

# BELHELVE BANTER

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**EDITION 10**

**MARCH 2012**



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**Copy date for next issue – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

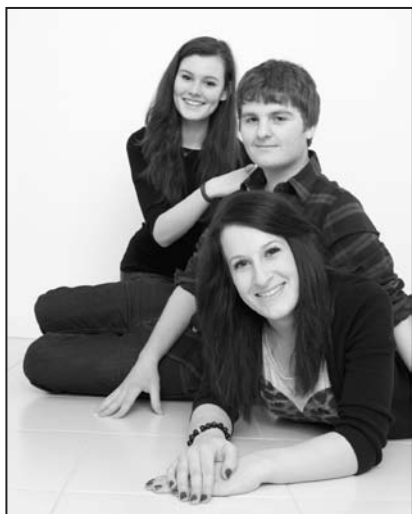
## **EDITORIAL**

This is our first edition of 2012 and we start the year by ringing the changes. A change of font will allow us to pack more words per page, and the addition of colour for our cover and back page, plus some adverts should improve appearance. I do not need to remind you that this free publication comes to you courtesy of our advertisers and we are grateful for their commitment and continued support. We ask that you, in turn, support them.

We operate with a small financial margin in case of unforeseen costs, so we were delighted to be able to help Better Balmedie provide a bench by the Eigie House Road bus stop. The cover shows your production team: Back row: Alan, Audrey, David. Front row: Fiona, Shuna, Karen, pictured on the bench.



Thanks to **Jonathan Holt** of **Barrett and Coe** for the photos on the cover and this page.



As well as the many great national events scheduled for 2012, here in Belhelvie, Balmedie House plans to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. The House is just one of many places within the Parish where volunteers are welcomed and indeed provides essential services to others.

The photograph is of three Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers: Jason Clark, Kirsten MacIntosh,

Nikki Holt, and they tell of their service to others on page 3.



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**Jason Clark, 16**

*"I am currently participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Scheme and for my volunteering section, I have a placement at Balmedie Library. I enjoy my time there, I feel I am learning new skills which will help me in the future, as well as involving myself in my community. The Library staff are always very welcoming; I have had great feedback about the work I have done which is encouraging. Volunteering in the community is a way of making contact with others I wouldn't usually meet, I have found it an enriching experience and I would highly recommend it to others."*

**Kirsten MacIntosh, 16**

*"Volunteering at the MICAS base at Bridge of Don Academy, has made me realise that it is good for me to mix with people that don't have the same capabilities as others. Speaking to these individuals makes me see that they are not that much different to me, they just need extra support."*

**Nikki Holt, 16**

*"I am currently working towards my Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award, for this I am required to do volunteering work for a minimum of 6 months. I started in November at the Balmedie Out of School Club helping with games and craft activities for at least an hour a week. I enjoy helping younger children so this seemed like a good place to work with a variety of tasks each week. The staff at the club make me feel very welcome and for the children it's someone different to play with! This is giving me valuable experience of working in a team and learning to adapt to different situations. It is also something else to put on my university application that may help me to get a place next year so I don't see it as a waste of time or working for nothing!"*

So, I'd like you to focus on volunteers –you know who they are. From those who produce and deliver your Banter, to those who broaden the life experiences of both youngsters and adults in the many organisations, clubs, teams and groups, including those who organise local events, brighten up our local environment and generally work tirelessly to make our Parish a better place for all of us to enjoy. The village offers a variety of volunteering opportunities from the Banter, Better Balmedie Group, Balmedie House, Belhelvie Community Council, Tarts & Crafts, Xmas Lights Group, the Gala Committee, the Library, to helping at Girlguiding and Scout groups.

**Go On! You can find out more about local volunteering at the Leisure Centre on March 24<sup>th</sup> from 9.30-12.30.** You must have an hour or two you can give to helping others - it will make you feel good.

**A.J. Editor**

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## NEWS FROM ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL RANGER SERVICE

By Sarah Gosden

I have enjoyed writing the seasonal Nature Notes from the Banter over the last year and hope some of you enjoyed reading them. Unfortunately huge budget cuts have resulted in changes within the Ranger Service and I will no longer be in a position to write any more. The Ranger Service has taken a severe cut in staffing and it has been decided that there will no longer be a “Coastal Ranger” at Balmedie. There will now only be one Ranger for each administrative area. I will be moving on to cover the Buchan area and your contact in the service will be David Brown, the Formartine Area Ranger. He can be contacted on [formartine.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:formartine.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk), 01358 726417. He has been the full time Ranger for Formartine for a number of years now and will obviously not have the time to take on all the work I did as Coastal Ranger in Formartine, but please feel free to get in touch with him if you need advice.

**Editor’s Note: We are sorry to lose Sarah as a feature writer on the Banter, we know you have enjoyed reading her Notes; we thank her for her time and wish her well in Buchan. We would very much like to continue with this type of feature so over to you the readers to either volunteer to write for us or to recommend someone you know who has knowledge of wildlife issues.**

### GIVE BEES A CHANCE

Last summer was not kind to our honey bees. Without bees there would be very few flowering crops. 60% of our food plants depend on bees especially tree fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and beans.. No bees – no healthy diet.

A typical hive in summer has about 60,000 honey bees and a healthy queen will lay an average 2,000 eggs a day but if we then have bad weather this keeps the growing colonies inside their hives until, like mischievous children on a rainy day; they break out with disastrous, often fatal, consequences. The skill of the beekeeper is in providing just the right amount of food substitute, in the form of sugar syrup, to keep the ‘ladies’ at home!

A worker bee will live for six to eight weeks, foraging for three weeks for pollen, nectar and water and that is where you can help by providing a bee-friendly garden environment with the following plants.

**Spring flowers** - Bluebell, bugle, daffodil, flowering cherry & currant, forget-me-not, hawthorn, hellebore, pulmonaria, pussy willow, rosemary, viburnum, thrift.

**Early-summer flowers** - Aquilegia, astilbe, campanula, comfrey, everlasting sweet pea, fennel, foxglove, geranium, potentilla, snapdragon, stachys, teasel, thyme, verbascum.



Well worth a visit, to see

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**Late-summer flowers** - Aster, buddleia, cornflower, dahlia (single-flowered), delphinium, eryngium, fuchsia, globe thistle, heather, ivy, lavender, penstemon, scabious, sedum, verbenaa..

For each pound of honey, a bee can fly the equivalent of twice round the world, making 500 trips, to 10,000 flowers within four miles of the hive and the resulting honey production will take on the flavours of the main flowers within that area as the season progresses. Honeybees cannot store nectar, as it will ferment. Pure honey will not ferment. The younger workers turn nectar into honey for their winter

larder. They buzz furiously inside the hive while clinging on with their feet to create an air-conditioning system that drives the excess moisture from the stored nectar. This is sweet music to the beekeeper's ears. **AJ**



### **BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY NEWS**

The last day of Xmas term was celebrated with a 'Dress as you Please' charity event, that saw a variety of interesting dress styles from both pupils and staff. We had tigers, cats, several Santas, lots of imaginative uses of tinsel, festive head gear and earrings. Throughout the day, all years took part in a Ceilidh.

The Academy recently played host to the P7 pupils from our feeder schools of Balmedie, Scotstown and Braehead primaries. Taster sessions were arranged in all faculties for the pupils to sample a range of the wide choice of subjects available. We look forward to seeing you all again in June for your 3 day visits.



The Parent Council 100 club recently celebrated its inaugural draw. This club is a way of raising funds to assist the school and is open to all parents, guardians, staff, grandparents and members of the community who have a vested interest in the education of our pupils. Please contact the school for further information.

Recently pupils studying Modern Languages were able to find out first-hand what it was like to be an MSP, when Brian Adams MSP visited their classes and answered questions regarding possible Scottish independence.

Pupils at the Academy are busy with rehearsals for a musical production of Oliver which is to be performed during the last week of the summer term, Wed 27 to Fri 29 June at the Arts Theatre. The main roles have been chosen and lines are being learned. There are many openings for the pupils within the production, from wardrobe to stage management and several support roles.



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## INTRODUCING ROTARY

The nearest Rotary Club to most of Belhelvie Parish is the Aberdeen Balgownie Club which meets weekly at the **Mains of Scotstown, Bridge of Don every Thursday at 6.30 pm**. We have 30 members but we are always looking for more, so readers would be most welcome to come to any meeting to see how we organise things at Balgownie. Just turn up, or phone our Secretary, Graham Donaldson on 01224 744144 beforehand.

There are also Rotary clubs at **Ellon** (Wednesdays 6.30 pm), **Oldmeldrum** (Mondays 6.30 pm), **Dyce** (Tuesdays 6.15pm) and five other clubs in Aberdeen city. We are all part of a much larger District which stretches from Dundee to Shetland and across to Skye and Lewis, 80 clubs in all. Any Rotary member can attend any club if they find themselves in the area on the appropriate day. This extends to the network of clubs around the world and is an excellent way of meeting like-minded folk in any location.

All Rotary meetings follow a similar pattern. First and foremost, we are a club – with good fun and a relaxed atmosphere. Each evening we have a meal, a speaker and a short business session to discuss our various activities.

In addition to the club evenings, we organise fund-raising events for local charities and needy projects overseas. During the year, we join up with other clubs for larger events such as “Kids Out” at Craibstone when a day’s entertainment is provided for 500 children with special needs, every June. Rotary also organises the Christmas Car Raffle at Bon Accord Centre which this year raised more than £50,000 for CLAN and other charities.

At Balgownie, we also have our own smaller pet projects, plus a series of outside visits to interesting locations, concerts and the theatre. For special events and occasional club nights our numbers are swelled by inviting members’ partners. The club sports two curling teams and a very successful golfing team with full participation in various Rotary leagues.

Finally, Balgownie is proud of its close link with Nagasaki via a student exchange programme to commemorate the impact on Japan’s modernisation by Thomas Glover, who was raised in the Bridge of Don in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Rotary is not expensive nor does it require lots of time – unless you wish to get heavily involved. It is open to men and women. If you think it looks interesting, please visit us on a Thursday evening at Mains of Scotstown either alone or bring a friend.

Mike Daw

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## BETTER BALMEDIE

Better Balmedie is glad of this chance to express our thanks to two local organisations. First of all we say "Many Thanks" to Belhelvie Banter who paid for the new bench at the bus-stop opposite the end of Eigie House Road. Perhaps the wait for the bus will be a bit more comfortable now! Secondly, we were delighted to receive over £2300 from Whitehorse Balmedie Golf Society, from their fundraising evening in November. This money will be used to buy equipment and add to the planting around the village. "Many Thanks" to the Golf Society too! "Clubbing together" really can benefit the village!

In October and November we planted many more daffodils and crocuses around Balmedie. Thanks also to Aberdeenshire Council and Dobbies for these additions to our spring flowers, also to children at Balmedie School for helping us to plant them.

We have a busy year ahead, both in and around the polytunnel and around the village. **We would love to welcome more folk to the group. Whether you are an experienced gardener or a novice, you will be very welcome.** Just a few hours a month can make such a difference and the satisfaction is enormous when you see planters and tubs blooming in spring and summer! We also need help from handy-men for lots of jobs around the polytunnel, so would love to hear from you too.

This summer and autumn we hope to be selling a range of home-grown fruit and vegetables and we hope that the polytunnel will develop as a feature of the village that can be enjoyed by folk of all ages. You would be very welcome too at any of our Garden Club meetings, usually the last Thursday of the month at the school. If you and your children would be interested in starting a Junior Garden Club, please get in touch and we will see what we can do.

To find out all about Better Balmedie please look at [www.betterbalmedie.org](http://www.betterbalmedie.org)

For more info, ring **Rosie Nicol**  
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## BELHELVIE PARISH CHURCH

Firstly, a big thank-you to everyone who attended or helped out at our services over Christmas. We were delighted at the turnout for Christingle and Watchnight, and especially pleased that around 200 folk piled into Balmedie Leisure Centre on Christmas Eve afternoon for carols and fun, ably assisted by the Balmedie School Choir. It was – quite literally – standing room only!

Through our “Right Christmas” appeal we managed to raise £5380 to help the maternity unit of Nkhoma Hospital in Malawi – again, a big thanks to everyone who helped with that effort.

Things are a little quieter this term, but Easter is not long away. Please take note of the dates of our services and come along if you can – you’d be more than welcome.

Christian Aid week runs from 13-19<sup>th</sup> May and as usual, folk will be coming round the doors collecting. Please give these volunteers your support. Christian Aid works with people of all faiths and none, to help them move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. The money you give isn’t just thrown at problems as a temporary solution – Christian Aid’s partner organisations are working for long-lasting change. The principle they work from is summed up in the old adage – *“If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you get him a fishing rod and teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime”*.

Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup> is our annual Memorial service, when we remember folk who’ve passed on in our community over the past year. If you are still carrying sadness for someone you’ve lost, please think about coming along – there will be an opportunity in the service to remember them and light a candle in their memory.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> we are also organising a meeting called “The Gaitherin” as part of our stewardship campaign – we are hoping that as many folk as possible with an interest in the future of the church will attend, whether members or not. There will be worship, entertainment and presentations to help us reflect on what the church has been doing locally, nationally and internationally, and also think about some of the things we’d like to do locally if we had more resources.

One last thing to flag up is that after the success of “Going Bananas” last year, we plan to run a primary age Holiday Club in the Forsyth Hall for 5 days from August 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> from 10-12 each morning. More details will follow, but we’ll be choosing a sporty, Olympic theme! Hope to see you and yours along.

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## **BELHELVIE PARISH CHURCH SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The inaugural meeting of The Social Committee was held on 2nd February 1994 (some 18 years ago) and since then a team, presently comprising 13 members, has organised a wide range of social and fundraising events throughout the year. Our aim is to help strengthen the depth of fellowship, while raising funds to finance projects, within the Church and the wider community.

**Dates for 2012 events are as follows:-**

**Sat 28 April – Sponsored Walk for Christian Aid at Forvie Sands followed by meal/BBQ**

**Fri 1 June - Concert in the Forsyth Hall hosted by Jim and Marisha Addison**

**Sat 9 June – A ‘99p’ Table at the Balmedie Gala**

**A Photography Competition, closing date to be announced later, followed by a display and presentation of prizes on Fri 7 September at a Talent Show in the Forsyth Hall which will be promoted within the Church and local community.**

**Sat 24 November – Christmas Coffee Morning in the Forsyth Hall**

Further details of all these events will be displayed locally and in future issues of the Church Magazine and Belhelvie Banter

Please come and join us – you’ll be made very welcome!

**Doreen Crawford, Convener, Tel: 01358-742309, doreen51@talktalk.net**

**Arthur G Nicolson, Secretary, Tel: 01358-743628, arthurnicolson@sky.com**

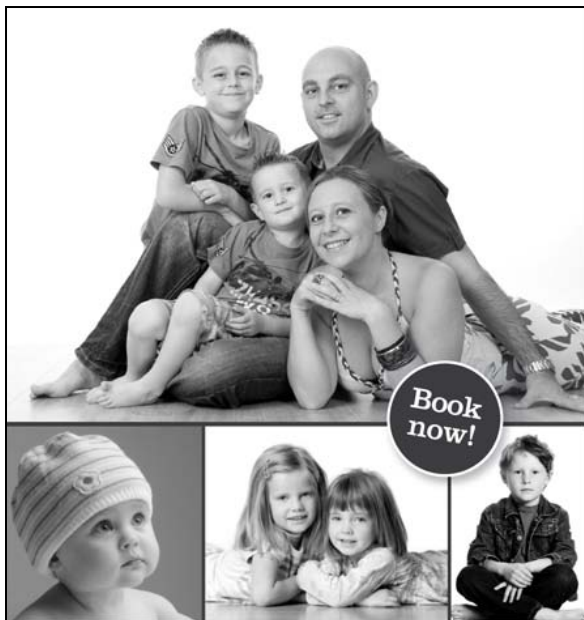
## **BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP CLUB**

The Friendship Club continues to meet on the second Tuesday of each month in the lounge at Eigie House, Balmedie from 2-4pm. There is easy parking outside the building.

Any person over 50 who lives in the parish is invited to attend and will be made very welcome. The programme up to summer includes a variety of speakers including Bob Orskov, Bob Davies and Sheila Craggs, entertainers including Amy Wilson and company and bingo sessions. The session for 2011/12 ends with an outing on 19<sup>th</sup> June. For more details and dates of these sessions see 'Dates for your Diary'.

**Margaret Murison, Secretary Tel 01358 742285**

**Mr Vic Deans, President Tel 01358 743634**



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## OLD WIVES' TALES

Sometimes it is quite straightforward to write a piece for the Banter, but there are times that you really have to scratch your head!! I thought that I'd best leave my gentle nagging about taking more exercise and eating a bit less, as I'm sure you've all got the message by now and have hardly any excess Christmas pounds to shed....!

I realised that much of the "modern" advice is no more than reinventing the wheel and is really common sense. Some of the oldest advice or "Old Wives' Tales" derive from many centuries of collective observations which are passed down the generations. There are many of these "Old Wives' Tales" that are now attracting scientific interest and as a consequence we now understand some of the science behind them.

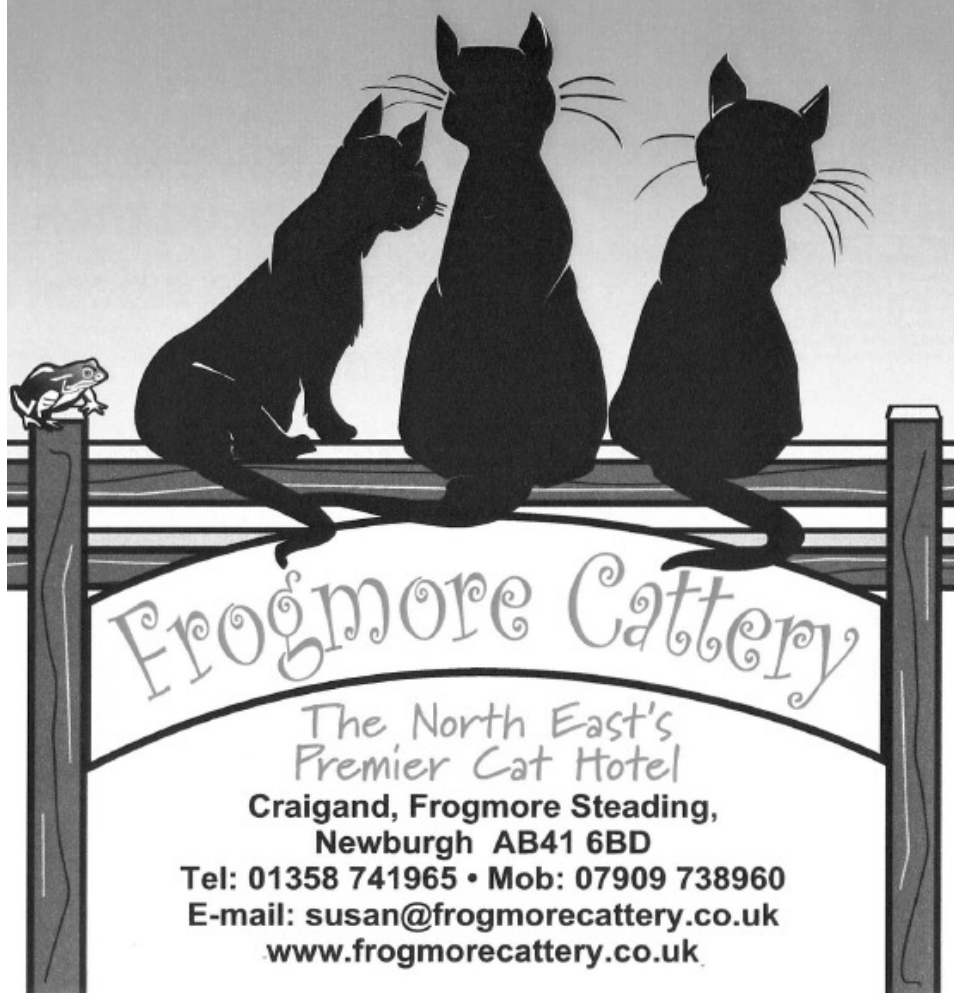
There are many to choose from but I'd thought I'd mention a couple:-

"Breakfast like a King, lunch like a Prince and tea like a Pauper" is one I often mention. I'm sure the meaning is clear but research has shown that this is really quite sensible!

It has been shown that a good breakfast, especially one that is quite high in complex carbohydrates (for example bran cereals or porridge) and proteins (meats and eggs), can fill you up and provide slow burn energy. These foods are digested more slowly, which in turn causes your blood glucose level to rise and fall more slowly. This means that you do not get mid-morning hunger pangs and reach for the chocolate biscuits. In contrast, higher sugar cereals and less complex carbohydrates cause your glucose levels to rise and fall more quickly, so you feel hungry in a shorter time. A lower blood glucose level triggers the hunger response, and so you end up munching away on the choccy biscuit by 10:30am! So a bigger healthy breakfast means less snacking and, you've guessed it, less weight gain!

Studies have also shown that children do better in school when they've had a good breakfast, with improvements in concentration and behaviour. Similar gains in mental performance have been shown in adults as well.

By having your biggest meal in the evening you increase your chances of weight gain as you are unlikely to be very active thereafter, and then you head to bed. All the energy in the food that is not used gets stored as fat, so you stand a higher chance of gaining unwanted pounds. The advice is certainly old fashioned in tone,



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**Susan Barrowman**

but is no more than a prompt to make you think about what and when you eat. So the old tale is certainly not a bad guide, and has scientific credibility.

“Fish is good for the brain”. This is very interesting for a number of reasons as research has shown that fish, especially the oily fish, such as herring, salmon, mackerel and tuna have high levels of essential fatty acids (EFAs), which are important in many processes in the body, including nerve development in children and maintaining a healthy function of the brain in adults. I am sure that you are all aware of the medicines for sale that contain concentrated amounts of these EFAs, all implying that you’ll boost your child’s brain or improve your own, but save your money and enjoy the fish! Having oily fish two or three times a week will ensure you’ll get adequate EFAs. Another benefit is that oily fish contain high levels of vitamin D, and this vitamin is the focus of research into Multiple Sclerosis. It is thought that a reason that MS is so high in Scotland is due to low levels of vitamin D (no long sunny summers!), but the levels of MS are lower in Scandinavia as the populations there eat more oily fish. Of course the Old Wives had no idea about EFAs and vitamin D, but again they were correct! Fish are also good for the heart, as it has been found that the oils help protect the heart even if your cholesterol is high. Indeed we sometimes prescribe capsules containing fish oil derivatives to patients whose cholesterol remains too high despite treatment with statins.

I realise that I’ve managed to continue my nagging in another way! I do hope you have only just realised it, but it’s my job to try and keep you all healthy and out of the surgery!!

So the common sense observations that have amassed in society over the years, passed down as “Old Wives’ Tales”, are often very sound and increasingly the scientific facts behind them are becoming established and understood. I am sure that you can think of many more, and yes some will be rubbish, but many of the enduring ones are not. So next time you think “Och that’s just Old Wives’ Tales”, there is a good chance these wise old women were on the money, even if they did not know why!!

**Dr. Alasdair Forbes**





## BALMEDIE CUBS



The Cubs enjoyed the recent presentation, from the Red Cross, on the subject of “Water Rescue Dogs”. Colin the presenter brought in Loki, the largest and most loveable Newfoundland dog imaginable. So large in fact, that the leaders kept checking the number of cubs, to ensure that none had been on Loki’s menu that evening!

We viewed a video of Loki being trained to rescue people in the sea and rivers, and inspected all his rescue equipment.

Colin taught all the cubs how to put people in to the recovery position after rescue, which complemented our normal badge work. Loki eventually left 22 new firm, but somewhat nervous, friends. We hope he will come back to see us again in the future.

Two visits were also made to see the workings of Ellon Police and Fire Stations. Great fun was had by all, using the fire hoses for real, and a demonstration on how the police arrest and detain criminals. We even tried the cells and handcuffs out for ourselves. Fortunately, Ian the Police Officer let the cubs free before the parents came to take them home. Our thanks go to the service organisations that have widened our cub’s horizons so much **Ivor Jenkins & Lesley Cruickshank**

## 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 from 3.30pm till 6pm.

At After School Club, children receive a snack and are 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. For further information or to enquire about spaces contact the club on

**07920 295508**

### **Fees**

Breakfast Club £4.00

After School Club

½ session till 4.30pm £4.00

Full session till 6pm £7.00

### **3<sup>RD</sup> BELHELVIE BROWNIES (POTTERTON)**

We had a busy build-up to Christmas at the end of last term. We joined in with every event we could. We went to see the Inverurie Pantomime wearing flashing Santa hats and joining lots of other Brownies there. We had a Christmas party with 1<sup>st</sup> Belhelvie Rainbows (Potterton). Alan of Alan's Magic came and entertained us and what a fantastic job he did. We were all in stitches, especially when he got Sooty Owl, one of our leaders, to be the ventriloquists dummy. We had great fun trying to work out how the tricks were done but just couldn't figure them out.

As part of our community action challenge we made Christingles for the church to give them out at their service which we joined in with. All those lit candles were very worrying for our leaders but thankfully everyone was alright.

Now Christmas is over we are back down to earth. We all chose our activities for the term in our pow-wow. We chose to have a Robert Burn's night where we made and decorated little Robert Burn's poem books. We have chosen to do interest badges this term, half of us are doing cook's badge, the other half of us are doing artist badge. Plans are made and we are very excited at the thought of getting another badge.

We have a few spaces at Brownies if your daughter is between 7 and 10 years old. Contact **Katherine Hebron-Scott on 01330 833448** or email [katherine@hebron1.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:katherine@hebron1.orangehome.co.uk)

#### **POTTERTON 2's GROUP**

At Potterton Community Centre

Currently, we have places for children aged 18 months (parent to stay till they turn 2 years) till 3 years when they can transfer to the playgroup at Potterton Community Centre run by the same staff.

We aim to encourage social and communication skills through positive play within our happy and safe environment for the children. The group is run by qualified staff and rotational parent helpers.

**Monday 10-12noon**

**Friday 10-12noon**

**Children are welcome to attend one or both sessions**

**Sessions are priced £4 for 2 hours and include a snack**

**Children under 2 (18month+) must be accompanied by an adult**

**Any further questions, queries or to organise a visit to our facility please don't hesitate to call: 01358 743335 and ask for Jenny or Joyce**

**FREE event  
on Saturday  
24<sup>th</sup> March  
9.30 to 12.30 at  
the Balmedie  
Leisure Centre**

# Balmedie NeedsYOU!

**Find Out About Balmedie  
Free Coffee Morning  
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Freebies**

Several new groups have been set up in the parish resulting from the Balmedie Views Project that was held a few years ago. Some of these groups are now experiencing an increase in the activity that they undertake and are desperately seeking new volunteers to enhance their development, often resulting in a better environment for you to live in and local activities to participate in.

A number of local groups and organisations such as Better Balmedie, The Christmas Lights Group, Belhelvie Banter, Balmedie House, The local library, Tarts & Crafts and the Community Council are all looking for new blood to help their group develop and grow.

**Volunteering in your community is very much based on the time commitment you can offer; no matter how much or how little time you can offer, your local community groups will be happy to look at how you can become involved.**

Support, advice and guidance will be available for anyone looking to volunteer and every effort given to ensure barriers are not in place to prevent you from volunteering.

**Please come along to our FREE event on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012 9.30 to 12.30 at the Balmedie Leisure Centre, for a fun filled morning, with activities for the children and free teas and coffees, there may also be a free buttry! You can see the hard work of your local groups as well as learn about any volunteer opportunities in the village.**

For more information, please contact **Mark Mitchell, Community Planning Officer on 01358 726406 or Annette Holland, Senior Community Worker, 01358 721946.**

***“Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them.”***

***Harriet Naylor, Volunteering Pioneer***



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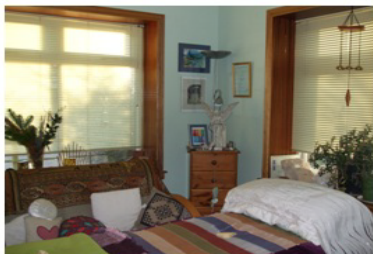
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Being a volunteer means doing a variety of jobs: cooking and baking a range of dishes, taking orders, working the till and selling crafts. The range of jobs is good experience when applying for college or any of the hospitality professions.

Excellent news!!!!!! We have a new coffee machine and we are pleased to be able to continue to serve Fair Trade products. We can now serve different types of coffees and teas. Come in and try something different. Starbucks watch out!!!!

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. We can also offer a gift wrapping service.

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Opportunities exist for Adults, both male & female, to train as Beaver Leaders, Scout Leaders and for those who wish to share their hobbies as Skills Instructors.

We currently cannot meet the demand for places at Beavers. Trainees will work alongside established leaders to gain the experience. Each Colony will have a minimum of three Leaders. If you think you can commit a regular 90 mins after school or early evening, get in touch and discuss it some more.

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 have a vacancy for a trainee Scout Leader on a Wednesday evening and some weekends. Trainees will work alongside established leaders.

Scouts are for Boys & Girls from age 10 and Explorers from 14.

We run two Cub Packs meeting on Mon & Tues evenings. Cubs are for Boys & Girls aged from 8 to 10 years. There are vacancies for new Cubs at our Monday Pack. To discuss either Leadership opportunities or to find out more about Scouts call us on **0774 384 4040** or email: **balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com**



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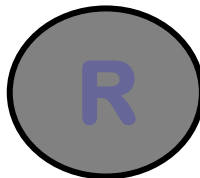
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## PARISH THREADS - "Aliens"- By Mary Cane



I have just driven through the Parish of Foveran on my way home, next stop Omarama, then Aviemore and over the Lindis Pass. I know, I know, I'm tricking you, because I am in the South Island of New Zealand, until Easter. For this issue and perhaps the next I shall be the Belhelvie Banter Foreign Correspondent (self appointed). We are spending the rest of the Aberdeenshire winter visiting our son who lives near Queenstown. The summer sun is shining and a little friendly fantail is squeaking in the Wisteria by the verandah. Apricots are ripening, cherries have been picked.

It's not just the place names that are familiar. Up here in Central Otago the 19th century settlers were from Scotland. One at least must have been from Foveran, since naming your new home after your old was one way of feeling less adrift. There are Community Councils here and a Presbyterian church. They drive on the left and everyone looks as if they could be your cousin with a suntan. Charmingly they have retained words we have dropped, in a sort of language Darwinism.... pottle for instance, the old word for half a gallon, tramping, meaning hiking and 'wilding' referring to a tree which is not indigenous, and superannuation whatever that was.

Around 150 years ago the council chairman was called Vincent, a Scot from south of Edinburgh. He asked the other council members to bring their suggestions for naming the many local creeks. Four weeks later, up came the item on the agenda. "Well let's have your suggestions." said he..... No hands went up and there must have been the usual hush as people remembered the request, but due to their busy pioneering lives it had slipped their minds. 'Right then,' he probably said in the universal chairman's tone, used to being proactive. 'This is what we are going to call them'... He then brought out a list of the burns from his area of Scotland. We live near one he named, the Luggate Burn, and the village of Luggate is named after it. It is now quite a bit larger than its namesake near East Linton.



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The climate is getting drier here, and there is talk of irrigation, failing boreholes and more hydro-electric schemes. The lakes are 30 miles long but the thirst of modern towns and agriculture is enormous. Long irrigation booms are on all day to make grass. Dairy cows have to be culled when the farm allocation of water has been used up. On the news, big dairy farms in the north island have been up for sale and there is interest from Chinese buyers. They are keen to have a good clean source of dairy products. The government here is caught in a difficult dilemma... to sell seems like losing control, to a not entirely trusted nation, but not to sell seems like racism, when there are German and American owners here already.

A local project we can help with, is removing the unwanted weeds brought over from Europe. Who would have thought that weeding could be such a useful transferable skill? Yesterday we went to a Working Bee down by the river to chop back Poplars and plant Otago native species like Manuka, the Tea Tree, and Harikiki the New Zealand Flax. They thrive in the dry soil here, which is perhaps why so many flax plants with their distinctive Kangaroo paws died in Aberdeen last winter. New Zealanders are very tired of cutting back thistles, gorse and willows that have done so well in the last century or two, and they loathe the rabbit. "Take 'em home with you when you go", they say, with a hint of coolness.

There is one more thread that links us to home. During Scottish dancing sessions in the Forsyth Hall before Christmas, we met a couple who astonished us by saying they owned a plot of land here in the village. Bought 10 years ago as a retirement project, yet to be started, the land now looks neglected. Geoff the Community chairman and fellow weeder, is happy that we bring news from the owners.

Now obviously you don't need a lesson in geography or the local politics of the South Island. You're not in a great mood, it's miserable weather and the only reason you are reading this, is because you are waiting for the kids to come out of school, or Football, or the Green hut, or your fish supper to come out of the Balmedie chippy. This rather tatty copy of the Banter which you have rescued from the foot-well of the car is all you have to read. Oh dear, bad luck... what can I say?

The Peter Jackson team is up in the mountains near here at the moment filming the Hobbit. Some local people are extras in the crowd scenes. If it succeeds like the previous films it may revitalize the Lord of the Rings tourism business here. When the film crew has gone, taking every scrap of scenery with them, enterprising bus drivers will rebrand themselves and their vehicles. They will invent little ceremonies on scenic hill sides with a sword and maybe a ring for enthusiasts to be photographed with, while shouting 'Gon-doorrr' into the wind.

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## **POTTERTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP**

At Potterton Community Centre

We are pleased to announce that Potterton Pre-School Playgroup will be kept open by Aberdeenshire Council. However it will NOT be on the list for placements in the 2012/2013 booklet. If you want a place at Potterton Pre-School Playgroup please tick Balmedie Nursery as your first choice and indicate your preference to the POTTERTON facility on the form and also when you hand in your form. If you choose Balmedie Nursery and it becomes full and you are unsuccessful in getting a place - do not despair, it is still a possibility for you to be placed at Potterton Pre-School Playgroup.

Potterton Pre-School Playgroup will hold formal links with Balmedie Primary School, under the management of Education, Learning and Leisure. This will ensure a very smooth transition from playgroup/nursery to P1.

Our discussions with Aberdeenshire Council began January 2010 when we circulated a petition and received 1100 signatures. We would like to thank everyone who has supported our on-going discussions and helped build a relationship between Potterton Pre-School Playgroup, Aberdeenshire Council and Balmedie School over the past 12 months – it has been a long process and tiring at times but definitely a positive experience all round. It was worth it to keep such an amazing establishment that is Potterton Pre-School Playgroup open.

We have commissioned places for 3 year olds and will accept children prior to this with a minimal fee. Children can stay at Potterton Pre-School Playgroup until they are 5 as we work very closely with a development worker to ensure that Rising 5's curriculum is followed. Children can develop and learn in a fun, friendly and safe environment.

### **POTTERTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP sessions are:**

**9.30-12noon Tuesday and Thursday**

**12.30-3pm Tuesday and Thursday**

**9.30-12noon Wednesday**

**A lunch time club does operate (at an additional cost) to enable a full day at playgroup on a Tuesday and Thursday.**

**Any further questions, queries or to organise a visit to our facility please don't hesitate to call: 01358 743335 and ask for Jenny/Joyce or Jo**



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

We're just back from the Christmas holidays and already the prelims are looming for the Rangers! To get prepared, we're having a study night where the girls are going to try to help each other out with problematic questions from the exams. I might help out too on the science questions since I'm a physicist! We're also working on a science challenge badge which might involve anything from the history of science to making lip balm depending on what the Rangers fancy doing. It's not all work though as the girls are going to organise a pyjama party one night, and a bowling night to end the term with.

I thought I should add a few words about Rangers in general as not everyone is familiar with them. Being a Ranger is the next step on from Guides (although you don't have to have been a Guide or a Brownie before, to join). Any woman aged 14 to 26 years old is welcome to join us. The Rangers plan their own programme and there are many challenges that they can choose to work on that look great on a CV. We meet fortnightly on Thursdays in Potterton.

If you are interested in joining us as a member or as a helper, then drop me an email or give me a phone. **Susan 01224 703335 s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk**

## **BELHELVIE BOWLING CLUB**

Belhelvie Bowling Green is due to open on 21st April 2012 for yet another season of exciting outdoor bowling. Why not come along and give it a try? Recently retired or maybe have a spare evening or two - get in touch. Everyone starts somewhere - no experience necessary.

For further information please contact **Marion Donald**, Secretary **01358 723126**  
[marion.donald@btinternet.com](mailto:marion.donald@btinternet.com)

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## FORMARTINE POLICE

is informed by understanding what communities need through consulting, listening, responding and providing feedback. Your local priorities were:

- 1. Anti Social Behaviour** particularly around vandalism and antisocial driving.
- 2. Speeding** within your areas.
- 3. Community Focus**, a visible police presence was important within communities

### **What we have done so far:**

On 2 November, an officer from Ellon provided an input at the Parent Forum at Ellon Academy to provide an overview of the close working relationship that exists between staff and pupils and the Police. The input included information about parents' responsibilities in terms of trying to ensure their children were not involved in anti social activities in the community. There were many positive comments about the 'Midnight Football' events that have been promoted and run by the local Police and Community Learning and Development Staff and were hailed as good examples of 'youth diversionary' activities. In addition, the 'Text a Cop' facility that exists at Ellon Academy was also praised. This facility allows pupils to text or call a mobile phone that is carried by a local officer who is well known to the pupils and staff at the school. A similar facility also exists at Turriff Academy.

Operation Caine was launched in the late summer in Turriff to deter underage drinking, youth disorder and vandalism. During the course of the operation, numerous young people in Turriff were spoken to. The majority of them were not, however involved in any anti social behaviour. Licensed premises were also visited. A total of 48 cans of beer, 4 bottles of spirits and a small amount of cannabis resin were recovered. In addition one young man was searched and found in possession of a knife.

I have mentioned several times, in the Banter, that regular contact is maintained between Formartine Councillors and myself. I can tell you that following complaints of speeding in Belhelvie a total of 8 hours of speed enforcement has taken place by my officers at various times of the day and days of the week in order to deter this. Very few 'speeders' were actually caught and given 'speeding tickets' but numerous drivers were spoken to. During the course of the operation one person was caught drink driving.

Police Surgeries at Balmedie and Belhelvie were attended by one of the Mid Formartine Councillors, which emphasises our joint working approach. These surgeries are not very well attended by members of the public despite them being advertised in the media and by local Community Councils. However, as they form part of the Formartine Community Plan, they will continue in the future.

As is normally the case in your Parish, it is a safe place to be. **Inspector Steve Pratt**



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## THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS

There has been more gold found in Belhelvie than you would think. There have been two attempts at mining for gold and silver in or near the Parish; firstly, at Overhill Farm, just west of Belhelvie; and secondly at Hill of Minnes near Foveran, just north of the Parish. Both were excavated by shafts to a depth of some 3 fathoms (18 ft) in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but no surface traces remain now. The old miners had the right idea, in that there is a massive volcanic intrusion extending from Belhelvie to Foveran, but the gold content of the rocks is minute, never forming commercial deposits. When I recounted the story of the mines to the owner of the Alpaca farm at Menie, who recently featured in Banter, he noted that he finds traces of fine gold in the filters of his water well. It sounds as if it is alluvial gold being washed down off the Grampians during the Ice Age. Again it is not commercial, unless you are prepared to dig most of the dunes between Blackdog and Newburgh!

The real gold in the Parish was found not by miners, but by archaeologists. A series of Bronze Age tombs at Cothill, North of Balmedie have been opened to reveal twisted gold wire torcs or necklaces. One is preserved in the cabinets at the Marischal College Museum, while two are in the National Museum Collections in Edinburgh. They date from approximately 1500 B.C. and probably arrived in the area through trade with Ireland.



You can check out the hundreds of archaeological artefacts in the parish, by using the search facility for Belhelvie in the following website. Everything from Stone Age axe-heads to shipwrecks can be found here. [Canmore.rcahms.gov.uk](http://Canmore.rcahms.gov.uk)

### **I. Jenkins**

The Council has a new web based fault reporting system to enable the public to report street lighting (and other road faults) [http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/report\\_it.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/report_it.asp) An important feature is that it will show defects already reported. Not on the Web? telephone - Contact Centre on: 08456 081205 or Text message to: TEXTSHIRE: 07624 802 722 To help ensure that the issue is directed to the correct person it is helpful if the message is prefixed by the defect type (e.g Road, Light, Bridge).

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## CHARITY CORNER



An event which raises money for charity and takes place along our beautiful coastline is the Sandwalk. The event has been run for the last five years by the Rotary clubs of Aberdeen, Balgownie and Ellon (you can read more about the Rotary Club in this edition of the Banter).

Two of the four recipients of the monies raised have been featured previously in our charity corner, CHAS and CLAN. This edition features another of the charities that has benefitted from this event, Erskine.

Erskine is a charity which was set up in 1916 to care for the wounded of the Great War. Some felt that once the war ended in 1918, the charity had served its purpose – how wrong they were. There are five Erskine homes which look after veterans of all ages from those in their twenties to those in their nineties and beyond. All have served their country in some way in various campaigns from WWII through conflicts in the Falklands, the Gulf, Bosnia and Iraq and now need support and care. The foundation of Erskine's principle is the importance of treating residents as individuals with differing pasts, varying needs in the present time but looking towards positive futures.

Each year, Erskine cares for nearly 1380 ex-Service personnel at their five modern care homes across Scotland's Central Belt; three in and around the town of Erskine in the west of Scotland, one in the centre of Glasgow and one in Edinburgh. The home in Edinburgh has a twelve bed unit manned by Ministry of Defence doctors specifically for convalescing Service men and women.

Care is also provided via the Erskine Bursary Care scheme at private nursing homes in Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness. These homes offer long-term residential, respite and dementia nursing care to ex-Service men and women of all ages with a broad range of care needs, including those who are relatively fit and mentally active and those suffering from severe physical and mental disabilities. Erskine strives to provide all equipment and therapy required to ensure each resident can enjoy the best quality of life, whilst maximising their independence and encouraging social interaction and communication. In addition, we also provide employment for disabled and ex-Service personnel in our Garden Centre, Pine Workshop, Print workshop and Conference Centre and housing for 56 families in our veterans' cottages.

We depend upon charitable donations and can only provide our high quality care services with the commitment of our donors, their family, friends and work colleagues. Charitable income provides on-site services in our Homes such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, recreational activities and outings,





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dentistry, podiatry, hairdressing and more – all of which has a huge positive impact on the quality of life of our residents.

If you feel that you can help in any way we would be delighted to hear from you. We are looking for people to train as volunteer speakers, to form committees, to manage collecting cans and to take part in fundraising events. We have Charity Assured places available in the Baker Hughes Aberdeen 10K on 20<sup>th</sup> May and in the Baxter's Loch Ness Marathon on 30<sup>th</sup> September. If you feel that you can help in any way, please do get in touch I'd be delighted to hear from you. You can contact me at [catherine.cowie@erskine.org.uk](mailto:catherine.cowie@erskine.org.uk) Tel: 01561 361313, mob: 07811 326206

### **BELHELVE SWRI**

I'm keeping fingers crossed this weather continues, no meetings cancelled yet, it certainly makes life much easier. We had a successful December meeting with Ann Prentice and her daughter from Blankie Brooches giving a demonstration on her craft. (She had a table at the Fayre in the Forsyth Hall last October). January's meeting was an early Burn's night with the traditional haggis, neeps and mashed tatties followed by shortie biscuits. 15 ladies enjoyed the evening.

**Why don't you come along to one of our evenings? The total number of SWRI members is very much in decline BUT with your help we could boost the numbers in this area. You would be made very welcome.**

On March 10th the Ellon Group Show (9 Institutes) takes place in the Victoria Hall, Ellon. Judging of exhibits is in the morning and doors are open to the public in the afternoon, you don't have to be a member. Come along and see the many crafts, produce, bulbs and flower arranging. Look out for the Posters in the local shops. I can be contacted on **01358 743173** or go on to the SWRI website [www.swri.org.uk](http://www.swri.org.uk) for more information. **Elaine Strachan**

### **BALMEDIE CRAFT CLUB**

We started back Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January when we made our spoon puppets and spoon fairies. So far we have also designed our own puzzle and a woollen god's eye. Over the next few weeks we will include crafts for Mother's Day, Easter and lots more. We welcomed all the children back after Christmas with one or two new members. We meet at Balmedie School every Thursday (term times) at 7.30pm. All school-aged children welcome.

**Catherine 01358 743114**

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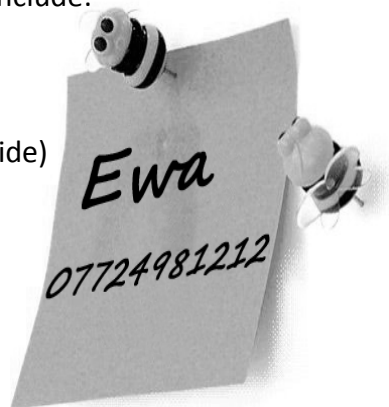
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## BELHELVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

In the past year we have endeavoured to act on your behalf to make our villages better, safer and more attractive places to live in and with your help in the coming year we can further develop these aims.

2011 saw a number of developments and changes in the villages with new houses being built and the completion of the Jesmond Gospel Mission Hall in Balmedie. They have very kindly donated £1000 to Balmedie as a mark of gratitude to the villagers for the inconvenience caused during the construction work and it has been agreed that we will purchase a couple of benches to be placed at locations around the village for the benefit of the villagers.

The past year also saw the removal of 'Tabletop Mountain' which formed part of Easter Hatton Landfill Site and the work on the topography of this area is now nearing completion with grass now visible on the contours. On the opposite side of the dual carriageway at Wester Hatton the operators' appeal for an extension to 2023 has been refused and restoration work will now have to take place.

We are hopeful of being able to add new members to our ranks to allow us to continue our work on your behalf. We welcome comments and suggestions from the public which can be done by attending one of our meetings or by writing to us (see notice boards for details).

**Wishart McBride**

**Secretary.**

## BALMEDIE GALA

The 2012 Balmedie Gala will take place on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> June.

The village gala has been running since the mid 1980s and has been a major event on the village calendar. The current committee have now had two very successful galas and we hope to improve again this year with new events and stalls. Unfortunately, the weather has let us down but our investment in a marquee for the last gala was well received and we will be using this again in June.

As yet, we do not have a final figure to report on our finances but are confident that we will be able to make donations to a number of worthy causes. So far we have made a gift of £200 each to Balmedie House and The Friendship Club and £150 to Primary 4, 5 & 6 football teams towards the cost of equipment.

It is hoped to aim the 5-a-side football at primary ages and we have been able to obtain the help of Paul Smith & David Lorimar who have experience in organising such tournaments. The other major part of our gala is the raffle and this year we have an amazing prize of a round of golf for two at Trump Golf Scotland.

The success of our galas depend on the help of volunteers to plan and stage the event. If you would be willing to join the committee please contact **Wishart McBride Tel: 01358 742884 e-mail: [wishart@wishart21.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:wishart@wishart21.orangehome.co.uk)**

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<b>Scottish Water (Water Supplies and Emergencies)</b>	<b>0845 601 8855</b>
<b>Electricity</b>	<b>0800300 999</b>
<b>NHS 24 (Calls from 6pm to 8am)</b>	<b>08454 24 24 24</b>

<b>COUNCIL</b>	
Aberdeenshire (General Enquiries)	0845 608 1207
Cllr Gifford	01651 869493
Cllr Hendry	01358 743091
Cllr Johnston	01651 851198
Cllr Loveday	01651 872591
Balmedie Library	01358 742045
Eigie House	01358 743506
Community Centres - Bookings (Belhelvie and Potterton)	01358 727910
Balmedie Leisure Centre	01358 743725

<b>CHURCHES</b>	
Church of Scotland (Rev Paul McKeown)	01358 742227
Congregational Church (Rev. Andy Cowie)	01224 703248
Catholic Church (Parish Office)	01224 626359

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Emergency Contact	0870 054 1999 PIN 011020
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Emergency Contact	0870 054 4999 PIN 021290
Ellon Academy	01358 720715
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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### March

Sun 11	Communion	Belhelvie Church	11am
Tues 13	Friendship Group	Amy Wilson & Co Eigie House	2pm
Wed 14	SWRI(Rural)	Mini Rural Show Eigie House	7.30pm
Sun 18	Better Balmedie	Willow Fencing W/shop Poly Tunnel	TBC
Mon 19	Belhelvie Community Council		7.30pm
Sat 24	Balmedie NEEDS YOU!	Leisure Centre	9.30am
Tues 27	Friendship Group	Living in New Orleans S. Craggs Eigie Ho.	2pm
Wed 28	SWRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 29	Better Balmedie Meet Beach Rangers	Balmedie Sch	7.30pm
Fri 30	School Term ends	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy	

### April

Thurs 5	Maundy Thursday Service	Belhelvie Church	7.30pm
Fri 6	Good Friday Service	Holyrood Chapel Newburgh	7.30pm
Sun 8	Easter Sunday Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
Tues 10	Friendship Group	Bingo Eigie house	2pm
Wed 11	SWRI Rural AGM	Eigie House	7.30pm
Mon 16	Aberdeen Holiday		
Tues 17	School Term begins	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy	
Sat 21	Belhelvie Bowling Club	reopens for the season	
Tues 24	Friendship group	Entertainment Eigie House	2pm
Wed 25	SWRI (Rural) Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 26	Better Balmedie – Butterflies and Moths	Balmedie Sch	7.30pm
Sat 28	Better Balmedie Litter pick	Poly tunnel Leisure centre	10am
Sat 28	Potterton Playgroup	Spring Fayre	10am-1pm
Sat 28	Belhelvie Church Social	Sponsored Walk-Christian Aid	Forvie Sands

### May

Mon 7	May Day holiday	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy off	
Tues 8	Friendship Group	Cambus O'May Cheese Co Eigie House	2pm
Wed 9	SWRI (Rural)	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tues 22	Friendship Group	Cruden Singers Eigie House	2pm
Wed 23	SWRI (Rural) Whist	last for season Eigie house	7.30pm
Sat 26	Better Balmedie Plant sale	Poly Tunnel, Leisure Centre	10am
Wed 29	"The Gaitherin"	Belhelvie Church	7.30pm

### June

Fri 1	Belhelvie Church Social	Concert Forsyth Hall	
Tues 5	Queen's Jubilee Holiday	All schools off	
Tues 5	Friendship Group	Beetle Drive Eigie House	2pm
Sat 9	Balmedie Gala		

