges by nimble fingers. Trimming up was hardly ever done before about a week before the big day because everyone had coal and wood open fires then and they created so much dust.

Christmas Eve was always full of excitement and we were packed off to bed early with hot water bottles, placing our stockings at the end of our beds. Bedrooms then were invariably cold and draughty with no such thing as central heating. The only residual warmth we had came from the chimneybreast from the fire grate below. We were lucky because we had a small Beeston boiler in our kitchen which heated a towel rail in our bathroom above. In the very cold winters like 1947, our bedroom windows were frozen on the inside with wonderful feathery Jack Frost patterns and our eiderdowns often had frost on them too in the mornings where our hot breath had frozen on it during the night.

On Christmas Eve though all those small considerations were forgotten.

We would be in bed early too excited to sleep at first, listening out to try and hear what was going on downstairs with the grownups. Of course, we finally dropped off into the Land of Nod and before we knew it Christmas Day had arrived.

Happy Christmas



BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Recent Results

First XI League Position: Second

Ashton Keynes – Wilts FA Cup Round One	won	2 – 1
Swindon AFC	won	2 – 1
Minety – Wilts F A Cup Round Two	won	6 - 4

Blunston have successfully negotiated the first two rounds of the Wilts FA cup against local village opposition, but now face a stiffer challenge from Trowbridge league Semington Magpies. It promises to be a cracking game on 4th December at The Theatre of Trees with a quarter final place up for grabs.

Then a week before Christmas we have the traditional Mince Pie Derby away to friendly rivals Highworth Town.

Development Side Position: Division Two, 6th out of ten

K O Plastering	lost	3 – 5
Shield & Dagger	lost	0 – 2
Spectrum - friendly	won	5 – 2

Division Two has seen the top 5 move 12 points clear of the bottom 5, with Blunston currently sitting top of the bottom. We began the season bottom of the bottom, but we are now aiming to be bottom of the top, even if finishing top of the top is nigh on impossible and is bottom of our top priorities.

Winter Fixtures. Kick Off: Saturday 2 p.m.

Date	First XI	Development XI
4th December, 1.30 p.m.	Semington – Wilts Cup Round 3, home	Swindon Centurions, tbc
11th	Priory Vale, home	Pewsey Vale, away
18th	Highworth Town, away	Cricklade Town, away
8th January	Nalگو Sports, home	Ramsbury, away
15th	No fixture	K O Plastering, home

The club would like to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all its supporters and sponsors Blunston Mortgages (www.blunstonmortgages.co.uk)



Blunsdon Village Garden Club



This is a reminder that our first club meeting will be in January on Tuesday 11th at 7.30 pm, with a guest speaker, *Geoff Hodge*, garden writer, broadcaster and horticultural consultant. New members are always welcome to join us so let's see if we can make 2022 a specially good year! As always, entrance fee for non-members is £2.00 and includes refreshments. In the meantime, see you at the Heart in Hand in December for our Christmas lunch!

On behalf of the committee, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy and Merry Christmas, and also a Peaceful New Year.

Brenda Boyd

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19 December

Children's Carol Service - 10am

**Carols by candlelight
by ticket only - 6.30pm**

24 December Christmas Eve

Christingle Service - 4pm

Midnight Communion - 11.30pm

25 December Christmas Day

**All Age Communion
In church only - 10am**

26 December Boxing Day

Pyjama Praise on Zoom only - 10am

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As a local region we operate on a non-profit basis but do in fact organise events to help us raise money to support charity, our chosen charity to support is the Wiltshire Air Ambulance which is a fantastic service that is keeping a look out for all of us and relies on donations to exist as they receive no Government funding.

More information will follow in next month's magazine and if you are interested in joining us, then please email to swindonjec@aol.com



23M People Used 123456 As A Password

Whether it's your Facebook, Amazon, or Netflix account, the explosion in popularity of online apps and services means more and more of us have to remember an increasingly long list of passwords.

Unfortunately, some of us cope with this challenge by resorting to practices that leave our data, devices and money at risk - by using the same password across multiple accounts, or by creating simple passwords that could easily be guessed by hackers.

Bad password practice is more prevalent than you might think - the UK's National Cyber Security Centre carried out analysis of passwords leaked in data breaches and found that more than **23 million users worldwide used 123456 as a password.**

Here are some top tips that will make your life easier and your online accounts more secure:

1: Creating memorable passwords

A good way to create strong, memorable passwords is by using 3 random words. But remember, don't use words that can be guessed (like your pet's name). You can include numbers and symbols if you need to. For example, "RedPantsTree4!"

2: Saving passwords in your browser

Saving your password in your browser means letting your web browser (such as Chrome, Safari or Edge) remember your password for you.

This can help make sure you do not lose or forget your passwords and protect you against some cyber crime, such as fake websites.

It is safer than using weak passwords, or using the same password in more than one place.

3: Email account passwords

If a hacker gets into your email account, they could reset your other online account passwords and access personal information you have saved about yourself or your business.

Your email password should be strong and different to all your other passwords. This will make it harder to crack or guess.

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