# **BELHELVIE BANTER**



EDITION 7 JUNE 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	<b>Prices</b>	Articles
Full Page	£55.00	Use font - Garamond 12. We cannot
Half page	£30.00	accept anonymous text, but names
½ Page	£,16.00	can be withheld if necessary.

**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 <a href="mailto:belhelviebanter@live.co.uk">belhelviebanter@live.co.uk</a>

Copy date for next issue is: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011

## **EDITORIAL**

Just a few words from me, as I rejoice in the lovely Spring sunshine we have all enjoyed in late April and early May. As everything bursts forth into life, after a long winter, so happily do some of the residents of the Parish with an interesting crop of articles in our Inbox for this edition.

There is much to look forward to, but firstly, a word of caution to emphasise what Sarah says "Please do take care of the dunes if you are bbq-ing!".

As you travel around the Parish you might be drawn to identify not only the present day flora and fauna, enjoying the summer days, but you might envisage the Parish as Mary has highlighted in the post-Victorian era. Or indeed, let your mind move further back to how it might have appeared as it evolved from millennia under the Ice Sheath. Enjoy your summer.

Now I start thinking about the next edition and ask:

"Do you work with, or support, a favourite charity? Tell us about it."

"Do you enjoy a special pastime or hobby? Have you enjoyed a special holiday or adventure? Won any prizes at summer shows? Had a good season enjoying your sport - win, lose or draw? Let us know, drop us a paragraph or two and share the pleasure. We await in anticipation of much more news from around the Parish. This is YOUR BANTER......

AJ May 2011

Cover photograph: Imants Schneider

#### ARE YOU SPECIAL?

Grampian Police are looking to recruit more Special Constables to provide additional support to local policing teams and communities. Are you Special?

Special Constables are trained volunteers who support and assist regular police officers carry out their duties. They wear the same uniform as regular police officers and have the same powers and responsibilities and can be called upon to assist in all areas of police work including patrols, community engagement, specialist operations, attending incidents and royal visits.

They can report for duty at any mutually-convenient time on a regular or irregular basis, depending on their work or lifestyle commitments. Some of the Force's Special Constables work in the evenings or at weekends. Others prefer to be on duty during the day.

Many Special Constables choose to work in the area where they live so that they can become more involved in their community. Others choose to work away from the area they live in, in order to keep their private lives and their police duties separate.

Steve Pratt Local Policing Inspector for Formartine said: "Special Constables are an extremely valuable resource who make a vital contribution to our policing activities. Those who volunteer as a Special get a lot of satisfaction from helping make a difference to their community whilst improving their career prospects from the skills they develop working on the beat."

Specials Constables are unpaid although a £1100 award is available if Specials join the recognition award scheme, which requires a person to work a minimum of 45 four hour shifts over a 12 month period and attend some training nights. Anyone interested in becoming a Special Constable can **contact Sergeant Ian Chalmers on 0845 600 5700 or visit www.grampian.police.uk** 

#### ENCOURAGING NEWS

The end of year figures for 'vandalism' across Formartine revealed a 30% decrease in respect of this time last year and an increased detection rate to 34%. There were 187 crimes of vandalism reported in 2010/11 compared to 268 the previous year. The figure of 187 equates to less than 4 per week for the whole of Formartine which, when compared to a population of nearly 40,000 people, is quite a positive reflection on the behaviour of those residing in Formartine as a whole.

From Inspector S. Pratt

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### HERE COMES THE SUN.....

Well let's hope so! After the promised barbecue summer of 2010 failed to materialise, we're all hoping to see the sun this summer. Hopefully the recent good spell was not it! So how can we enjoy summer sun and stay healthy?

We all like to see the sun, but now some worry that it is dangerous and if you go out you'll get skin cancer. Now it would be a shame to not show off that toned and honed body, as I'm sure you've all followed the advice from last time. So what should you do?

The main thing is to be SENSIBLE. Sadly some parents have been so terrified that they'd damage their kids, they have covered their child in Factor 50 AND head to toe in clothes! This is actually NOT necessary and indeed there have been cases of rickets, a condition which causes soft bones, causing the bowlegged appearance seen in medical textbooks, reported in the UK. Vitamin D is produced in our bodies when we are exposed to sunlight, and a lack of this is associated with osteoporosis, or brittle bones. Indeed Vitamin D deficiency or insufficiency is attracting significant medical interest at present and may be linked to other conditions.

So too little sun is bad for you and too much is bad for you as well, and none of us enjoy seeing the baked lobster look! So we need to find the "Goldilocks zone", where we get it just right.

Red and fair haired Celts among us will need to be more careful than less fair people, but can still aim for a few minutes without sun block on, especially in early or later parts of the day, but the amounts of time will vary between individuals, with less fair people able to have slightly longer before slapping on the sun cream. We ALL need to take more care at the beach as the sun's rays can reflect off the sand. Care should also be taken on days that are warm with haze or cloud, as you will still be affected even though the sun appears obscured.

I would say that children who have a healthy glow and have avoided being burnt will probably have had a great summer time. That would mean they'd have spent time outdoors, away from the games console and TV, and made plenty of vitamin D!

The same would apply to adults, so please do not lie and bake in the sun, rubbing on the cooking oil to make the skin nice and crispy! If you have a hairstyle like Bruce Willis (or me!), then a hat is a good idea, I find that sun block runs and makes interesting patterns... Like most things a little thought and common sense goes a long way.



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Victoria Hall, Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire, AB23 8YR Tel: 01358 743053 Mob: 07887 536987 www.victoriagarage-belhelvie.co.uk What can you do if you or your child gets sunburn? As with all burns it depends on severity. If the skin is so badly burnt that there are large blisters or loss of skin then seek medical advice without delay. Thankfully, this is not too common, as most people will find very red skin in the evening and can manage this at home. What is needed is plenty of after-sun or similar cold cream applied to the affected areas. This should be repeated as required when the cream dries in.

So what else can we do to stay healthy? Again common sense should prevail. Drink plenty of water, avoid too much alcohol (you'll get sleepy, doze off on the sun lounger and then wake up well done!). Cook meat properly on the barbecue, especially chicken, and remember to have salads and fruits as well as burgers, sausages and steaks!!

Here is a useful list for summer health and first aid,

Water;

Sun block and After sun;

Insect repellent/anti-midge cream/spray;

Anti-septic wipes and cream for grazed knees etc;

Plasters, various sizes;

Tweezers to remove thorns, stings, and ticks (apply Vaseline and turn ANTI-Clockwise a ½ turn and pull out);

Anti-histamine cream and tablets (eg Piriton  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{R}}$  ) for insect bites and stings.

So have a great time and enjoy the summer, and I hope we'll all be able to sit out and enjoy the sun's rays whilst eating the burnt offerings from the barbie, and not turning ourselves into one at the same time!

Dr Alasdair Forbes

## **BELHELVIE SWRI**

Our final meeting for this session took place on Wed.11th May in Eigie House, Sheltered Housing complex in Balmedie. We will have an outing (a trip or meal out) in June to round off the year. We will re-commence at Eigie House on the second Wednesday in September. The syllabus is still to be arranged and will be announced in the Autumn edition of Belhelvie Banter.

The Whist also starts again in September, on the fourth Wednesday of every month but will exclude December. Again more information will follow in the Autumn Edition.

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### **BALMEDIE PATHS**

Residents will no doubt have noticed significant improvements to footpaths around the village - for example in the Magnificent Sevens Wood to the south of the village, and along the eastern edge of the built-up area between the village and the football pitches. This excellent work was carried out by Leisure Services of Aberdeenshire Council. Better Balmedie has been liaising with Graham Waters of the Council on its aspirations for better and safer access paths around the village and on creating of more opportunities for some walks / cycle paths - for example through the woodland planted as a shelter belt east of the village. Some preliminary work has already been carried out to open up some of the woods east of Balmedie Primary School and this shows real promise of something special that the local community can use and broaden folks' experience of walking and cycling around here, either as individuals or as families. The group would also like to encourage wildlife through the installation of bird, bat, and invertebrate boxes in the future.

I would encourage anyone who is pleased at the ongoing path improvements to pass their thanks to the Leisure Services team. (graham.waters@aberdeenshire.gov.uk). The staff seldom get due recognition for the breadth of work they do throughout the year, but often get criticism levelled at them when some item is overlooked. At a time of severe Council cut backs it would be good to try to raise morale a little by awarding praise when it is due.

Ian Nicol (member of Better Balmedie)



#### BALMEDIE PLAYGROUP

Community Room, Primary School

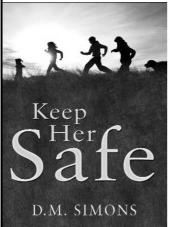
We are a friendly group offering fun activities and learning for pre schoolchildren. Working in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, we provide pre school education for children aged 3-5 years. Sessions are led by qualified playgroup staff and we have a rota for parental help. Activities are planned around the "Curriculum for Excellence" and children may attend up to five sessions per week with a mixture of morning and afternoon sessions available.

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 **07923 470741** 

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Author: D.M. Simons, whose background is in science, lives near Aberdeen with her husband, four children and many pets. www.dmsimonsauthor.co.uk

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## 'PARISH THREADS' Crystal Gardens.

It's glorious when the sun comes out in May. The newly arrived swallows wheel and chirrup in the breezy blue sky, arguing over their traditional nest sites. I am working in the shelter of the old conservatory at Ardo, fingers in warm loam, happily potting on plants, a spring task that has taken place here for many generations. Nearly one hundred years has passed since someone around this spot, with the forefathers of my swallows flying overhead, might have said, "Bother me; if it wasn't for this chilly wind it would be lovely working out here in the sunshine... I tell you what, why don't we have one of those fancy glass houses they are going on about in my 'Gardening Quarterly' magazine."

An enticing advert from that magazine read: "Think of the pleasure one of these crystal gardens will add to your home. What enjoyable atmosphere the subtle bloom fragrance will lend, and what a cosy retreat it would make to entertain in".

History doesn't relate how many conversations along the lines of "It's going to cost HOW much?"...or "Remind me again what's the problem with wearing your good thick Gabardine coat and dubbined boots?" Anyway eventually there must have been marital harmony, because in 1914, records show, plans were drawn up and planning permission was granted for a conservatory to be erected here.

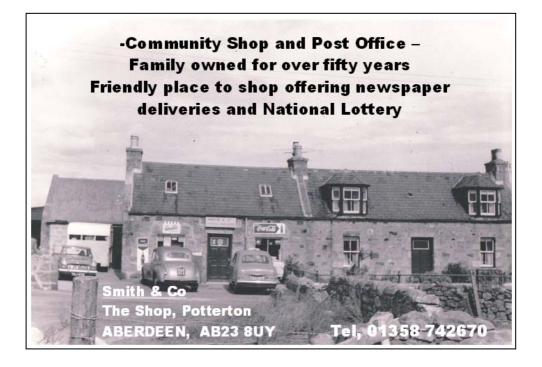
I know who built it because I can see his oval nameplate on the inside of the door. James Walker Hot House Builder Aberdeen. Aberdeen Council had already built the Palm House and Winter Garden in the Duthie Park by the turn of the century. It had followed on from the one at Kew, supporting the fashion for growing tender plants brought back by the Victorian plant collectors.



One hundred years on, the Parish of Belhelvie is still on trend by creating energy from sun and wind. Several country homes are now sporting wind turbines, and this month I noticed a whole south-facing roof has been clad in photo voltaic cells to feed electricity into the grid.

Wouldn't you like to be the one to tell that person here tending the plants in 1911 that it would be possible to sell the wind or the sunshine from your house roof? A bizarre notion when the ultimate ambition of that time, was to entrap enough sun inside a glass room to produce a ripe peach.

Mary Cane





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



The dreaded exams are on some of our members this term but we have still managed to plan a fun few weeks! This term we are going to be sewing mobile phone covers, having a nail night, having a movie night (popcorn-yum), and hopefully going to a Zumba class. A few of the Rangers will also be going camping in June. Fingers crossed for good weather!

We break over the summer holidays but then we will be back when the schools go back. The Rangers plan and choose all their own activities so I really can't tell you what they will pick to do! I can tell you that we will be starting to work on the Duke of Edinburgh Award at the very least.

If you are a 14 to 26 year old women and are interested in joining us then drop me an email or give me a phone. We meet fortnightly on Thursdays in Potterton. Susan 01224 703335 s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk

## **BELHELVIE BOWLING CLUB**

We meet at Belhelvie Community Centre (Green Hut), Minnes Road, Belhelvie and are looking for new members for this season. Novices and experienced players very welcome. We meet over the summer months and usually have an annual tournament at the beginning of September with the closing of the green in mid September.

If you are interested in joining the club please contact the secretary.

Tel: 01358 723126 Marion Donald Club Secretary,

Email: marion.donald@btinternet.com

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MONDAY	2.30-4.30, 5.3	0-7.30	THURSDAY	10.00- 1.00
TUESDAY	Closed		FRIDAY	Closed
WEDNESDAY	2.30-4.30,	5.30-	SATURDAY	10.00 - 1.00
7.30				

The first Thursday of each month (term time only), there is a Rhymetime session for under-fives from 11.30 - 12.30 come along and join in the fun.

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### GIRLGUIDING FORVIE: HELPERS WANTED

Guiding celebrated its 100th birthday last year and we just keep getting better. We're always on the look out for more people who want to take part. We've listed some ways people can join us below.

## Leaders/ Adult Helpers

Women aged 18 + can help out as Leaders or Adult helpers. Leaders organise and run meetings while Helpers give support to the Leader. You don't need to be able to help out every week; Guiding can be flexible.

## Young Leader/ Duke of Edinburgh helper

Young Leaders are girls aged 14 to 18 years who help run the meetings. It might involve organising a game or helping the girls do a craft. If you are looking for somewhere to do your Service section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, we are ideal!

#### Accounts Checkers

Every year, each unit submits their accounts to the Charity Regulator (OSCR) but before we do, we need someone to check the numbers. We don't need a trained accountant, we just need people who are good with numbers and can spend about 2 hours looking at a set of accounts.

## Occasional Helpers

Have you got a skill or talent that you would like to share? Perhaps you can teach knitting or football skills? We are happy to have occasional helpers who can share their skills for one or two nights only.

Interested but not sure? Why not take up the 12 hour challenge? Just commit to giving 12 hours over a few weeks or months and see if you like it. Girlguiding is not a religious organisation and we welcome people from all faiths and those with no faith. You don't need to have been a Guide to help out or to have experience and you don't need to be particularly crafty or outdoorsy. All we need is enthusiasm and a willingness to try it out!

Drop us an email or give us a phone!

Susan Osbeck 01224 703335 s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk

Marianne McIntosh 01358 724231 marianne.mcintosh@btinternet.com



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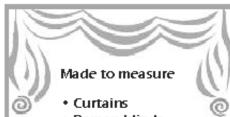
#### SUMMER NATURE NOTES – BALMEDIE COUNTRY PARK

By Sarah Gosden, Coastal Ranger, Aberdeenshire Council

After a glorious spring let's hope for some good weather this summer so you can get out and enjoy the wildlife to be found in Balmedie Country Park. An abundance of flowers appearing makes the park alive with colour. In the dune slacks and wetter areas you will see Northern Marsh Orchids. These are reddish purple and grow to about 25cm tall. They are native and perennial – the flower stalk and leaves die back in the winter but the root remains to produce a new flower stalk the next year. Most plant seeds contain enough food to feed the growing plant, Orchids, on the other hand, have very small seeds and so need help to get started. They have evolved a 'symbiotic' (or cooperative) relationship with a fungus - the fungus 'feeds' the orchid seed and the orchid roots protect the fungus. These fungi are not the mushrooms and toadstools that we are all familiar with, but are much smaller (like moulds) and permeate the soil like an invisible web. The older and less disturbed the soil, the thicker the fungal mat - this is one of the reasons why ploughing of fields causes so much damage to orchid colonies - the orchid bulbs survive in the soil but, because the fungal mat is broken up and destroyed, the orchids often die out. Like all wild flowers, orchids are protected and you should not pick them.

Tormentil is seen in amongst the grass and shorter vegetation. It is a low-lying plant, the flowers have four yellow petals, and it is seen not only along the coast but all the way up in the hills too. It has red roots full of tannin and because of this has been used in the past to tan and dye leather. It also has medicinal properties – it supposedly can help relieve sunburn, diarrhoea, paralysis and strokes. It also can apparently help a troubled relationship! Ladies – if you think your husband or boyfriend is "straying" you should pick some tormentil flowers every Friday night for three weeks and burn them. The gentleman in question will be filled with worry and discomfort and will cease his bad behaviour!

Devil's bit Scabious is another interesting plant, and it flowers later in the summer. There is usually a good patch just down from the wooden steps behind the old visitor centre. Its pin-cushion-like flowers are purple/blue and it is a rich source of nectar for butterflies and bees. Its name come from the stumpy root. According to legend, the devil was so furious at the success of this plant in curing all sorts of ailments that he bit away part of the root leaving it as it is today with and abruptly shortened root.



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With these and plenty of other yummy flowers about, you may see plenty of butterflies too. The Meadow Brown is a likely one to spot as it will fly in temperatures of 13°C and above, in dull and even rainy weather and into the evening. It is orange and brown, with a black eyespot on forewing tip, but the spotting pattern varies according to region. The eggs are laid on short grass, the caterpillars feed on grasses and the adults like thistles, ragworts and knapweed. The Common Blue is another one that is easy to spot as it is rather blue as the name suggests. That said, it is the male which has blue wings with a black-brown border and thin white fringe. The female is more brown with a blue dusting near the body. Its favourite food is Bird's-foot Trefoil. Another conspicuous animal often mistaken for a butterfly is the six-spot burnet moth. It is a day flying moth and its wings are metallic dark green with six vivid red spots. It can be seen feeding on scabious and knapweed.

Lots of other small beasties are flying around too and providing plenty of food for the swallows that arrived in spring. The young will be fledging soon, so if you see a nest under the eves of the old visitor centre, look out for 3-5 hungry mouths waiting for food. There are plenty of other birds around too – busy raising their new families, look out for stonechats in the gorse behind the visitor centre (so-called because their call sounds like two stones being tapped together). In previous years wren, whitethroat, starling, chaffinch, linnet and yellowhammer have all been seen to nest around the north car park. Sedge warbler and reed bunting have been seen in the Eigie marsh and willow warbler have been seen in the south car park.

Summer's a good time to feed our families al fresco too – it is the season of barbecues! If the weather is kind and you decide on a barbecue in the park, please take care. **Disposable barbecues are great if used properly but can do a lot of damage.** You may well see previous damage caused by hot barbecues on the boardwalks, picnic tables and grass. If the barbecue gets hot enough to cook what's on top, it will cook what's underneath unless it is raised. Many come with legs so please make sure you pull them out before lighting to lift the tray off the ground. If they don't have legs please find a surface that won't melt or burn to put them on. The sand is great but remember it will get very hot, so pour plenty of water over it before you leave (there's no shortage on the beach!). Oh, and don't forget to take the tray away and put it in a bin when it has cooled down – thank you!

Whatever you do at Balmedie Country Park this summer please enjoy it and help other people and wildlife to continue enjoying it too.

# BALMEDIE GALA SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011 BALMEDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION FREE

The OPENING PARADE starts at the Leisure Centre at 11:30am moving along Eigie Road to the School Playground

© © FANCY DRESS COMPETITION will be judged at the school so don't forget to dress up DOORS OPEN 12 NOON when parade reaches the school

STALLS: Plants, Home bakes, Bingo, 99p Stall, Face Painting, Bottle Stall, Books, Crafts, Toys and Baby Clothes, Chocolate stall and lots, lots more.

OUTSIDE: Bouncy Castle, Refreshments Tent, Fire Engine, Mobile Police Unit with WII game, Ice Cream Van,

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Grateful thanks to LOFTHUS SIGNS for donation of our Banner and LOCKFAST SECURITY for donation of Medals.

②A big thank you for all the donations for the raffle, and for all the hard work from our local community groups②

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON THE 11th OF JUNE SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

#### BELHELVIE CHURCH NEWS

**Christian Aid week** ran from 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May this year, and as usual we collected within the parish. Christian Aid aims to help people in poverty out of poverty, regardless of race or creed, and we hope that you are willing to support our volunteer collectors when they come to your door. You'll find more details about the groups that Christian Aid is trying to support in 2011 by logging on to **www.caweek.org/Poverty.** 

As part of our fundraising at Belhelvie we had a Quiz Night on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May, in the Forsyth Hall. All proceeds go to the work of Christian Aid.

Our **Discovering Christianity** course started on **May 15**th at 7pm. 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 five nights that we meet together. No prior commitment assumed, no question too daft! 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! Please be in touch at the address over the page if you're interested in coming along so we can plan for catering. We'd love to see you.

Our annual **Memorial Service** was held on May 29<sup>th</sup> at 11am. This is a service where we remember those from our parish who've passed on during the year, specifically those whose funerals I've conducted. Their names are read out and representatives of their families are invited to come and light a candle in their memory. Once those candles have been lit, any other folk who are carrying the pain of bereavement are able to come up and light a tealight in memory of their loved one too. Many folk find this a helpful milestone along the way, and everyone is welcome to attend.

As mentioned in the last Banter, we are planning to run a Children's Holiday Club for three days in August. "Going Bananas" will run from Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> August to Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August in the Forsyth Hall from 10-12 each morning. The club will cater for children entering P1 to those entering P7 after the summer, and there will be a small charge of £5 per child to cover some of our costs.

During our three days we'll be exploring some classic Bible stories using music, songs, fun and games. Places are likely to be limited, so if you're interested please be in touch soon. More information will be put out through the school nearer the time.

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During our three days we'll be exploring some classic Bible stories using music, songs, fun and games. Places are likely to be limited, so if you're interested please be in touch soon. 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 <a href="http://www.sevengoodsongs.blogspot.com/">http://www.sevengoodsongs.blogspot.com/</a>

Contact Rev Paul McKeown 01358 742227 pmckeown1@btconnect.com

#### OPENINGS AT - BEAVERS - CUBS - SCOUTS - EXPLORERS

We currently cannot meet the demand for **Beaver** places by a long way and have got to expand to avoid disappointing the youngsters who cannot get places.

Opportunities exist for Adults, both male & female, to train as **Beaver** Leaders. Trainees will work alongside established leaders to gain the experience they need to run a Colony. Each Colony will have a minimum of three Leaders.

If you think you could commit a regular 90 mins after school or early evening, please get it touch and discuss it some more. If you want to "Try Before you Buy" that's fine too.

Boys & Girls can become **Beavers** from their 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> birthdays. There is currently a long waiting list to join Wednesday Beavers.

We currently also have a vacancy for a trainee **Cub Leader** to join one of our Cub packs. Our Cub packs meet on a Tuesday & soon to be Monday evenings. Again trainees will work alongside established leaders and will become part of an existing team.

Boys & Girls can become **Cubs** from their 8th birthday.

We also invite enthusiastic Adults to join our **Leadership Teams at Scouts or Explorer Scouts** on a Wednesday evening. Whether it is to train as an assistant leader or you wish to bring a particular outdoor skill to the troop or unit you are welcome.

**Scouts** are for Boys & Girls from age 10 and Explorers from 14. To discuss either Leadership opportunities or to find out more about our Beavers, Cubs, Scouts or Explorers call us on **0774 384 4040 or email** 

<u>balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com</u>



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## INSPIRE (Partnership through Life)

is a leading charity providing support to hundreds of individuals with learning disabilities and additional support

needs throughout North East Scotland. A range of innovative services are offered, including residential support, day services and respite care.

Renowned by its peers as an industry leader and priding itself on providing trailblazing initiatives, Inspire is at the forefront of social care but continues to offer a person-centred approach. As Fiona Poustie, Head of Business Development and Fundraising, points out, "We believe in the potential of each individual and our services continually evolve to ensure that the correct care and encouragement is provided to enable the people we support to broaden their horizons and access the same opportunities as the rest of us".

At Inspire, the emphasis is placed upon providing a better quality of life and this involves encouraging independence, freedom of choice and social opportunities. Initiatives such as Inspired Soap, a service which offers its attendees real-work experiences, the opportunity to develop skills and to form meaningful friendships, are providing a host of success stories. This particular project produces high quality soap products within a supported environment.

On a similar thread, the newly introduced training for employment scheme, Café Academy, is also proving to have a real impact on the quality of life of those who attend. This scheme, which arms its students with the skills, knowledge and experiences required to access mainstream employment within the customer services and hospitality industries, has already seen a number of its students secure permanent employment.

Fiona continues, "The work that we do at Inspire is absolutely vital and has an impact not only on those people who depend upon us, but also on the communities in which they live. However, in this uncertain economic climate we rely more than ever on voluntary income to ensure that we can continue to offer our services.

There are many ways that you can help Inspire in addition to donating funds. You can organise a fundraising event or you can join in one of our pre-existing events, such as the sponsored firewalk which we hold on bonfire night at Queens Links Aberdeen. We're also always looking for volunteers who can help out at an event, for example the Celebrate Aberdeen parade on June 11<sup>th</sup> or they can offer to befriend a person we support. Remember, a small gesture can make a huge difference to the lives of a person who is often socially isolated and has restricted opportunities".

To get involved with Inspire, contact Head Office on 01224 280005 or via facebook, search for inspireonline.

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#### INTRODUCING ALPACAS INTO BELHELVIE PARISH

With the introduction of alpacas at Pettens Croft, the parish of Belhelvie has taken another step forward in the name of agricultural diversification. The alpaca is a domesticated member of the camelid family – the others being Llamas, Guanacos, Vicunas and of course the Camel. Alpacas are native to South America, from the high altitudes of the Andes of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, where they have been kept for their luxurious fleece for thousands of years. During the Spanish conquest of South America as the invaders systematically went about exterminating the indigenous Inca population, the alpacas were equally persecuted. These lovable animals were almost exterminated.

The principle behind the slaughter was simply to remove the food and clothing source from the people who would be unable to survive the hostile mountain conditions to which they were escaping. However, some herds did survive and fortunately, the species lives on.

We imported three pregnant females from Peru in 2005 and have now established a herd of 23 through our own breeding programme. Our aim is to focus on breeding very high quality animals and year-on-year to develop and improve the desired qualities of conformation and fleece characteristics, which make this such a valuable animal. Fibre quality is the key element underpinning the industry, as the finished product is what the customer buys and appreciates.

People have desires to keep alpacas for various reasons. They serve as excellent livestock guards and will fend off foxes and other predators with ease. They make really good pets and all have individual characters and traits just like humans. We have chosen to focus on breeding and improving the genetics by identifying and selecting the most suitable Stud males throughout the UK. Gestation is 11.5 months, so it is a long wait until the little ones (cria) are born. During the summer of 2010, we had six cria born and this provided a most remarkable experience as we watched them grow and develop. They are generally born in the morning to maximise the drying time in the sun so they have a warm fluffy fleece ready for the cold night ahead. This is far more important in their homeland where at 15,000ft it can be sub zero at night even in the summer time. Within an hour of being born, they are up and running and learning to suckle from mum. They can't hang around in the wild, as they would very quickly become a Puma lunch. Fortunately, here in Balmedie they don't have such nasty predators to contend with.

It is impossible to look at these animals and not fall in love with them. On one occasion, having met some patrons of the Cock & Bull while enjoying an evening meal, we engaged in conversation about alpacas and ultimately invited them to come over the next day to see them. One of the party was a Fife police officer. His reaction to seeing 'Sapphire', one of our Supreme Champions, was unprecedented. His friend and colleague was amazed how this "tough" cop was overwhelmed with emotions, more in keeping with that of a 4 year old, as he sank to his knees to kiss and cuddle this lovable animal. "It's like having a real live teddy bear," he said. Such is the impact of these adorable creatures.

Our efforts in producing top quality animals are showing signs of success. We have already achieved top accolades at the Strathendrick Agricultural Show at Drymen and have come home with Supreme Champions on two occasions with two different animals. Unlike most animal shows where a considerable amount of preening, brushing, polishing and making the animal look its best, with alpacas it is quite the opposite. Extensive cleaning and brushing causes damage to the fibre. As the fibre carries the greatest marks during assessment it is important to make sure it is not damaged just to make the animal more attractive.

The fleece is the final product from the alpaca as the animal is not in the food chain in the UK. The quality of the fleece will vary from one animal to the next and is also dependant on age. Baby alpaca fleeces are extremely fine and soft, and garments made from these fleeces can be worn directly on the skin with no effects of irritation or itchiness.

## New dance aerobic classes

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The fibre is very strong, extremely warm and being hollow in design is extremely lightweight. It is also hypoallergenic and can therefore be worn by people who suffer wool allergies.

There are now over 20,000 alpacas in the UK and this is constantly increasing. The value in this is the viability for mills to process the annually harvested fibre which can then be used in manufacture of yarn and garments. Currently there are some mini mills scattered throughout the UK but as the economics of scale ultimately come into play, some of the larger mills will no doubt be able to take on alpaca fibre production.

People often ask the differences between Peruvian alpaca fibre and the fibre we produce in the West. Principally Peru and other South American producers are geared up for mass production so quantity is a key driver for them. In the past, mill owners put pressure on the hill farmers to produce more raw fibre.

As a result, the hill farmer began breeding alpacas with llamas to produce a 'Huarizo', which is a bigger animal with more fleece but the fibre quality is then degraded. In the West, however the primary driver is to produce high quality fibre. Australia is a big alpaca producer and some of the world's best genetics emanate from there. The quality has reached such high levels that now the Australians are exporting the high quality back to Peru for processing and indeed breeding.

At "Highland Alpacas", we do not have any alpacas for sale. However, if you have a genuine interest to see these gorgeous creatures close up then Mabel would be delighted to take you round them. Beware though; it will be love at first sight!!!!!

To arrange for a viewing please call **Mabel on 07761-913191.** Obviously it is best to see them on a fine dry day to appreciate the quality of their fleeces as well as their individual characters.

Imants Schneider

#### **CRAFT CLUB**

We are in the last few weeks of our craft club sessions as we finish the classes when the school closes for the summer holidays.

Over the last few weeks we have made shakers, whizzers, cross-stitch, Easter bags and also some chocolate truffles – all lots of fun and often lots of mess!

We will resume the craft club after the summer again once the new school term begins.

Look out for us at the Balmedie Gala as we will be at the chocolate stall - hope to see you all there. **Catherine Cassie** 

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#### BETTER BALMEDIE

Better Balmedie has been very busy since the last issue of Banter!

Our large planters were filled with spring bedding in the autumn, so we have been feeding and watering them.

The Polytunnel at the back of the Leisure Centre has been erected and is operational. We are growing-on flowering plants there for use around the village, and will be trying our hand at vegetables too! It can be used by anyone in the village and we hope to develop its use with other groups, especially children.

We have also started to restore the dry stane dyke beside the football courts, working with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers who obtained funding from the National Lottery to train community groups. We now have 5 members who will continue this work, completing this wall and working on others around the village.

We continue to meet monthly for visits and talks and on July 2<sup>nd</sup> we are going to Crathes Castle for lunch and a tour of the Garden.

Throughout the summer months we will be filling the planters and tubs with summer bedding plants, watering and feeding them, and cutting some areas of grass around the village.

Better Balmedie will soon have its own website, but meantime we can be found on the excellent new Belhelvie Community Council website at www.belhelviecc.org.uk

We have a great team of volunteers, but we would love more people to get involved in Better Balmedie, so if you have an interest in gardening or helping to keep our village looking good, please do get in touch! Contact Better Balmedie on 01358 742557 or rosie.inform@lineone.net

P.S. We appealed for planters and slabs in previous issues. This has worked, as we are now proud owners of a boat which will be planted, and several slabs. So many thanks to the people who responded to those appeals!

Rosie Nicol



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#### **GLACIERS IN POTTERTON?**

Not today obviously, but the glaciers have visited Potterton regularly, 10 times in the last million years, and the signs of their passing are all around us. It's all due to the planet Jupiter influencing the orbit of the Earth around the Sun, an effect that was discovered by Scottish scientist James Croll in 1875.

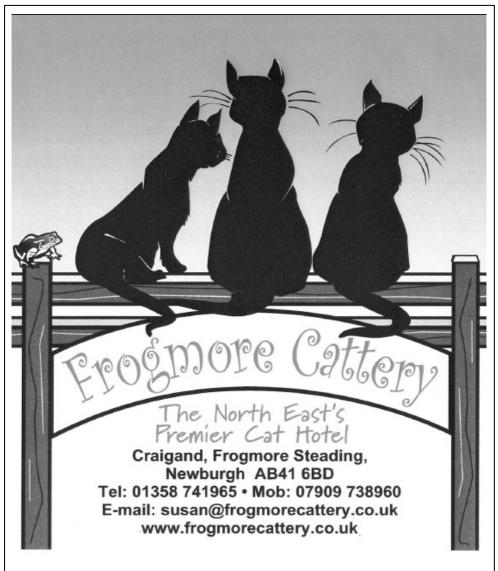
When the Ice Age started, large masses of ice, up to a mile thick built up in Scotland's mountains and at the Poles over thousands of years. This caused the sea level to drop by some 400 ft and the sea retreated several miles out into the North Sea. The gradient from land to sea increased and local rivers cut deep channels. The Ythan Bridge at Newburgh has a 40ft deep cut rock channel beneath it, but this is hidden by the sediment deposited when the sea came back. With the mass of ice, Scotland began to sink several hundred feet below its weight. Ice started to move around and reddish/grey clay was pushed up from the bottom of the North Sea. This can often be seen in farmer's excavations or round the fields near Potterton, as the crops grow poorly in it. The clay was used for early ceramics, which gave our village its name, Potter's Town.

When the ice eventually started to melt some 10,000 years ago, the land warmed up very quickly, so the melting ice deposited large boulders all over the area. A quick look at the rocks in the fields show that there are many different types, indicating the material was sourced from all across Scotland and even Norway. The thaw was so rapid (6°C in 100 years) that huge volumes of water ran off the land. The rivers could not cope with this extra water and new channels formed; drying up once the ice had gone. You can see the old meltwater channel running down from Denview Road through the backroad by the quarry and down to the A90. The deep channel to the East of the B977 just before you get to the Murcar roundabout was cut by meltwater. You can see a huge glacial boulder deposited near the farm entrance. Union Terrace Gardens is also a meltwater channel. Try imagining them with a 10 foot depth of rushing water.

The glaciers had one last effect that we can see in the area. As the ice melted, Scotland has been rising slowly (England is sinking, that's why the Thames Barrier is needed). Slowly the sea receded from the land and the sea cliffs became stranded. This is best seen at St Cyrus, where the cliffs are now several hundred yards from the sea, but the effect occurred all over Scotland. If you stand at the junction of the A90 with the back road into Potterton and look westwards, you will see a low line of old sea cliffs directly in front of you.

Finally, the glaciers will come again to Potterton, but probably not in my lifetime, in spite of the recent cold winters! See the web link.

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**Susan Barrowman** 

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The café serves a variety of delicious home bakes, hot and cold drinks, savoury snacks and soups. We can cater for most people with special dietary needs and vegetarians. The café is staffed by volunteers. In the summer on dry and hot days we have tables outside for customers to enjoy fresh air and a breeze while eating.

In addition to being a café, we are an art gallery exhibiting paintings by local artists. We stock a wide range of crafts made locally. The artwork and crafts are for sale and we have on offer products to suit both those who want to spend their pocket money to items for people wanting to invest in something more exclusive. We would encourage people to visit to get gift ideas. Remember Father's Day and we know that lots of children like to give a gift to their class teacher at the end of the school year! Browse for that special gift, some of which can be personalised while you relax with a coffee.

The café is run on the basis that we cover our costs of rent, electricity, food and drink and we are pleased to say due to our regular customers we manage to do this but it would be good to be able to earn a bit more to be able to support more projects in Balmedie. Please mention us to your friends and family as we can assure them that they will have a good experience. Since our last article in Belhelvie Banter we have raised money for two charities thanks to your support we were able to donate £30 to Sue Ryder and nearly £100 to Friends of Anchor.

## Dates for your diaries:-

- **21**st **May 2011,** 10 -12pm we will serve cream teas to support the Better Balmedie Group Plant Sale.
- 11th June 2011 we will be at Balmedie Gala. Now in the café we have two activities running and the winners will be presented with their prizes at the Gala. Call into the café and guess the birthday of the doll and have a stab at counting the number of sweets in the jar.

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#### NORTH-EAST FARM SHOP SECURES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

A local farm store & coffee shop has won a prestigious award in recognition of their commitment to delivering outstanding products & service to customers across the North-east.

The Store at Foveran was named The Taste of Grampian Local Independent Retailer of the Year at the Grampian Food Forum Innovation Awards held in Aberdeen on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

The family-run farm and business faced competition from four other strong local businesses in the category so they were delighted to come out on top.

Managing Director and Farmer, Andrew Booth, said: "We were delighted to have reached the finals of two categories this year and winning Independent Retailer of the Year is a fantastic achievement for the entire team as they have worked so hard over the last ten years. Securing the award gives The Store recognition for what we strive to achieve and that is providing good, natural, local produce for our customers."







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#### BALMEDIE LEISURE CENTRE

There is a variety of exercise classes available at the Balmedie Leisure Centre. We have recently started circuits classes on a Wednesday from 7.30 - 8.30 pm. Proving to be very popular with young and old, our Zumba classes are held on a Tuesday morning and again in the evening (6.30 and 7.30 for an hour) and also a Thursday evening (7.30 for an hour). Children's Zumba classes are to be starting soon. Our spinning classes are held on a Monday and Thursday evening, and as these are very popular we would advise that you call to prebook your cycle. Other new evening classes, available for children, are the Glee/Drama group on a Monday and Cheerleading class on a Wednesday.

We would like to remind all potential customers that the outside 5-aside football pitches are available to hire during evenings and weekends.

Please log on to our Facebook page to find our full programme; to find out which new classes will be starting soon, and to view our summer holiday programme. Alternatively, you can contact us by email or telephone on the address/number below.

Hope to see you soon!

Balmedie Leisure Centre, Eigie Road, Balmedie AB23 8YF
Tel: 01358 743725 email: balmedie leisure@btconnect.com

#### POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Meets 2 pm Last Tuesday of the month
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#### **BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

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Every Sunday at 11 a.m

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We hold informal, family-friendly services, which you are welcome to visit. We had very successful joint Easter Services, Maundy Thursday at Kittybrewster, Good Friday at Danestone and on our own on Easter Sunday at Balmedie

Our Church enjoyed a meal out at Jimmy Chung's.

As part of our outreach, we supported the Shaun Tia Appeal and we continue to support Kids Action with children in Sierra Leone.

We are looking forward to the Balmedie Gala in June, when all profit from our Church stall will be in aid of an Arthritis Charity.

Open invitation for you and yours to come and have a look at what we do

#### WELCOME ANY SUNDAY.

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

#### 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 until 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.

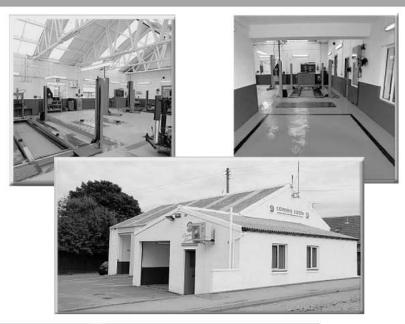
Fees Breakfast Club £4.00

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#### **BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY - values and aims**

Current S1 pupils are the first to access the Curriculum for Excellence. At the heart of this new curriculum is the aspiration that all of Scotland's young people become confident, responsible, effective contributors and successful learners. BODA strongly agree with this and have arrived at the following statement:

#### Our aim is that all of our young people become

Confident individuals

• Effective contributors

Responsible citizens

Successful learners

In talking about this with pupils, Heads of House, other staff and focus groups of parents, it is clear that something was needed that is immediately accessible in a way that words like 'inclusion', integrity' and 'compassion' are not. The following summary statement was devised:

#### Achieving more together BE:

Fair

Caring

Your best

- Honest
- Respectful

This has been well received and now there are decisions to be made as to how to incorporate the words with the school badge to produce a statement which captures clearly what characterises Bridge of Don Academy. from J P Harland

#### WHAT'S IN A BADGE?



On the badge there is a bridge (the Bridge of Don), a river (the Don), a Stag and a sunrise. All of these are quite symbolic in themselves – in Art, Science, History, Literature and Geography to name a few. A bit of research leads to the **Stag** being there as the history of the school was originally to provide schooling for the children of the Gordon Highlanders - the Stag is on the old cap badge of the regiment. The land was also well known for having deer roaming throughout.

Historically (from Wikipedia) the deer plays a large role in Scottish Gaelic poetry (*fiadh*) of the Highlands of Scotland, where it is seen as a **noble** creature, and often used as a flattering simile or metaphor when used in

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email: <a href="mailto:servicemasterabdn@btinternet.com">servicemasterabdn@btinternet.com</a> 20 Tormentil Crescent, Balmedie, AB23 8SY comparison to a famous warrior, hero or chief. A key word there is Noble. Many definitions exist for this but an appropriate one would be:-

■ Having or showing qualities of high moral character, such as courage, generosity, or honour: *a noble spirit*.

So what else can Noble, as in 'a noble Stag', mean? – integrity, chivalry, courage, self-sacrifice, all aspects reflected in the "BODA Bs"

The bridge – always a symbol of strength, connections, joining together.

A **flowing river** – perhaps a symbol of the journey through life? Travelling through challenges, finding a way around obstacles, sometimes flowing faster, sometimes slower, heading towards the sea.

A **sunrise** – signifying the beginning, the start, perhaps the early part of a journey.

There are many possible parallels to be drawn through historical art imagery and the aims and experience of an education.

The Don itself was first referred to by Ptolemy (who was perhaps better known for his works in astronomy in Roman times). He was a Greek/Roman citizen with Egyptian background who was commissioned by Caesar Septimus Severus, circa 150 AD, to publish all the known geography of the Roman Empire of the time. The work was called Geographia and covered a quarter of our globe.

It named the river as Anouava Devona, meaning goddess/sacred river. The Don runs for 131 km from the Ladder Hills at the Glenlivet estate in the Cairngorm National Park. At that time, many Roman forts were built along the length of the river at places such as Kintore where there are still remains of the 120-acre Deer's Den Roman camp. Donmouth was fortified around 200 AD to help protect these camps, and for the further invasion and exploration of Northern Scotland and the Grampus mountains.

At that time the Don was at a more southerly location and was a wetland environment. This changed in 1750 when the Don was redirected and moved to its now more northerly position. The five arch granite bridge was built between 1827 and 1832. The original design by John Smith was modified by Thomas Telford and now carries four lanes of the A956 road, protected as a Category B listed building

We may now be regarded as Europe's biggest suburb having grown rapidly over the last 40 or so years, but with a rich, varied history on which to draw to give us a sense of place, of where we stand and why we are where we are, which can be reflected in our school badge and what we hope are the aims and values we encourage our young people here at Bridge of Don Academy to aspire to.

Adapted from Mr Fitzgerald



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For more details on any of the above, please call Leyonee on 07545 634550 or email zumbaleyonee@yahoo.co.uk



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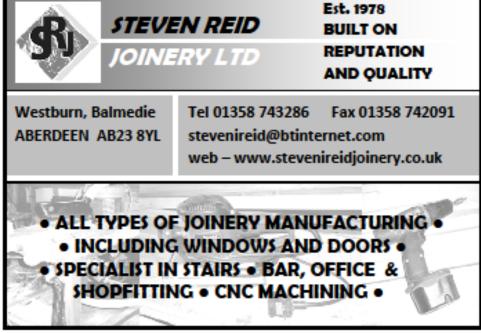
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- Information on your health concerns
- How to access NHS services
- Employment within the NHS
- Access to free condoms
- Access to smoking cessation services

#### The *healthpoint* service can be contacted by:

• Calling the free *healthline* 0500 20 20 30 or emailing <u>healthpoint@nhs.net</u> or by dropping into one of our local walk-in healthpoints across Grampian at:

Aberdeen Indoor Market • Aberdeen Royal Infirmary • Hot Spot, 1-3 Kirk Street, Peterhead

healthtext offers information and advice on a wide range of health issues, so if you have a query, would like more information or advice, text 'Info' to 82727 to speak to a trained health advisor today!



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#### YTHAN DISTRICT GUIDE ASSOCIATION

We are currently **looking for a small piece of land** to store some of our equipment in. We are hoping to be able to obtain a storage unit but will need a place to put it on. If anyone has a small piece of land that they would be willing to allow us access to for this purpose please contact:

Marianne McIntosh, District Commissioner on Tel 01358 724231 or email Marianne.mcintosh@btinternet.com.

#### BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

The Friendship Group meets on Tuesdays, 2-4pm every two weeks, in the lounge of Eigie House, Balmedie. See 'Dates for your Diary' for details.

We are almost at the end of the session for this year and have enjoyed our varied speakers and entertainers. We welcome any new members aged 50+ from anywhere in the parish - if you are interested in joining then contact us:

Mr Vic Deans, President 01358 743634 Mrs Margaret Murison, Secretary 01358 742285





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ectricity	0800300 999	
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r Loveday	01651 872591	
lmedie Library	01358 742045	
gie House	01358 743506	
mmunity Centres - Bookings (Belhelvie and Potterton)	01358 727910	
lmedie Leisure Centre	01358 743725	
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urch of Scotland (Rev Paul McKeown)	01358 742227	
ngregational Church (Rev. Andy Cowie)	01224 703248	
tholic Church (Parish Office)	01224 626359	
HOOLS		
idge of Don Academy	01224 707583	
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DOCTORS		
Danestone Medical Practice		01224 833866
Ellon Group Practice		01358 720333
Oldmachar Medical Practice (Jesmon	nd Drive and King St)	0845 337 0510
Scotstown Medical Practice	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	01224 702149
Udny Surgery		01651 842204

0870 054 4999

01358 742474

PIN 021290

01358 720715

Balmedie Primary

Ellon Academy

Emergency Contact

May	Dates for your Diary	
Tues 31	Potterton Congregational Church Stead Inn Potterton	2.00pm
June		
During June	Better Balmedie Planting tubs with summer plants	
Tues 7	Friendship Group Summer outing to Montrose	
Sat 11	Final of 5-a-side Football Competition	10.30am
	Balmedie Gala	11.30am
Mon 20	Belhelvie Community Council Balmedie Primary Sch	7.30pm
Tues 21	Friendship Group Bingo Eigie House	2.00pm
Tues 28	Potterton Congregational Church Stead Inn Potterton	2.00pm
July		
Fri 1	End of school term Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy	
Sat 2	Better Balmedie Outing to Crathes Castle Lunch & tour of castle gardens	
Mon 18	Belhelvie Community Council Belhelvie Community Hall	7.30pm
Tues 26	Potterton Congregational Church Stead Inn Potterton	2.00pm
August		
Wed 3- 5	Going Bananas Children's Holiday Club Forsyth hall	10-Noon
Tues 16	School Term begins	
	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy	
Thurs 25	Better Balmedie Topic TBA Balmedie Sch	7.30pm
Tues 30	Potterton Congregational Church Stead Inn Potterton	2.00pm
Tues 30	Friendship group Whist or Bingo	2.00pm
	Future Dates	
September		
Tues 13	Friendship Group Talk on Bees and honey tasting	2.00pm
Thurs 29	Better Balmedie Topic TBA Balmedie Sch	7.30pm
October		
Fri 7	School closes for half term	

#### BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GROUP

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent coffee morning; funds raised will be put towards maintaining our current lights. Watch out for further events in the coming months.

If you have any suggestions or would like to become involved with the group please contact <a href="mailto:christmasgroup@hotmail.co.uk">christmasgroup@hotmail.co.uk</a>.

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.