

# BELHELVE BANTER

*Balmedie: Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog*



EDITION 6

MARCH 2011

# Belhelvie Banter

Adverts and articles should be sent to

**belhelviebanter@live.co.uk**

Please include name, address & phone number in case details need to be clarified.

| Advertising | Prices | Articles                                       |
|-------------|--------|--|
| Full Page   | £55.00 | are in font - Garamond 12                      |
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| ¼ Page      | £16.00 | <b>but names can be withheld if necessary.</b> |

**Distribution** All deliveries are made by volunteers, we are always looking for extra help to reduce size of delivery areas or to cover for holidays/illness. If you feel able to deliver in any part of the parish, then please get in touch via the email [belhelviebanter@live.co.uk](mailto:belhelviebanter@live.co.uk)

**Copy date for next issue is: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2011**



Scotland's biggest population count, the 2011 Census, takes place on Sunday 27 March and everyone must be included.

The census is the only survey to ask us all the same questions at the same time. It is how people across Scotland send a message to government and businesses about the services they and their community need, now and in the future.

The census paints a picture of Scotland as a nation and through its communities. This reliable measure of the size of the population and the statistics about our circumstances –

including age, health, accommodation – that are derived from it are used to help target and deliver billions of pounds worth of public services. The census informs the planning of health, education and transport services as well as business investments and retail opportunities throughout Scotland.

Your census questionnaire will be delivered by Sunday 27 March. You can fill it in as soon as it arrives provided your answers cover the people living or staying with you on the night of 27 March.

Personal information is kept confidential for 100 years.

: Liz Price, Scotland's Census Regional Manager  
For more information or help visit: [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

**Editor's Annual Report 2010** Bellhelvie Banter is just one of several good things to come out of the Community Action Project in Balmedie in 2009. Balmedie Views was published in May and having a community newsletter was one of the ideas that came out of the consultations and here we have the end result produced by a very small team of volunteer local people:

**Editor - Audrey Jeffries**

**Production - Alan Smith**

**Distribution - Karen Secombes**

**Advertising - Shuna Jenkins**

**Treasurer - David Moss**

Many local groups have contributed information and we have penned a few articles and have attracted the support of many local businesses with advertising. We aim to be useful and informative and I hope we are very much in line with what people were discussing at the World Cafe event in the White Horse earlier in the year as part of the Action Research project.

Hopefully with continued help and support we have here a sustainable piece of community action.

Of course Bellhelvie Banter came along after the launch of the very active Better Balmedie Group and the hugely successful Christmas Group. Both raised Community spirits with their colourful displays and plantings and the organisation of Christmas lights and associated festivities.

Of course the Banter picked up where other publications had gone before. The Community Council had, for many years, produced both Newsletters and Year Books (newsletters from 1976 to 1990 and year books in 97-98 and 2001-02). But we have a different format, handy size, handy reference material, blanket distribution and all the commercial printer's production costs are met by the generosity of advertisers who clearly know a good thing when it is offered to them! We have had some 45 contributors, we have had between 33 and 46 advertisers per edition, and we are especially grateful to a whole army of distributors who went slip sliding around the Parish with our first (and fifth) edition(s)!

Mentioning the first edition causes me to reflect on our beginnings. I brought to the group my experience of the long established "Newmachar News" and it is definitely a case of imitation being a sincere form of flattery and my thanks are due to Mrs Jill Bridges, the Editor, whose tried and tested format we copy. And it is only fitting that I mention the help, encouragement and support we had from Cllr Paul Johnston in getting this publication into print. Although we were not so keen on the leg work we did picking up 25x1800 A4 pages. The staplers we had were barely up to the task and we rolled the fold with sugar bowls as presses to collate the pages of the first edition.

So where are we heading? - for more of the same - but we do need the support of Parishioners for without your feedback and encouragement this "non serious conversation" might go the way of its predecessors and fade into the distance as the 'faithful few' simply 'run out of gas'. **AJ – Dec 2010**

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## SPRING NATURE NOTES – BALMEDIE COUNTRY PARK

It may seem a long time until summer but spring is on the way and soon there will be signs in the Park of things warming up. We are used to seeing geese flying overhead throughout the winter but they will be leaving soon to return to their summer homes in the Arctic. There they will find rich feeding grounds where the winter ice has melted and there will be lush grassland for them to feed on. Conversely, the swallows will be arriving soon from their wintering ground thousands of miles away in South Africa. Migrating swallows cover 200 miles a day, mainly during daylight, at speeds of 17-22 miles per hour. The maximum flight speed is 35 mph. They return to Scotland each summer to feed on the many wee beasties flying around. You can often see their nests made of mud under the eaves of the old visitor centre.

On the beach look for holes in the vertical faces of eroded sand dunes – I saw some holes last year and they were made by sand martins. The holes lead to horizontal tunnels 60-90cm long leading to a nesting chamber lined with plant material and feathers. Sand martins spend the winter in equatorial West Africa, leaving here in August or September. They haven't been seen at Balmedie every year so are something special to look out for.

As well as seeing signs of spring you can hear them too. Skylarks are present all year round at the Park but are pretty quiet during the winter. In the spring they regain their voices and you can often hear them before you see them – they rise several hundred feet in hovering flight sustaining their clear warbling song for several minutes. They are ground nesting birds so try to stick to the paths where you can to avoid disturbing their nests. Their numbers have dramatically declined over the past few years due to loss of habitat, in fact they are on the RSPB's Red List for conservation so we are lucky to have so many at Balmedie.

Closer to the ground the butterflies will be reappearing soon too. The Small Tortoiseshell hibernates over winter in houses, sheds and outbuildings and reappears in early spring. It lays its eggs underneath nettle leaves and the young emerge in late June to fly and then lay eggs for the autumn brood which fly until October and then hibernate. The Red Admiral is another butterfly to appear, a little later in the spring, but this is a migrant, rather than a resident and numbers depend on influxes from the continent. Red Admirals like clover and scabious.

Even closer to the ground we will start to see colour arrive as the flowers start to bloom again in spring. The first will probably be daffodils but these are not native to the park and probably originated from people's gardens. *(Contd. on page.5)*

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One of the first natural plants to flower will probably be wild pansies. Wild pansies, or “heartsease”, flowers early and can be seen right through to the end of the summer. With their stunning purple and yellow flowers they look like miniature versions of pansies in your garden – which is what they are. Selective breeding of wild pansies over many years has resulted in the many varieties of garden pansies we get today.

The primrose is another early bloomer – in fact its name means “first rose”. They need insects to pollinate them so are quite often not pollinated as they flower when there are few insects about! If they do pollinate they produce sticky seeds which ants love, the ants carry them off and disperse them. In the Middle Ages primroses were used as a remedy for gout, rheumatism, headaches and as a love potion!

There are many other signs of Spring to see at Balmedie Country Park so why not take a walk down to the Park and see what you can find?

By Sarah Gosden, Coastal Ranger, Aberdeenshire Council



## **BEAVERS ALERT**

Beaver's are the victims of their own success and the Colony has been running at maximum. This has resulted in a waiting list and there are currently 10 youngsters who are old enough to join (6) but are unable to get a place.

I would like to hear views from all interested parties and to gauge if there is a will to establish a second Colony.

contact **Ian Thomson, Group Scout Leader. 01358 743156**  
[balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com](mailto:balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com)



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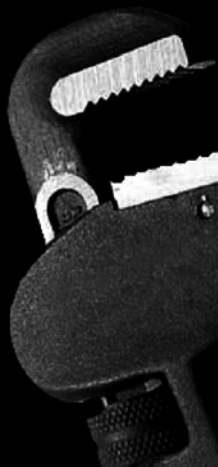
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**2011 BALMEDIE GALA**  
**SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 12 NOON TO 4 PM**  
**BALMEDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following a very successful gala in 2010, the gala committee are now busy planning and organising an even better event for 2011 and are currently organising the booking of events and displays.

Our revenue last year came from the sale of raffle tickets and the hire of stalls and thanks to your generosity we were able to donate sums of money to a number of local causes. We donated £200 to Balmedie House for a Christmas Party, £300 to The Friendship Group who put on regular entertainment at Eigie House. We also donated £300 to the Sean Tye Appeal and most recently gave £350 to Balmedie Primary 4 & 5 football teams to allow them to purchase goals and to support their training and future development. We still have a balance left and will be considering other local causes to donate to, so if you know of any worthy projects then please let us know and we will give it consideration.

This year we are adding some new stalls and are hoping to have Mr Bug and the Kidsglove Show as well as the Balloon man who was such a success at the Christmas Lights party in the Leisure Centre. Another new addition will be a Tug-O-War competition so get your teams name down.

We will again be starting the gala off with a procession from the leisure centre to the school playground and this year we will hopefully have a pipe band to escort the procession. (sorry about last year!!).

As well as having stalls and outside events we will be having demonstrations in the gymnasium some of which will be interactive so come along on 11<sup>th</sup> June and have a great time.

The other major feature of the gala will be the 5-a-side tournament which will take place on the week of the gala at the new 5-a-side courts at the leisure centre. Last year the trophy was won by 'Pathetic Athletic' and we already have a number of teams who have registered for the tournament.

We still have a number of stalls available for hire and if your organisation is interested then please contact Zara Wilke on 01358 741874 or myself. The cost of hiring a table is going to be £5 for local community groups and £15 for commercial businesses.

We look forward to seeing you all there.      **Wishart McBride Tel: 01358 742884**

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## THAT TIME OF YEAR – Dr Alasdair Forbes

Christmas has come and gone, January has finally faded away, but that rather large tummy has not. The bankers still get their bonuses; we get higher taxes and cuts, all enough to drive you to the nearest tub of Baskin and Robbins!

You've touched a big toe on the scales but then are afraid to look. Then bravely, eyes closed, you step on, take a deep breath and open an eye slowly... only to discover that you cannot see anyway as your tummy gets in the way! So you slowly lean forward and nearly fall off the scales trying to keek over the rotund expanse.

**What are you going to do?** Firstly the bad news, lets get it out of the way, your round soft unwanted friend will not go overnight, and will not go without a fight. You will need willpower, have to make sacrifices and change your routines. Sad to say there are NO miracle “melt the fat away” tablets. So let's be honest **YOU NEED TO EAT LESS** Hopefully you're still reading, so now for the good news. **IF** you really want to *and* can do the hard work *and* make some changes you **WILL** succeed, here's how.

Most people can, rather surprisingly, forget what, and how much, they eat in a day. The chocolate bar from the petrol station, the bag of crisps in front of the telly, and the 3 chocolate biscuits with your cuppa, does this ring a bell? Admit it, how often have you done this, then sit down to the salad (carefully having counted the calories) and then feel fed up when you've lost no weight?

So what do you do? Fad diets and tablets are best avoided; very few succeed long term, most people “bounce” back once these stop. Eating some more protein (lean meat, fish) and much less carbohydrate can be of benefit, but fundamentally being honest with yourself and eating less is the best way. Using a smaller plate, cutting out alcohol (“empty calories”) and avoiding grazing between meals all help enormously.

Any food we eat is turned into glucose, the currency of energy in the body. Any that is not used is saved for later by being turned into fat. So to get rid of fat you must burn off some of that “banked” energy (shame we can't get the investment bankers to do this, we'd all be rakes!!), and to do this you need to be more active. You do not need to join a gym, start jogging or do anything painful. The only expense I'd recommend is a Pedometer and you aim to do 10,000 steps **EVERY** day. Try and find someone to keep you company. This coupled with less food in will mean you will lose weight, **AND** from the right place, the stored fat.

Sound too easy? Well yes, it certainly does, but it is **HARD** work. However, it is worthwhile as getting weight off is good for you; you will have a lower risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attack and stroke. The immediate benefit is a feeling of well being and getting fit. You will also save money by spending less on food!

I mean this in a nice way; I hope you'll be less of a person soon! So good luck, and here's your action plan: - **EAT LESS      WALK MORE - buy a Pedometer**

**JOIN FORCES- do it with a friend or group**

**ABOVE ALL TRY- it's not as if you've not got a lot to lose!!**

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## ELLON & DISTRICT



### **Caring for the UK's cats: homing, neutering, raising awareness**

The Ellon & District Branch of Cats Protection is now 20 years old, having been formed in 1991. It is run entirely by a small group of volunteers who are committed to the rescuing, neutering and the rehoming of stray and unwanted cats and kittens.

We cover quite a large area from just south of New Deer to Potterton and from just east of Oldmeldrum to the east coast.

We have four fosterers with a total of 12 outdoor pens and/or spare rooms in their homes. We also have a team of fundraisers to raise the money needed for food, litter and veterinary bills.

All our cats over six months old are neutered and with the exception of a few ferals are vaccinated and microchipped. In accordance with Cats Protection policy, we visit all prospective owners in their homes, as this helps us to find the cat most suited to their lifestyle; for first time owners, we can also give advice and answer any questions they might have.

We began 2010 with 33 cats in care, took in 101 and found homes for 103; four cats were reunited with their owners. Looking after these cats is a considerable commitment, especially when young kittens are involved, but it can also be very rewarding. We do our best to take in the most urgent cases as quickly as possible, but rarely have enough spaces for all.

We are always on the lookout for more volunteers, both for fostering and fundraising. Anyone who would like to help or to offer a home to a cat, can contact:

**Dorothy on 01358 723314 or Lynn on 01358 721204**

or

visit our website: [www.cats.org.uk/ellon](http://www.cats.org.uk/ellon)

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## BETTER BALMEDIE

Better Balmedie have a busy year planned. We now have planning permission to erect a Polytunnel at the back of the Leisure Centre. In February, we will be putting up fencing to protect the tunnel and then erecting the tunnel over a weekend in March. If you are strong and healthy we would welcome your help with both these physical tasks!

The bulbs we planted in 2009 and 2010 are already starting to show and we are hoping for a good show in spring, including the daffodils planted by school pupils on the corner of Eigie Road and Forsyth Drive.

In April some of our members are taking part in a training course arranged by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers when they will learn all about dry-stone walling. This is a great opportunity, as we have several tumble-down walls in Balmedie which will benefit from their new skills. Also in April we will be organising a litter-pick in Balmedie as part of Keep Scotland Beautiful National Spring Clean.

We are delighted to see our membership continue to grow, but will always welcome new members or helpers. Some people just come to meetings to enjoy contributions from speakers, some folk enjoy growing plants at home and are looking forward to using the Polytunnel, some enjoy fundraising activities and others enjoy more physical tasks of building, composting, cutting grass, digging etc – we have a job for everyone! Your contribution will be appreciated, not just by other group members but by village residents who have complimented Better Balmedie on their work. – so please – get in touch!

Future meetings are included in Dates for your Diary (back cover).

For more information, or to offer your support or ideas, please contact me –  
**Rosie Nicol 01358 742557**

or

**rosie.inform@lineone.net**

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# BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**Meets in Balmedie Leisure Centre, Eigie Road, Balmedie**

**Every Sunday at 11am.**

Everyone Welcome

We hold informal, family friendly services, which you are welcome to attend.

We thank our staff who run our Children's Craft Club which meets in the Primary School on Thursday evenings.

Our small Church continues to support: Children in Sierra Leone, World Disasters Funds through TearFund, while recently we sent a donation to Sight Savers, which saves children's sight in Africa.

We have a special Service approaching:- **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011,**  
**'COME and SEE SUNDAY' at the Leisure Centre.**

An opportunity to come and have a look at what we do – but  
you and your family are WELCOME ANY SUNDAY.

For information, Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals,  
**contact Rev. Andy Cowie, 01224 703248.**

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# POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**Meets in Stead Inn**

Last Tuesday of every month at 2 pm.

Everyone Welcome - You May - COME and SEE US ANY MONTH

We hold what is called a new expression Church, and this is ideal for anyone who feels uncomfortable in a formal Church setting, *it is informal, friendly, allows those present to share their thoughts* and this style of worship also allows people to share in Prayer, so if you find yourself with concerns, issues, problems, please feel free to come and be with us.

We are different in that Congregational Churches are Independent Churches, which allow members to make decisions. That applies to our tiny Church at Potterton.

What do you think a Church should: *be like, actually do, put their Faith into action?*

We had a very successful 'Christmas Lunch Service'.

For Information, Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals,  
**contact Rev. Andy Cowie, 01224 703248.**

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## BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

The Friendship Group meets on Tuesdays, 2-4pm every two weeks in the lounge of Eigie House, Balmedie and welcomes members aged 50+ from all over Belhelvie Parish. The meetings from Spring 2011 until the Summer break are as follows:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Mar 1 <sup>st</sup>    | The Cruden Singers  |
| Mar 15 <sup>th</sup>   | Entertainment by Tom Wyness   |
| Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>   | Talk by John Corall on 'Union Terrace Gardens'  |
| April 12 <sup>th</sup> | Entertainment by Raymond Mack   |
| April 26 <sup>th</sup> | Entertainment by Myra & Norma   |
| May 10 <sup>th</sup>   | Business meeting & Bingo  |
| May 24 <sup>th</sup>   | Rev Paul McKeown on guitar  |
| June 7 <sup>th</sup>   | Summer outing to Montrose Wildfowl Trust, Montrose Basin<br>with lunch at the Links Hotel, Montrose |
| June 21 <sup>st</sup>  | Bingo. This will be the final meeting before the summer break                                       |

After our summer break the Friendship Group will begin again on 30<sup>th</sup> August. Members pay £2 per meeting, the fee covering tea and biscuits and a raffle ticket, and are also asked to bring a small raffle prize.

For further information please contact:

|                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Mr Vic Deans President</b>         | <b>01358 743634</b> |
| <b>Mrs Margaret Murison Secretary</b> | <b>01358 742285</b> |

## BELHELVE S.W.R.I.

The Belhelvie branch of the SWRI meets on the second Wednesday of every month from September to May. There is usually an outing or meal in June.

Meetings are now being held in Eigie House Sheltered Complex in Balmedie (formerly held in the Forsyth Hall) at 7:30pm. There is plenty of parking and easy access for the less mobile.

Our syllabus is varied with talks and demonstrations or why not just come along for a chat. We would like to invite everyone to our mini show of bulbs, handcrafts and baking to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> March and our AGM will be held in April.

A warm welcome awaits you and new members are always welcome.

**Why don't you give us a try?**

**Elaine Strachan Tel: 01358 743173**

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## FORMARTINE FAIRTRADE

After a very successful Fairtrade Christmas Sale at Bonnyton Farmhouse, Pitmedden which had a turnover of over £6000, the Mid Formartine Fairtrade group are now preparing for Fairtrade Fortnight events in March.

The main event will be held at **Udny Green Hall on March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7-30** and will be hosted by the **Tartan Chef, Craig Wilson from “Eat on the Green”** restaurant. It will be held in aid of his chosen charity “Appeal 4 Alfie.”

Mark Steven of Radio Scotland will compere the evening which will include a cookery demonstration by Craig, using fair-trade ingredients, a Fairtrade film and a cookery competition between teams of pupils from Meldrum Academy.

There will be a bar with Fairtrade wine, beer and soft drinks, and Fairtrade foods and crafts will be on sale. Tickets, £10 (£8 conc.) can be obtained /reserved from Anne Aspden 01651 842329, or Joan Orskov, 01651 862351. As previous events have been sold out it is advisable to get tickets early.

We are proud that we could find sufficient sales and use of Fairtrade products to qualify for the award of FAIRTRADE ZONE STATUS for Mid Formartine in 2009. However that wasn't an end in itself– to maintain the status we were required to provide evidence that there was an increase in promotion, outlets and usage during the following 12 months. Happily this was achieved and we are now collecting information to support our re-application in 2012. We would be delighted to hear from any local businesses who are using or would consider using Fairtrade teas, coffees etc. for staff breaks, owners of Bed and Breakfast establishments and restaurants serving fair-trade products and shops who have widened their range of FT goods. Everyone can do their part too – our shops will sell fair trade products if there is a demand for them –so it's over to you – create the demand by asking!

Information on suppliers and opportunities to sample products can be obtained by contacting members of the group, who would also welcome new members. All local businesses and voluntary groups who commit to using Fairtrade products are listed in the on-line directory at the mid-formartine fair-trade website. **[www.formartinefairtrade.co.uk](http://www.formartinefairtrade.co.uk)**

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## POTTERTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAY GROUP AND 2'S GROUP NEED YOUR HELP!



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A warm, friendly, family centred playgroup opened it's doors and heart to your community. Generations have passed through it's doors and lifelong friendships have been formed. The current children of Potterton and it's surrounding areas lovingly refer to their playgroup as "Jenny's House".

In December however, we received some devastating news from Aberdeenshire Council. Following on from their Early Years Review the local authority have decided to re-align early years provision in our area. In short, they intend to close our playgroup and offer pre-school education in either Balmedie Primary School or Primary Schools in Ellon. Aberdeenshire Council state this will bring early years services in line with Scottish Government advice of "meeting the needs of families, best value and quality of provision". As parents however, we disagree and are not going to let our Playgroup become just another local authority efficiency saving.

Please give us your support. We have started petitioning in the community and would be grateful if you could add your name to our petitions in Smith & Co. The Shop Potterton, The Stead Inn and facebook :- **save PottertonPre-School Playgroup/2'sgroup**.

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***Sylvia Buchan***



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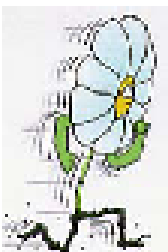
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## FUNDRAISING NIGHT – 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY

Balmedie Scout Group is holding a Fundraising Evening to support the good work of the R.N.L.I. and for Scouting locally. The Social Evening and Race Night is planned to take place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May from 7:30pm-Midnight in the Whitehorse Inn, Balmedie.

**There will be limited ticket numbers priced at £3 each. Over 21's Only.**

For many people our Social & Race Nights are their 1<sup>st</sup> experience of horse racing. Novices have thoroughly enjoyed them in the past and are first to ask for the next one. You don't need to be an owner to enjoy a flutter on the horse you think sounds best with a £1 Tote bet.

There are a number of horses available for pre-sale priced at £5 each horse, so if you want to own a nag... sorry, a thoroughbred racehorse to compete in one of our 8-horse races, buy it now, give it a name and it will appear on the race card with you as owner. There will be a valuable sponsor's prize for each race-winning owner.

We invite you to "Bring Your Own Hamper" and take along your own favourite cold-buffet picnic foods to enjoy at the interval.

Tickets are on a 1<sup>st</sup>-come-1<sup>st</sup>-served basis.

A number of complete tables of 10 are available on request, so bring your own friends or clients. **SPONSORS PLEASE** – If any local business or individual would like to sponsor a prize for one of the races please get in touch for details. Your business will be credited on the race card on the night and if you are present you can give it a punt when the prize is presented. Large & Small sponsor prizes required.

**We also invite raffle prizes**

Whether you wish to buy tickets, reserve a table, buy a horse or make an offer to sponsor a race, all can be done by emailing: [Balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com](mailto:Balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com)  
or text / call 07743844040 9am – 9pm

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### 3<sup>RD</sup> BELHELVIE BROWNIES

3<sup>rd</sup> Belhelvie Brownies have been very busy celebrating girlguiding's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with as many activities as we could manage. In our weekly meetings we took part in the 'Centenary 100 Challenge' which had us doing lots of different challenges to collect 100 points. Some of the things we did included making milk shakes and slush puppies, we thought about things we would change if 'we were in charge'. We visited the aquarium at Macduff which was fantastic, we had a night hike around Potterton wearing Hi-visibility jackets and we had an Austrian night trying food from there.

We joined 100's of other Brownies at an activity day, 'I'm a Brownie, Get me out of here' in Alford where we had lots of different challenges to complete and we got to go tubing – *brilliant!*

To top our birthday celebrations there was a huge concert at the AECC just for Rainbows and Brownies and Guides and Rangers. Stacey Solomon and Olly Murrs sang especially for us and we all renewed our promise at exactly the same time as everyone else in the United Kingdom.

We have been away again. This time we stayed indoors at Fyvie House. Our theme was the Flintstones. We made Flintstone dresses, cooked pancakes, made jelly, followed a trail around Fyvie Castle woods, made our own pizzas and played 10-pin bowling. We took our Holiday and Holiday Advanced badges and our Artist badges.

At Brownies we get to choose lots of the things we do ourselves. We chose to make cakes. It was brilliant, we all did them at the same time, doing the measuring, mixing and washing up ourselves. We did a good job because they tasted very good.

Our plans for the next few weeks include a pamper night, trampolining, more camping. We will also be working on our Adventure challenges and Adventure On challenges.

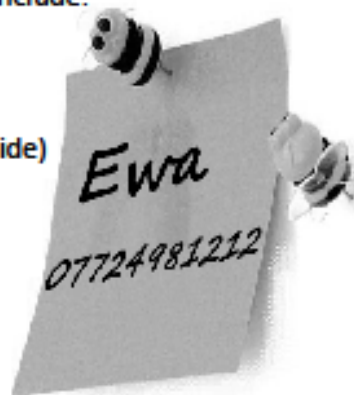
3<sup>rd</sup> Belhelvie Brownies contact is **Katherine Hebron-Scott 01330 833448**



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## U3A - UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Aberdeen U3A will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and continues to grow since its formation in 2001. It offers opportunities for meeting, sharing and learning together. U3A membership is not related to a specific age but to a period in one's life (the third age) after the second age of full-time employment and parental responsibility. Anybody in their third age can join U3A and this includes people who are working part time.

U3A encourages retired and semi-retired people to keep their minds active by discovering the joys of learning in friendly surroundings far from the pressures of formal academic structures. Everyone is encouraged to take part and contribute from their accumulated store of knowledge and experience. There are well over 100 members in the Aberdeen Branch of the U3A and the committee arranges monthly meetings with a speaker on the first Thursday of each month in St Mary's Cathedral Hall, Huntly Street at 1.30 p.m. In addition to the monthly meetings there are a variety of social events and about 20 groups meet regularly. *Annual membership costs £12.*

Special Interest Groups meeting regularly in Aberdeen include Art Appreciation, Book Club, Bridge, Cinema, Conversational French, Discussion Group, Enjoying Music, Geology, German classes both beginners and advanced, International Lunch Group, Philosophy, Poetry, Scottish Heritage, Singing, Travel and more.

There is online access to courses as diverse as Genetics and British Garden History, Venetian Art and Lighthouses and national websites for U3AUK and U3AScotland and access to OpenLearn, the Open University site. There is even a virtual U3A which exists only on the internet that might be of interest to those who are isolated either geographically, through illness or through personal commitments (e.g. carer responsibilities).

There is no doubt that the U3A provides endless opportunities whether it is to enjoy the cinema or a good book followed by a lively discussion over coffee or to brush up your language skills, to explore practical uses of computers, or share your views on "Deepwater - the Gulf of Mexico oil spill." or a hung parliament? There are many opportunities not only to socialize but to expand your knowledge and prove that lifelong learning is healthy and fun.

New members are always made welcome. If you would like to know more about the U3A phone **Marion on 01224 702836.** **AJ**

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## TARTS AND CRAFTS

Tarts and Crafts is pleased to report that we have been spruced up because we received a grant which allowed us to put new flooring down. The café is a not-for-profit organisation and relies on grants to be able to purchase vital pieces of equipment. You may have heard that we are to be closing down - this is news to us but we will keep you informed.

In addition to our monthly art exhibitions we always have a selection of unusual and original crafts made by local people. Please come and visit us and pick up that gift which is something special. Our crafts are available in a range of prices to suit all budgets. We currently have lots of crafts at reduced prices.

Tarts and Crafts cafe & gallery is situated behind the Library in Balmedie, just follow our signs. We have good parking and disabled facilities.

We serve delicious home-cooked food, catering for all tastes and special dietary requirements. We cater very well for vegetarians. All soups, cakes, and bread rolls are baked on the premises using fair-trade ingredients where possible. We serve fair-trade coffee and tea along with a variety of herbal teas. We have a selection of child friendly drinks and snacks.

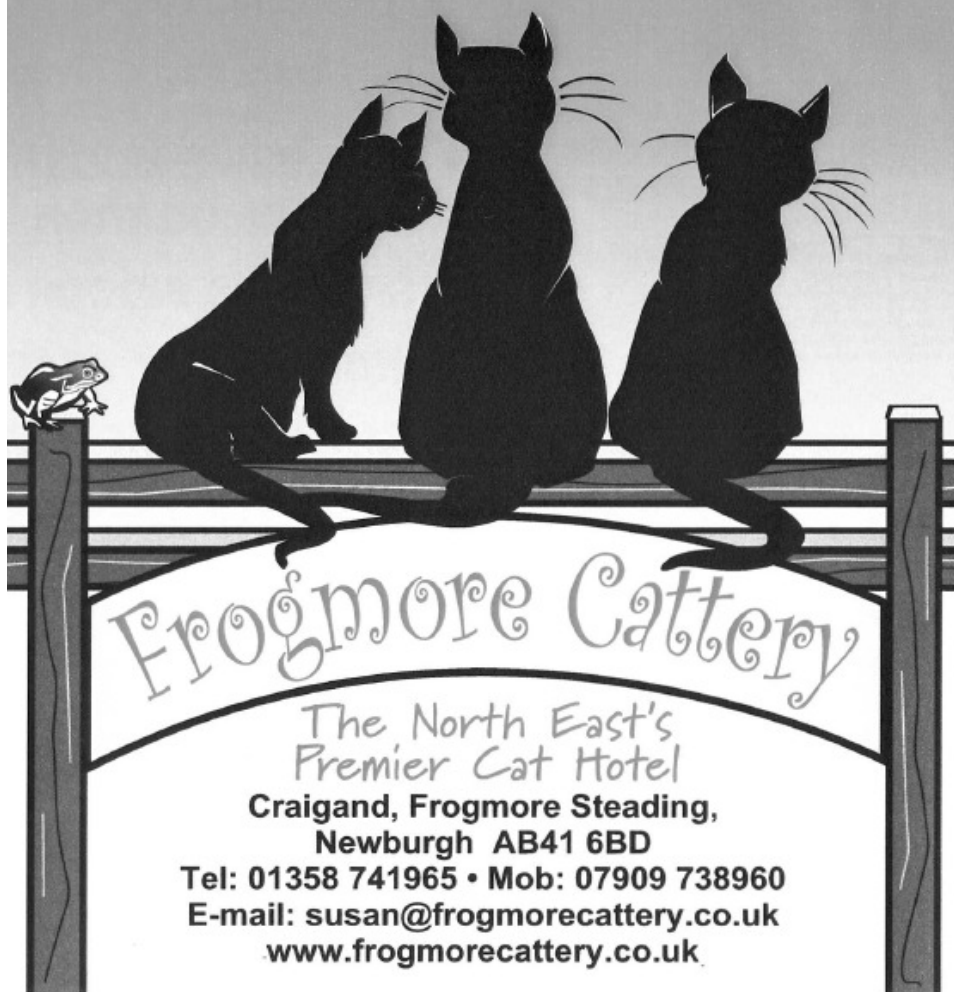
Our opening times are 10 – 4pm on Weds, Thurs, Fri and Saturday. Please come and visit us to sample our home bakes and relax in a friendly atmosphere, whilst shopping for that unique gift.

We are staffed entirely by volunteers and aim to meet the needs of the community by providing a much needed meeting point as well as support for local community projects.

We are always looking for volunteers so please contact the cafe by email or phone to ask – as little as 2 hours a week would be much appreciated. We are particularly proud of our volunteers who have used their experience working at the café to obtain paid employment. We are sorry to lose them but wish them well.

**Phone: 01358 742002**

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**Susan Barrowman**

## BELHELVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Since last writing this article we have all come through one of the worst winters on record and have spent many weeks battling with snow and ice. Thankfully our council roads departments have done a sterling job in keeping our main roads open and I feel that these are very much 'un-sung' heroes who turn out in all weather to keep us all mobile so our thanks go to all drivers of gritters/snowploughs from a grateful community council.

On your behalf we have been monitoring the planning applications for a number of projects including the various landfill sites which are a very emotive subject. Hill of Tramaud site is now in the process of completion and we have lodged an objection to the extension of time on the Easter Hatton site.

The good news is the confirmation of the start of the Tippetty Bypass which will hopefully commence later this year. This has been a long overdue upgrade to this section of road from Balmedie to Tippetty and should make accessing and crossing this section of road much safer.

At community council level we have been analysing all the comments which were made at the recent Potterton Project and we are now ready to carry it forward to the next stage. Our plans are to conduct meetings in each village to ask you to prioritise your comments to allow us to formulate a Community Action Plan. We will be posting a flyer through your letter box in the next few weeks advising of the dates and places. Please try and make an effort to come along as we need **YOU** to tell us what you want for **YOUR** village.

Another major project which we have been working on is the creation of a Belhelvie Community Council Website and this is now launched and is available on [www.belhelviecc.org.uk](http://www.belhelviecc.org.uk). We will be making regular updates to this website and would encourage everyone to check it out.

This report is being written before our AGM on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30pm in Balmedie Primary School at which time we hope to appoint additional councillors and would welcome anyone who would be interested in joining us.

Our Community Council is only as effective as you make us and we need your comments and views on any matters relating to your village. Please send us an e-mail to [belhelviecc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:belhelviecc@yahoo.co.uk) or come along to a meeting. (Dates can be found on the notice boards)

**Wishart McBride, Secretary, Belhelvie Community Council**

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## WATCH OUT – ‘TIS THE SEASON

The menace of rogue traders has become such a fixture in our lives that there is now an annual day dedicated to warning people about it and how to avoid their scams? Rogue traders tend to be more active in the summer, between April and September. Most complaints are about contractors offering tarmac and paving services (25%), roofing repairs (20%) and insulation work (11%) and as this is the time of year when new roofing or insulation problems emerge, there is the possibility of falling prey to a doorstep rogue trader.

While canvassing on the doorstep is not illegal and there are many legitimate businesses selling to people in the home, rogue doorstep trading is an ongoing problem. It might be tempting to agree to attractive prices offered on the doorstep but the Office of Fair Trading advice is to think twice.

This sentiment is echoed by Darren Ross and Gavin Esslemont of TradesAdvisor.com, an Aberdeen-based website aimed at putting local reputable tradesmen in touch with the people “There are many excellent trades-people around but it is difficult sometimes to develop a trust on first contact. This was one of the reasons that we founded TradesAdvisor.com. TradesAdvisor provides our members the opportunity to be continually monitored by their customers and it gives users peace of mind that they are dealing with trades-people who value their reputation and are at the top of their game”.

The first piece of advice Consumer Direct offers people considering home maintenance or improvement projects is to ask friends and neighbours for recommendations or to look for traders who belong to trade associations approved by the Government-endorsed Trustmark scheme.

Michele Shambrook from the Office of Fair Trading said: “Hasty decisions made on the doorstep can sometimes result in agreeing to work that isn’t necessary, that turns out to be more expensive than quoted or that is carried out to a poor standard if it’s done at all. We want people to recognise the warning signs, and to feel confident enough to take appropriate precautions and say no. Remember, it is your doorstep, your decision.”

**[www.tradesadvisor.com](http://www.tradesadvisor.com)** offers a safer option than waiting for a stranger to tell you what they think your home needs.

**Adapted from an article submitted by  
Gavin Esslemont of TradesAdvisor.com**

*Want to be fitter?  
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***Then join Balmedie Ladies' Netball Team !!!***

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We also have a well-established social scene !

***Please feel free to come along and join us !!***

- ▶ **WHERE?** Balmedie Leisure Centre
- ▶ **WHEN?** Every Tuesday – 7.15 – 9.15
- ▶ **MORE INFO?** Call Mandy on 07939 042124

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[www.stcolumbas.bridgeofdon.org.uk](http://www.stcolumbas.bridgeofdon.org.uk)

**Mondays** Youth Group  
Journey of Faith

**Wednesdays** House Groups

**Tuesdays** Prayer Group  
Alpha Course

**Thursdays** Healing service (1st  
Thurs. of each month)

**Saturdays** 11 am Music practice, singers and instrumentalists welcome!

**2nd Sunday of each month** at 12 30 African Community Mass

St Peter's RC Primary School is in King Street. Free transport is available for children in Balmedie. If you would like to find out more about the school, check out the website [www.st-peters.aberdeen.sch.uk](http://www.st-peters.aberdeen.sch.uk)

## **Our Lady and St John the Baptist, Union St, Ellon**

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## **BALMEDIE PLAYGROUP**

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We have had a busy few weeks this term. We have been learning about Scotland and Robert Burns and had great fun taking part in some Scottish dancing. We then started finding out about China and are making rabbits at the craft table as it is the Year of the Rabbit.

Outside play has been hindered as our play surface has been icy. We did however manage to have our “explorer day” to the magic woods last week and had fun investigating the wooded area behind the school. We are looking forward to the arrival of spring and being able to do some gardening again. The bulbs planted in the Autumn are growing well and the primrose plants planted by last years children continue to flourish.

We are hoping to raise some funds with a used toy stall at the Balmedie Gala in June, please think of donating your unwanted toys to us. Donations can be left in the cloakroom at any time.

For further information or details regarding current vacancies please contact us on the above number.



## **CRAFT CLUB**

Our craft club continues to meet, during school term, on a Thursday 6.30-7.30pm in Balmedie School, for children of primary school age.

Over the last term (although we missed a few weeks with the school being closed due to the snow) we have made various things: shakers, painted piggy banks, snowflake tea-light holders, pom-poms, moulded candles and Halloween masks. We enjoyed making sparkling angel tree decorations and had a great Christmas party.

We are now back after the Christmas break and are pleased to welcome some new children. We made Valentine treats and are looking forward to making, Mothers day gifts and of course something special for Easter. We will once again have the chocolate stall at the Balmedie Gala and appreciate your support.

**Catherine 01358 743114**



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## BELHELVIE CHURCH NEWS

One of the positive changes in today's church life is that many people are looking for places beyond Sunday worship where they can meet together to socialise and also get under the surface of what it means to be a Christian.

At Belhelvie Church we've been running two house groups for that very purpose - one meets on alternate Thursday evenings and the other (for young mums) meets on occasional Friday mornings. These give us a great place to explore our questions and commitments to God in a safe space. We'd be delighted to welcome new folk along to either of those groups.

Over the past few years we've also run a course for folk who are just in the early stages of thinking about what it means to have faith. We meet for food, and then watch a short DVD together which gets us talking about what we believe and why. Stories are shared, experiences voiced, questions aired and relationships built over the six nights that we meet together.

If you're new to all of this and want to think it through with some other folk, this could be the group for you! We plan to meet on six Sunday evenings from May 8<sup>th</sup> 2011 please be in touch at the address below if you're interested in coming along. We'd love to see you.

One other exciting piece of news is that we are hoping to run a Children's Holiday Club for three days in August. This will be catering for Primary aged children and will explore some classic Bible stories using music, songs, fun and games. Again, please be in touch if you're interested. More information will be put out through the school nearer the time.

Finally, please remember to 'friend' us on Facebook to keep up to date with what's going on in your local church of Scotland, and if you have the time and interest, you could check out our sermon blog at

<http://www.sevengoodsongs.blogspot.com/>

**Contact Rev Paul McKeown**

**01358 742227      [pmckeown1@btconnect.com](mailto:pmckeown1@btconnect.com)**

## BALMEDIE OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB

Based in the primary school and managed by Aberdeenshire Childcare Partnership we offer high quality, affordable childcare during the school term. Breakfast club opens at 7.30am and After School Club is open from school closing at 3.30pm till 6pm.

At After School Club children receive a snack when they arrive and are then free to choose from a range of toys and activities, including football in the gym hall, puzzles and board games in the small hall, DVDs, craft activities and other toys in the community lounge.

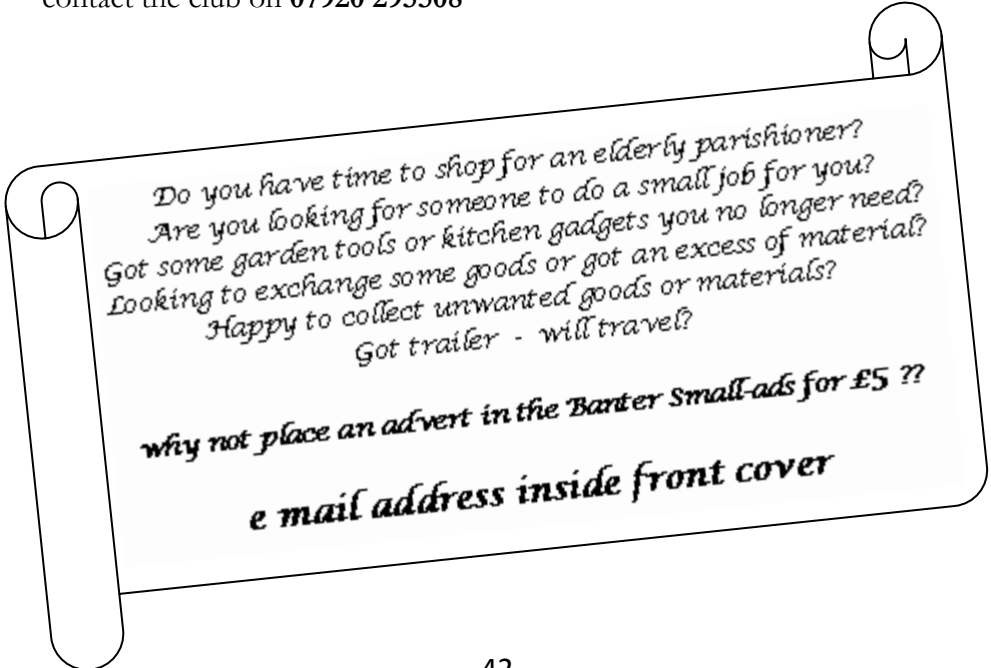
At Breakfast Club children may help themselves to toast or cereal, choose to play with their friends in the lounge or play computer games or watch a DVD in the TV room.

**Fees    Breakfast Club - £4.00**

**After School Club ½ session till 4.30pm - £4.00**

**Full session till 6pm - £7.00**

For further information or to enquire about spaces  
contact the club on **07920 295508**



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## BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GROUP

Since forming just over 18 months ago we have been truly amazed at the support we have received from the local community which has enabled us to make a very good start in lighting up the village at Christmas time. We are also very grateful to Santa for coming to meet so many villagers during his stop off in Balmedie just before Christmas!

In the future in addition to increasing the amount of lights around the village we would also like to see a permanent tree planted in a more prominent position. We are hoping to organise several fundraising events over the coming months, look out for information on coffee mornings and children's discos. With the shooting star lights on the lamp posts costing approximately £250 each, plus an extra £50 to install, remove and store we really do need your support.

If you have any suggestions or would like to become involved with the group please contact [christmasgroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:christmasgroup@hotmail.co.uk). We would love to see some new faces at our meetings. Meetings are held every couple of months in the Whitehorse and are very friendly and informal. Offers of help at fundraising events would be really appreciated too.

## “SPIRITUAL FITNESS” IN PITMEDDEN

January has come and gone, and maybe with it our New Year's resolutions! But there is still time to get physically fit before the summer holidays.

However, do you feel that your spiritual life is lagging behind? Would you be interested in taking time out to give your spiritual life a fitness make over and find ways to keep it that way? If so this event in March in Pitmedden will be for you! Pitmedden Friday Ladies Fellowship is hosting a day conference entitled: **“Spiritual Fitness” on March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 4pm in Pitmedden Church and Hall** and will cost £12.50.

The speaker is Nancy Goudie, who is from Ayrshire but currently lives in Bristol and with her husband runs NGM, a Christian mission and arts centre. She has written several books and is well known as a speaker. Tickets can be bought from:

**Kathryn Moore 01651 842526 or  
Anne Aspden at [annemaspdn@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annemaspdn@yahoo.co.uk)**



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## BALMEDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL SOCCER SEVENS FOOTBALL TEAMS

In August 2010, P5 formed a Soccer 7's team, the Balmedie Raiders, followed by the P4's Balmedie Colts in October.

The objective of Soccer 7's is to encourage an appreciation of football and get the children engaged in sport and team work whilst working in line with the Scottish Youth Football Association's (SYFA) objectives to help develop skilful players from a grassroots level.

Councillor Allan Hendry is supporting our plans to seek pitches to play our "home" games in the village. He is also assisting in seeking potential opportunities for support in relation to training costs, equipment and team kits. Thanks are due also to David and the Gala Committee for a donation made to the teams.

From August 2011 we hope to have four teams across Primaries P4 – P7 so are looking for volunteers to run teams for the current P3 & P6. Please let Ken McGowan at the school know you are interested. We will provide full support.



We seek like-minded individuals who want the children to play and embrace the principles that the SYFA are trying to achieve. **We would like to start this process from March** to allow these age groups to have squads up and running to commence games from August.

Both teams watched Peterhead play Alloa Athletic on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011. All had a great time and received coaching from Peterhead's Youth Coaches. We hope to arrange similar trips in the future. Peterhead won 4-1 and said they couldn't have done it without the vocal support of our children, the loudest fans at the game! This trip was made possible by part funding from a Rural Transport Grant from the 'The Formartine Partnership'.

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## BELHELVIE BOWLING CLUB

Belhelvie Bowling Club will open for the season on 23rd April. We are a small club who are always looking for new members. Even if you have never thrown a bowl, come along and we will show you how! It can be fun. Does not have to be taken too seriously and a good excuse for a blether and a cup of coffee. If you would like further details, please contact the undersigned or come along on opening day at 2pm.

**Marion Donald** Secretary [marion.donald@btinternet.com](mailto:marion.donald@btinternet.com)



### 1<sup>ST</sup> BELHELVIE RANGERS

In October last year we attended Grampian Vision; the big final party at the AECC to celebrate our 100 year birthday. One of our members, Laura, did an excellent job in the compere team on stage. Backstage she got to meet Olly Muirs and Stacey Solomon who were performing for us that night. It was a very enjoyable evening and we all received a special badge for renewing our promise that night.

We didn't manage many meetings before Christmas as the snow forced us to cancel. This term we are meeting fortnightly on Thursdays in Potterton. So far we have a chocolate themed night, pancake night and badge night planned. The Rangers will probably be quite busy towards the summer with the dreaded exams but we will hopefully manage some outdoor activities as well.

As always, we are looking for more members and for another leader. Any young woman aged 14 to 26 years can be a member and you don't need to have been in Guides before. The Rangers plan their own activities so it can be as adventurous or as relaxing as you want. We can also change the days we meet to suit how busy we are. To be a leader you need to be over 18 years old. Don't worry about having to do the accounts etc. as I do all of that but we are always on the lookout for someone to audit the accounts once a year; volunteers are very welcome!

If anyone is interested, please give me a call or an email.

**Susan** 01224 703335 [s.osbeck@physics.org](mailto:s.osbeck@physics.org) / [s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk)

## INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

| <b>Garages &amp; Transport</b> | <b>Page</b> | <b>Retail</b>                      | <b>Page</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Ardo Classics                  | 38          | Barret & Coe – Photography         | 2           |
| Belhelvie Garage               | 14          | Diane Whyte –Photography           | 38          |
| Cadgers Taxis                  | 20          | El Pescador                        | 22          |
| Lawrence of Kemnay             | 8           | Pauline Wood - Antiques            | 22          |
| Robeck Garage                  | 36          | Potterton Shop                     | 10          |
| Victoria Garage                | 4           | The Store                          | 24          |
| <b>Garden Services</b>         |             | <b>Services</b>                    |             |
| Bridgefoot                     | 18          | Housemaid & Gardening              | 28          |
| Carle's Sheds                  | 18          | Jolly PC Support                   | 18          |
| Martin Stallard                | 46          | Leigh Alexandra Soft Furnishing    | 16          |
| Parkhill Garden Centre         | 24          | Newmachar Business Centre          | 14          |
| <b>Health &amp; Beauty</b>     |             | Pet Crematorium                    | 44          |
| Balmedie Hair and Beauty       | 22          | Robert Lamb Architectural Services | 46          |
| Balmedie Pharmacy              | 10          | <b>Trades</b>                      |             |
| Douglas Leal - Chiropodist     | 44          | ABC Central Heating                | 30          |
| Rowancott Herbs                | 38          | Balmedie Heating & Plumbing        | 6           |
| <b>Leisure</b>                 |             | BPD Builder                        | 26          |
| Ardene House Vet               | 40          | Clearview PVCu                     | 34          |
| Balmedie Netball               | 36          | DG Painter                         | 18          |
| Frogmore Cattery               | 32          | DJ Builder                         | 44          |
| Jazzercise                     | 26          | Nu Look Windows                    | 26          |
| Lady and Tramp Pet Grooming    | 16          | Prompt Plumbing                    | 20          |
| Murcar Links Golf Club         | 2           | Reid Plumbing                      | 12          |
| Petpals                        | 46          | Steven Reid Joinery Ltd            | 40          |
| Positive Paws                  | 20          |                                    |             |

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| Eigie House  | 01358 743506  |
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| Balmedie Leisure Centre                                | 01358 743725  |

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| Balmedie Primary      | 01358 742474             |
| Emergency Contact     | 0870 054 4999 PIN 021290 |
| Ellon Academy         | 01358 720715             |
| Emergency Contact     | 0870 054 4999 PIN 021040 |

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| Udny Surgery   | 01651 842204  |

| <b>March</b> | <b>Dates for your Diary</b>                                 |         |
|--------------|---|---------|
| Tues 1       | Friendship Group - Cruden Singers - Egie House              | 2.00pm  |
| Thur 3       | Balmedie Bookends Group - Whitehorse Inn                    | 8.00pm  |
| Wed 9        | SWRI – Bulbs, Handicrafts & Baking - Forsyth Hall           | 7.30pm  |
| Fri 11       | Fairtrade event - Udney Green Hall                          | 7.30pm  |
| Tues 15      | Friendship Group - Tom Wyness - Egie House                  | 2.00pm  |
| Sat 19       | Spiritual Fitness - Pitmedden Church and Hall 10.00am -     | 4.00pm  |
| Wed 23       | SWRI – Forsyth Hall   | 7.30pm  |
| Thur 24      | Potterton Project – Belhelvie Comm. Centre 7.15pm -         | 8.45pm  |
| Mon 28       | Potterton Project – Potterton Comm. Centre 7.15pm -         | 8.45pm  |
| Tues 29      | Friendship Group ‘Union Terrace Gdns’ Egie House            | 2.00pm  |
| Thur 31      | Better Balmedie ‘Pruning plants and shrubs’ Balmedie School | 7.30pm  |
| <b>April</b> |   |         |
| Fri 1        | Term ends - Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon Academy                   |         |
| Tue 12       | Friendship Group - Raymond Mack – Egie House                | 2.00pm  |
| Wed 13       | SWRI – Forsyth Hall   | 7.30pm  |
| Mon 18       | Term starts -Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon Academy                  |         |
| Thur 21      | Maunday Thursday Service Holyrood Chapel, Newburgh          | 7.30pm  |
| Thur 21      | Potterton Project – Blackdog (in Balmedie Sch.) 7.15pm -    | 8.45pm  |
| Fri 22       | Good Friday Church Service - Belhelvie Church               | 7.30pm  |
| Sun 24       | Easter Sunday Church Service - Belhelvie Church             | 11.00am |
| Tues 26      | Friendship Group Entertainment by Myra & Norma              | 2.00pm  |
| Wed 27       | SWRI – Forsyth Hall   | 7.30pm  |
| Thur 28      | Possible In-service Day – Bridge of Don Academy             |         |
| Thur 28      | Better Balmedie - Duthie Gardens Guided Tour                | 7.00pm  |
| Sat 30       | Better Balmedie - Meet at Leisure Centre                    | 9.30am  |
| <b>May</b>   |   |         |
| Sat 7        | Scouts Social evening and Race Night - Whitehorse Inn       | 7.30pm  |
| Tue 10       | Balmedie Friendship Group Business meeting & Bingo          | 2.00pm  |
| Wed11        | SWRI – Forsyth Hall   | 7.30pm  |
| Sat 21       | Plant Sale - Tarts and Crafts                               |         |
| Tue 24       | Balmedie Friendship Group Rev Paul McKeown on guitar        | 2.00pm  |
| Wed 25       | SWRI – Forsyth Hall   | 7.30pm  |
| Thur 26      | Better Balmedie - Talk The Coast of NE - Balmedie School    | 7.30pm  |