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THE BETTER BALMEDIE CALENDAR

The Better Balmedie Group is planning to create a sensory garden within the village starting next year. In order to raise funds to achieve this goal a calendar has been produced depicting local scenes and events which took place in 2012; ranging from snow-clad dunes to Jubilee celebrations and to a Christmas robin. As can be seen from the cover of this issue the calendar will make an ideal gift for anyone with an interest in the village. Many folks in the area raised children who have moved away to various locations both in this country and abroad. The gift of a calendar will invoke many happy childhood memories for them. Purchases may be made in many outlets within the village including the Co-op, Dickie's Pharmacy, the Leisure Centre, Library, Tarts & Crafts, Whitehorse Inn, Balmedie Fish & Chips, Parkhill Garden Centre and at various events on the run up to Christmas.

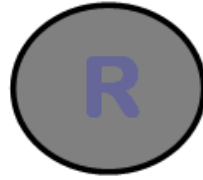
It is hoped that the garden will be formed of raised beds set out with plants of colour, structure, texture and scent linked by footpaths suitable for wheelchair use so that it may be enjoyed by all members of the community. Due to our coastal location one bed could reflect beach flora while a major, solar-powered water feature could provide a soothing setting on hot summer days. By stretching the imagination, a Japanese-style area could be included; the possibilities are endless. A sitting area will enable folks to relax and enjoy the peace and beauty surrounding them.

Thanks are due to the twenty four local businesses who sponsored the calendar and to all of you who have bought, or will buy, a copy. Without you this proposal would not happen.

Alan Jeffrey

ROBERT LAMB

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BALMEDIE BEAVER SCOUTS - “OUR SPORTING ADVENTURE”



In January 2012, Scout Groups were set a challenge of taking part in an Olympic inspired competition to earn “medals” following a programme of activities based on the Olympic and Paralympic values of Respect, Excellence, Friendship, Courage, Determination, Inspiration and Equality.

Balmedie Beaver Scouts entered the competition which led us to spend 9 months taking part in a wide range of exciting activities through clambering up sand dunes, crate climbing, scrambling over rope bridges and some long distance hikes. We climbed the equivalent of Mount Olympus. We made stools out of rolled up newspaper (one actually supported the weight of a Beaver!), experienced painting the Sistine Chapel (upside down painting), went camping at Haddo, tried archery, followed trails, built towers and cooked on fires. We finished with a Healthy Eating Competition where the boys prepared pasta in tomato sauce and fruit kebabs for parents and judges to sample. The judges declared the competition a draw and awarded a Gold Medal to all the Beavers.

Out of the 1412 Scout Groups across Britain that registered for the challenge Balmedie Beavers finished in 39th position – a great achievement.

Elaine Neil Beaver Leader

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CHRISTMAS COMES...YET AGAIN!

It is rapidly approaching, there are decorations and displays appearing in the shops, yes it is Christmas time again! Has it really been a year? Has the waistline recovered from last year? Don't worry; I am not going to nag again. I am sure that you all know not to overindulge too much and to try and stay active despite the weather, so I thought I would go off at a tangent.

We are all familiar with the original Christmas story, and the gifts given by the Three Wise Men to the baby Jesus, but did you know of the medicinal properties of gold, frankincense and myrrh? Mistletoe has had quite a bit of publicity recently, so I thought I would throw some light on these original Christmas gifts.

Gold is well known to all as a beautiful captivating metal, valued by all civilisations due to its rarity and ease with which it can be worked into jewellery. Already I realise that as well as a hopefully informative piece, I am giving present ideas as well!!

Some ancient cultures regarded gold as having healing properties as it was pure and rare. Unfortunately the hopes of these ancient cultures were misplaced as gold is chemically inert and if ingested will pass through unaltered. Therefore this only results in rather expensive motions, and a whole new way to pan for gold!

Gold salts, which are red in colour, are used as medicines. Injections of sodium aurothiomalate are used in the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) as it is an anti-inflammatory, and helps modify the course of the underlying disease process.

Frankincense is an aromatic resin harvested from trees. For the gardeners and botanists among you, the trees are from the genus *Boswellia*, particularly *Boswellia sacra*. The tree bark is cut and the resin that oozes out is collected. It is used in perfume and incense, the latter by many faiths in religious ceremonies. Mixed with oils it is also used to anoint people.

The resin is also edible, but only if the resin is clear and transparent. This has been used for centuries in India as a medicine for arthritis, and there is some modern work showing activity in the treatment of both osteoarthritis (OA) and RA. Some work has also been done in the treatment of ulcerative colitis and there is some tentative research showing anti-cancer activity.

Myrrh is another aromatic resin, again obtained from a tree. The *Commiphora myrrha* tree, again for the green-fingered, is one of the most important, and again its bark is cut and the oozing resin harvested. Sadly neither of the trees I've mentioned is likely to grow well in our frigid climate, so you're stuck with jewellery as a present idea!

It has a long history of use as a perfume, incense in religious ritual and as a medicine. In this respect it is similar to frankincense, and indeed the two are often mixed.

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Medicinally myrrh has long been used in traditional Chinese medicine for arthritic and circulatory problems. In Western medicine it has uses as an antiseptic in mouthwashes, toothpastes and to help prevent gum disease. It also can be used in liniments and salves that can be applied to abrasions and minor skin ailments. Myrrh also has pain killing properties, and there is some research exploring the way it works and to see if this could have applications as a medicine.

In Kuwait myrrh gums have been used to help lower blood sugar and it has been shown to lower cholesterol, although this is not likely to come to wide use as statins are so effective.

Therefore you can see that the Three Wise Men were well named as their gifts were not only very valuable but very useful! I do hope that your presents will be equally useful and valued as well.

As you head off into the maelstrom that is Christmas shopping try and leave plenty time so that you are not too rushed and don't feel too stressed. It is all too easy to get into a rut at this time of year and end up feeling fed up, hassled and out of pocket. Do try and enjoy yourself and pace yourself so you don't end up a frazzled heap.

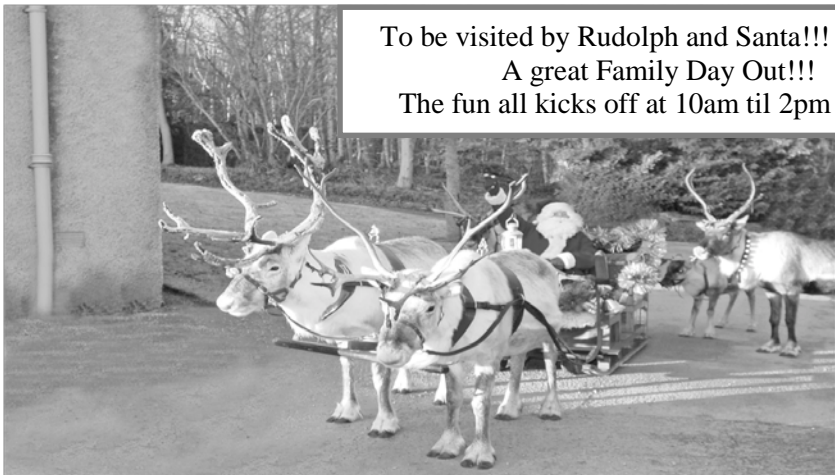
The Wise Men may be credited with the original Christmas gifts, but they did take their time and gave one each, maybe that's a good lesson for all of us!!

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year.

Dr. Alasdair Forbes

SANTA TO VISIT THE WHITE HORSE INN.

Christmas Farmers' Market and Craft Fayre, Saturday 15th December



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1ST BELHELVIE RANGERS

After our active Olympics-themed activities last term, we're taking a much more relaxed approach before Christmas. Each Ranger is currently working on a craft of their choice. Hopefully, before the holidays, the Rangers will be showing off their newly knitted scarves, fingerless gloves, and hand sewn skirts. Perhaps not the skirt; it is winter after all! And of course we will be having the Christmas party.

The Chills and Skills indoor weekend in October was a great success. We did some community action and built bird boxes, cooked our tea on open fires, stayed fit for life with orienteering and mocktail making, and made some lace candles with wax and ice.

After Christmas we'll be tackling the Millennium Development Goals Challenge where we're going to try to change the world. The Rangers will of course be choosing and planning all the activities themselves.

Rangers are for women aged 14-26 years old. You don't have to have been in Guiding before to join us and you can come and try out a few weeks first if you are not sure if it is for you. If you are over 18 years, you might like to join us as a helper (but you still get to take part in all the activities and chocolate eating). Duke of Edinburgh volunteers are also welcome.

We meet fortnightly on a Thursday in Potterton. We charge £3 per night Please get in touch if you are interested in joining as a member or as a helper.

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

FANCY STARTING A BELHELVIE WALKING GROUP?

Are you one of the many who say they would easily get more exercise by walking if they had someone to walk with?



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Services

*** Christmas Opening Hours: Closed 25 and 26 December 2012
Closed 1 and 2 January 2013 Open all other days as normal

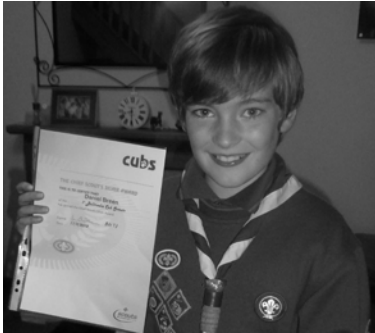
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CUB NEWS AUTUMN 2012

The Balmedie cub section remains in glowing health with 42 boys and girls spread between the two packs. Two cubs have recently become only the 2nd and 3rd cubs in the Group to receive the Chief Scout's Silver Award Badge, the highest award available to this section. Our heartfelt congratulations go to

Daniel Breen and **Matthew Sinclair** for all their hard work.



28 boys and two girls joined with the leaders in a weekend Olympic theme camp at Daviot District campground in late September. A late night campfire and cinema style showing of "Cool Runnings" with popcorn ensured that the cubs were suitably tired out by the time they were returned to parents. Cub leader Alison Warren gained a well-earned camping warrant from the District Examiner, demonstrating a flair for organising cubs and leaders.

One of our leaders, Ivor Jenkins, gained a long service award from the District Commissioner for 15 years of service to the Scout Organisation. Ivor assures us that he became a leader during primary school and that the grey hair is a genetic condition, unrelated to running cub meetings. We are investigating this claim in more detail.

Lesley Cruickshank Cub Leader.

Ed. Note: I believe Mr Thomson, District Commissioner, is to be congratulated on his 20 year award. **A.J.**

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OLYMPICS 2012

This summer I went to the Olympics, I went to two events, football and athletics. First we went to see the Mexico vs Senegal football match at Wembley, Mexico won 4-2 in extra time and they went on to win the gold medal, beating Brazil in the final.

The stadium was absolutely huge and there were over 80,000 people at the match. The Mexican supporters were in their national outfits and we sat next to their biggest supporter, she had a Mexican flag painted on her face, the Mexican flag round her shoulders and was always singing and shouting loudly. There were lots of Mexican waves and chanting, it was an amazing experience.

Four days later I went to the athletics. The stadium was in the Olympic park and everyone was excited, the volunteers were everywhere and they were singing and laughing, which made everyone else smile.

The stadium was massive, the Olympic flame was at the far end just beside the hammer throw cage and we had great seats only five rows from the front. The 5000m start, long jump and pole vault were all just in front of us so we had a great view.



We got to see the decathlon 100m, long jump, shot putt, women's hammer throw, men's pole vault, women's 800m and men's 5000m.

My favourite part was watching Mo Farah running in the 5000m; the entire crowd stood up and started cheering when he came on the track. They cheered for everyone but the Great Britain athletes got the most support.

Another highlight was when a pole vault snapped when the athlete took off – a tiny chunk flew off and it almost hit us!

My brother was fascinated by the remote control minis which collected the hammers and took them back to the hammer cage. The people in control of them were volunteers from two local schools - they thought they had the best job at the park. It was a great experience to go to the Olympics – it was lots of fun and I'll never forget it.

By Lauren Breen





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3RD BELHELVIE BROWNIES (POTTERTON)



We have just returned from a very busy weekend away at Fyvie. Our theme was the Madagascar films, we travelled the World like the zoo animals did in the films. After settling in, making our beds and unpacking our bags, putting all our clothes in drawers, we got very busy with our activities and food preparation. We decorated baseball hats, made our own pizzas, made fruit salad, cooked pancakes, made shrinkies, explored the village writing a list of anything interesting, played in the swing park and gave ourselves hair raising hair styles.

We also did our World Traveller badge. For that we had to make passports, make postcards, learn about the letters to show which countries different cars come from and learn to count and say “hello, goodbye and thank you” in a foreign language. We also had to pack a small bag with things we needed to stay at a friend’s for 1 night. Some of us took the Brownie Holiday badge; we had to join in with everything which needed doing on the holiday. This meant we had to wash dishes, help cook, set tables, make our beds and help clean the loos and sinks. Brownies who had been away before took their Advanced Brownie holiday Badge. They had to organise activities for us all to do, so we tried limbo, we played board games which the brownies had made up and we did short plays about Madagascar 1, 2 or 3.

Every Brownie said they really enjoyed it and were really glad they came.

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**



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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Members of Belhelvie Community Council were invited to visit Trump International Golf Links at Menie Estate to see the development at first hand. On Saturday 1st September, five members of the Community Council – Ian Edwards, Richard Miller, Andrew Robertson, Malcolm Ross and Alan Smith went along for what proved to be an interesting and enjoyable morning's tour. It begun with a 'working breakfast' in the club-house, when the story of the complex's development was related by Jack McGuire, Golf Co-ordinator at the centre. Members were then invited to ask questions on any aspects of it. Following this, we were taken on an extensive tour of the 18 hole course in golf-carts and all were impressed with the natural features incorporated in its conception. Members of the public are welcome to visit the development and enjoy refreshments/food in the clubhouse. We were also informed that the developers intend creating wooden boardwalks so that people will be able to access the beach from the car park.

ADS

Some interesting things we learned included:

- The course is almost 2.9 miles long from North to South and covers approximately 600 acres
- Over ten million individual sprigs of Marram grass were planted on the course
- There are ninety-five bunkers on the course
- There are eighteen bunkers on the 18th hole
- The highest tee box on the golf course stands over 36 metres above sea level



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BELHELVIE SWRI (RURAL)

We are well into our Autumn session and back into Eigie House after its refurbishment. The November meeting is our Birthday Month and this year we are having a meal in the Sand Dollar Cafe on the Esplanade in Aberdeen. The December meeting is back in the warmth of Eigie House the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7-30pm. Easy access for the less able and plenty parking on the street. **YOU WOULD BE MADE VERY WELCOME.** We try to have a varied syllabus that would interest most ladies. See Dates for your Diary (back cover) Come along and give us a try - a cuppa and cake awaits. **Look for the yellow posters in the local shops at Potterton and Balmedie.** For further information please call **Elaine Strachan, 01358 743173**

MARY'S MACMILLAN FUNDRAISING COFFEE MORNING

I am reliably informed that the last guests at Homestead, Whitecairns left around 11.00pm. Not that they had been there since Mary and Hebbie opened their doors around 10.00am - rather they were the last in a day-long procession of kind folks who donated a staggering £1623 to the Macmillan Funds.

NO matter at what time of day you arrived, the lounge was packed, the kitchen was 'steerin', the table groaned under an endless supply of home bakes and the tea and coffee pots were constantly being topped-up by Mary's willing helpers. The sound of silence must have been bliss after the many catch-up conversations which took place during that long day. Same time next year? A.J.

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EASTER CRAIGIE, DECOY AIRFIELD

Harestone Moss just outside Whitecairns at first glance is a large gorse area, with some fields scattered around it used for cattle grazing. However, in the early days of World War II, this area was a key, secret position crucial to the defence of RAF Dyce (now Aberdeen Airport).

Early in the war, Colonel Sir John Turner was placed in charge of the British decoy and deception programme. This programme was to create decoys to lure the Germans into attacking sites of no military value or deceiving them into believing that what they saw, in aerial reconnaissance photos, was real.

Easter Craigie, which is located in the North west edge of Harestone Moss was one of Turner's decoys. A decoy airfield, or 'Q'; Site as it was known, was built here to draw the Luftwaffe into bombing Harestone Moss instead of the airfield 5 miles away at RAF Dyce.

Decoy airfields were located up and down the country, generally in land that was unfit for farming and that was not near areas that people could see what it was or its purpose.

The site has a small bunker, where a generator was located along with an area to support two personnel. This bunker provided the power for a decoy flare path, that would, at night, be mistaken for a runway. In addition to the flare path, a small signal lamp at the bunker was used and rotated through 180 degrees to simulate an aircraft turning.

There were procedures laid down for use of the airfield, the ways and times that lights were to be dimmed and when to use the signal lamp. The big question was would it work?

Official records shows Harestone Moss was bombed on 3 occasions, 3rd of August 1940, 3rd of November 1940 and 18th July 1941. It is possible that the 15 High Explosive bombs (1 of which didn't explode) and the 20 Incendiary bombs that fell near Tillyeve on the 1st of October 1940, may have been targeting the decoy. The accuracy of bombing in WW2 leaves that possibility. Other bombs fell in the area in 1940 that could be possibly been targeted at the decoy.

The value of the decoy airfield, will never really be known, the lives it saved in drawing attacks away from RAF Dyce and saving civilians in houses that could have been bombed in Aberdeen. Following the last major raid in Aberdeen in 1943, the decoys were slowly decommissioned.

World War II memories from people in the area are now getting scarcer and scarcer. The prisoner of war camp in Pitmedden, the Royal Observer Corp hut at Udney Station and the flash bomb at Udney Green are all being forgotten about. The Anti-Tank traps at Newburgh are slowly rusting away, and the regular finding of unexploded ordnance is getting fewer and fewer.

Alan Stewart

I am delighted to hear from **Mr Alan Stewart** "I have spent the best part of a year now trawling through the national Archives in Kew and the Civil defence documents in Aberdeen, so have built up quite a knowledge on WW2 in the area, specifically about air raids. The Decoy is mentioned a couple of times (with no real detail) in a book called "Fields of Deception"

If you have any recollections, or WW2 stories etc, please email acstewart@yahoo.co.uk



Harestone Moss lying towards West, the bunker is close to Easter Craigie Farm, the Bomb craters are at the NW corner of the steading at Parkseat. The Flare path flighting ran parallel to the north side of the Orrock road. The Bunker entrance is also shown on the picture.

CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone, of which Richie Ramsay, PGA European Tour Player is a Patron, provides care and support in the community to enable children, young people and adults with disabilities and other support needs to enjoy a valued life. Cornerstone celebrated its 30th birthday in 2010 after being founded in 1980 by Nick Baxter who brought together parents and professionals concerned by the lack and quality of services available to people with learning disabilities and their families. It has grown to support over 1200 people each year, providing a wide range of services to people with a variety of needs, including, but not limited to, those with learning or physical disabilities, people with head injuries, children with special needs and people with dementia. These services include approximately 197 residential and supported accommodation sites with a staff of around 1300.

Cornerstone Direct is one service provided which helps people to remain independent at home. It provides help with personal care and day to day tasks along with companionship. Short breaks and respite are also provided across Scotland to help meet needs of individuals and their carers in purpose-built facilities.

'Shared Lives and Short Breaks' is another area of support provided. It gives a placement for adults with disabilities within a family home with a placement carer, enabling increased integration within the community. Cornerstone also provides support to children and families who are experiencing difficulties through a fostering service.

There is a new Health & Safety project supported by Talisman Energy with the character 'Keep Safe Joe' which helps people with disabilities identify food and fire hazards and safety advice for in the home.

There are monthly Aberdeen discos held in the Beach Ballroom, some with a seasonal theme e.g. Halloween or Christmas.

Cornerstone continues to support local people with its work but requires volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds to help enhance the lives of those people supported by the charity. Why not consider offering a few hours a week as it could change someone else's life and enhance yours at the same time? No special skills are required but you do need to complete an application and will be subject to a Disclosure check.

If you are interested in helping this worthwhile cause please contact:

Alison McPherson

Atholl House

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Aberdeen AB11 6LT

TEL : 01224 256000

Email: alison.mcpherson@cornerstone.org.uk

Note: if you are aged over 50 you can hear more about this charity at the talk at the Friendship Group in Egie House on 12th February 2013 @ 2 pm



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BELHELVIE YOUNG FARMERS CLUB

In 1948, the area organiser, Miss Wilson, held a formation meeting in the Belhelvie Green Hut to discuss the proposal of beginning a local young farmers club, as there was a very healthy number of young people within the farming sector. Belhelvie Junior Agricultural Club was formed, comprising of thirty to forty members.

In recent years the Club have enjoyed many successes in a range of activities, from winning the District Entertainments in October 2011 and being placed for the Agri Skills Competitions to receiving second place for The Forestry Commission's Pole Climbing Challenge and representing Belhelvie in the Junior Stockmanship Programme at The Royal Highland Show in 2012.

The experience of Young Farmers is exhilarating as Belhelvie participate in many other great opportunities. As a Young Farmer, you will be given a huge choice of events to suit every taste. Netball, rugby and football teams are starting to emerge at a high level and the all-time-favourite Tug Of War never fails to attract a fantastic crowd, for both male and female teams. Members within our district will also represent the North East at the Royal Welsh Show 2013 in the Young Farmers Sheep Shearing Category. For the less sporty members, ploughing matches are always very popular, along with clay pigeon shooting competitions and assorted stockjudging events. The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs is healthy and thriving and has a treasured place at every Summer Agricultural Show across the season. On display are the hard graft and skills of many young women (and men!) in the Industrial Sections, showcasing everything from jams, Victoria sponges and vol au vents to cross stitch, wine bottle holders and sewn garments - all demonstrating the diverse abilities of the members.

Fortnightly meetings have seen Belhelvie Young Farmers visit various local farms, which specialise in all sectors of the farming industry, Ravenhill at Dyce for a machinery valuation, ACE Winches and Aberdeen Grain to learn more about the vast and exciting countryside around us. One of Belhelvie's members also visited Texas on an exchange trip for two weeks, learning the differences of farming methods outside our country, highlighting the great international opportunities. Belhelvie also hosted a New Zealand exchange, Tryphena Carter, for a week in July, proudly showing her what Scotland and the North-East has to offer.

The social aspect of Young Farmers is invaluable, meeting hundreds of other young people across the region. Belhelvie hosts their annual Dinner and Dance in early March and also the popular Boxing Day Disco. All our members learn new skills, develop their strengths and, of course, have lots of fun!

For further information, or how to join, please contact Secretary, Amy Jo Reid, on: 01358 742 450 or ajreid.hfm@hotmail.co.uk we hope to see you soon! **Amy Jo Reid**

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IT'S THAT SEASON AGAIN

The prickly evergreen Holly and the twining Ivy are forever linked in our Winter folklore and songs. You know the usual ones but there is also:

*Holly with his merry men
They can daunce in hall
Ivy and her jentell women
Cannot daunce at all.*

Well there you are then... men will dance and women must watch. The Holly was king and Ivy his gentle lady. Our early images of Father Christmas look very like the



Holly King of olden times, but Ivy has all but slipped away. We have forgotten that the Ivy umbels cast beautiful starry shadows against the wall and the druid mistletoe has crept into our decorations instead.

So 'tis the season again...have you thought where you will be getting your Holly branches to ward off the evil spirits this Christmas? What about ordering the dried fruit from the grocer and grating the beef suet for the pudding? Ladies, perhaps you have nearly finished making your Christmas gifts and your husband is carving or whittling the toys for the family. You haven't? Oh yes, that's because you are living in 21st century Belhelvie not a hundred years ago.

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My goodness the shops stretch the season now don't they? Sometimes I think my eyes will bleed if I see one more sparkly blue plastic snowflake or cheery Santa. To use a modern idiom, the midwinter festival has well and truly 'Jumped the Shark'? So many extraordinary things are being offered to us, combined with ridiculously mixed up notions of what we want. There was a time when a meal of roast goose with plum pudding was remarkable and receiving a toy car and a pencil-case was enough on a cold Christmas morning. Well, I am exaggerating a bit, as fifty years ago I needed Famous Five books and a toy microscope, as well as felt tip pens, a selection box and a spirograph to be thrilled; oh yes and a family Monopoly game to share. It was my father's generation who made do with a torch and an orange, as did the other boys. He says on Christmas evening after their third church service they shone the beams up the bell tower to see who had the strongest light. Shake your heads children!

William Temple in his 1894 survey of the parish says two Druid Circles, those stone reminders of our ancient beliefs, were removed in the early 1800's when the land was taken in to be farmed. I still like to make the Holly wreaths to put on the family graves at Christmas. Quite why we do it is anciently mysterious, but it is nice to go, say hello and leave the circle of greenery with its empty centre of loss. I took over from the generation before and carefully make them from fresh holly, moss and wire as they did. It probably has a connection to the time when Holly was propped on the picture frames at the festive season to keep away the evil fairies. At that time it was also believed that a Holly leaf placed under a pillow divined the meaning of your dreams, and water drunk from a Holly cup was thought to be medicinal. These days we have the Udney Medical Practice for medicine; and dreams? Well we don't have time to dream, we are always out shopping in Union Square.

I have been looking at Holly trees as I go about the parish and although they are in the old woodlands around the farms, they are no longer planted in the new plantations or by houses to protect them from evil. We have outside security lighting to deter evil, and now by that silvery light I shall go over to the workshop and see how the whittling is getting on.

BCNU

BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

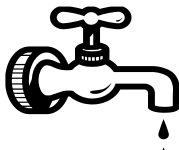
This group is open to all residents over the age of 50 who reside in the parish of Belhelvie. We meet every second Tuesday in the lounge of Eigie House from 2-4 pm. There is a small charge of £2 per session which covers tea and a raffle. We have an interesting programme planned again which begins on 15th Jan 2013 with a Bingo session. **See Dates for Your Diary for Springtime events.**

We hope you can join us. New members are very welcome.

Please contact the following for more information:

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

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BETTER BALMEDIÉ

Another three months of wet weather since our last report, but we hope you will agree that the flowers around the village came into their own late in the season and provided a good show to brighten even the gloomiest of days! We were awarded a “Highly Commended” certificate in the Formartine in Bloom competition. We are proud of our achievements as we are up against much larger communities of Ellon and Old Meldrum. The judges were impressed by our efforts to grow our own plants, build our own planters and work with other groups in the parish.

We are now clearing and replanting planters with spring bulbs and plants so that we’ll have colour throughout the winter. The Brownies in Balmedie have already replanted their planter with winter bedding plants and bulbs and school children have planted 200 daffodils along Eigie Road, near the burn. Their efforts show that just a little time spent can make a difference. Thanks to them all! We will continue to work with the School’s Eco-committee next year, and will be helping Brownies with their Gardening Badges.

We held a second successful Open Day at the beginning of September and enjoyed taking part in the second Farmer’s Market. We are very happy to be part of the Whitehorse Inn’s community events and look forward to working together next year.

Our main fund-raiser for this year is our Better Balmedie Calendar – you’ll find more about it elsewhere in this edition of Belhelvie Banter – an ideal gift for friends and family, especially good for folk who have lived here in the past and moved on!

Thanks to Aberdeenshire Council, Better Balmedie now has a small budget to pay a village orderly to pick up litter around the village. Our last orderly has moved on to college, so the post is vacant. The job would suit an active pensioner or a student, very flexible hours, just a few each week. Contact me for more information!

Some time ago we appealed in Belhelvie Banter for any unusual planters that you may have lying around your property. We were very kindly given the boat which has now bloomed for two years near the football courts. We are again on the lookout for other planters, perhaps carts, wooden wheelbarrows, or another boat! If you can help, give me a ring!

New members are always welcome. We now hold meetings at the Whitehorse Inn – you’ll be very welcome! Or during the day, come and see us at polytunnel on Wednesday and Saturday mornings... there may be winter plants for sale!

To find out all about Better Balmedie please look at

www.betterbalmedie.org or www.facebook.com/BetterBalmedie



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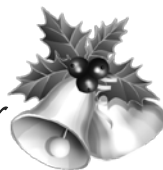
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BEING A GAMES MAKER

During the summer holidays I spent two weeks in London volunteering as a Games Maker at the Olympic Games. I wanted to share this fantastic experience so please forgive the self-indulgence to follow....

I started my "London 2012" journey some 30 months ago when I filled in the on-line application, as did my husband Adam. He was first to hear and attended for interview in Glasgow while I waited and waited and waited. He then attended a couple of training sessions in London before finally in March 2012 I had a telephone interview and was selected to be part of the Venue Entry Team. I didn't actually find out where and what I would be doing until the end of June and had to head down to Hackney College in East London for a training session in early July and to pick up my uniform. Call me strange but I really enjoyed the training, courtesy of McDonald's who have been involved in running the training for the last 3 Olympics I now know. It was all focussed on customer care, portraying a friendly and positive attitude no matter what the situation you were faced with and whether it was the first or the twenty first time that day you had been asked the same question. Eddie Izzard, Seb Coe and of course Boris were involved in delivering the messages, in person for the large scale training Adam attended at Wembley Arena, on video by the time I was being trained. Non-the-less it gave you a sense of value, that what you were going to be doing, however small and at times boring, was important and would contribute to the overall success of the games.

My shift sessions started on the first Saturday of the games in the North Greenwich Arena (NGA or the millennium dome in old money). The transport in London was great and I was really early that first day having left plenty of time to get there. I completed ten shifts over the two weeks, starting either at 11 or at 2.00 and finishing around 9.00pm. NGA hosted three sports over the two week period; gymnastics, trampolining and the basketball for the semis and finals.

We had some 60,000 spectators through the venue most days. Everyone wanted to have a great time and the enthusiasm was both infectious and incredibly exciting. I was part of the security team, pacing the queues into the venue or putting bags into trays to go through the scanners, just like at the airport. I worked in a team of about 20 volunteers, 18 of whom were teachers with one student (our team leader) and a retired civil servant. We had great fun. We worked alongside G4security staff or soldiers and did our very best to greet and engage in conversation every single person who came through the gates, be they Russian, French, British or Heston Blumenthal. He was very chatty.

Did I manage to see any sport? Yes and it was really fantastic. I watched the finals of four individual gymnastic events from brilliant seats in the Olympic family section.

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I sat right behind the Russian gymnast Aliya Mustafina (gold medallist in the uneven bars) who supported her colleagues then went on herself and won bronze in the floor. Epke Zonderland of the Netherlands got the biggest roar from the crowd in a spectacular routine for gold in the horizontal bars. I was also able to watch the ladies semi final in basketball where USA triumphed in the final quarter over Australia in a very close match.

London itself was really different, everyone was very open and friendly and I really enjoyed spending time walking around and just soaking up the atmosphere. As a family we had tickets for the hockey so also visited the Olympic park which was quite remarkable. A number of friends had wondered why on earth I would opt to spend my holiday (a) in London, (b) working and (c) wearing a purple shell suit. Just before I started my first shift I had a wobble that it might all be a bit tedious. Nothing could have been further from the truth, volunteering in the Olympic atmosphere was rewarding and incredibly refreshing. It sounds somewhat corny to say but “being a part of it” really did feel special.



Christine Kay



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CHRISTMAS AT BELHELVE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

I don't know about you, but it feels like Christmas has come around remarkably quickly this year. The flurry of snow in late October only emphasised that!

Christmas brings a mixed experience for many of us – some look forward to it and others can't stand it. Some are able to take holidays, while for others it's one of the busiest times of the year. Some are lonely because they live by themselves or a loved one is away working, while others would gladly swap the chaos of a family Christmas for a bit of peace and quiet!

Whatever your thoughts are on Christmas, we want you to know that your local Church of Scotland is there for you if you want to get back in tune with the reason for the season. We have some lovely services coming up at this time of year which will give you a chance to pause in the middle of the rush or bring a smile to your face when you see what the kids have been preparing to help us remember the Christmas story. You're more than welcome to come along at any time and join us.

Since 2007 we've run a campaign called "Right Christmas" in which we've encouraged folk to re-think how they 'do' Christmas to reduce some of the stress and expense, and get together for some low-key but enjoyable fundraisers. In that time we've managed to raise an amazing £30,000 from church and community to GIVE AWAY to charities both at home and abroad.

This year we're changing the emphasis a little and encouraging folk to give gifts not of money, but of **time and effort**. We're asking folk to make a commitment to do something **practical** to help someone, preferably someone they don't yet know very well. It could be an elderly neighbour needing help, or a young mum who needs a hand, or a charity who could do with a bit of additional help at Christmastime.

We hope, in this way, to bring a little unexpected blessing and neighbourliness to the parish and if you have some bright ideas about things we (or you) might do, please be in touch and let us know about them!

On behalf of the congregation, can I wish you every blessing for the season and for the year that lies ahead.. Yours,

Paul McKeown (minister)

Services

Sunday 2nd December

6:30pm Christingle Service. A lovely all-age service, part of which is held by candlelight. Don't know what a Christingle is? Come and find out! This is an especially popular service with children.

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Sunday 9th December

11 am The award-winning Bon Accord Silver Band lead us in a service of Lessons and Carols.

Sunday 16th December

11 am Informal Communion Service

Sunday 23rd December

11 am Nativity Service (held in the Forsyth Hall)

Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve)

4pm Community Carol Service (Held in Balmedie Leisure Centre). An informal, fun service aimed at folk with younger children. Balmedie School Choir are singing once again. If last year is anything to go by, get there early to get a seat!

11pm Watchnight Service. Half an hour of carols followed by a short candlelit service to bring in Christmas Day.

Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day)

11 am Christmas Day Service. A short service to welcome Christmas Day – kids are encouraged to bring along a new present to show us!

BELHELVIE PARISH CHURCH SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee were delighted at the response to our Open Photograph competition held over the summer and over 100 entries were received and displayed at the Prizewinners' Presentation and Talent Show held on 7 September. We were especially pleased to see so many talented youngsters eager to take part and we had a wonderful evening of music, song, dance, humour, poetry and even gymnastics! We were also very grateful to Jonathan Holt and Stuart Johnstone for judging the photos and donating such generous prizes.

Our next event is our **Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 24 November** in The Forsyth Hall from 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. There will be a great selection of quality, seasonal items for sale. Fair Trade, Better Balmedie, Girl Guides, The Pensioners' Club and Early Intervention in Autism will also be represented, plus refreshments and a Prize Draw. Donations welcome. Enquiries to **Doreen Crawford, Tel: 01358-742309/Arthur Nicolson, Tel: 01358-743628.**

Our Christmas Charity Quiz night is also coming up on 7th December at 7:30pm. This is always a great event and well supported, so book early to avoid disappointment! Tickets £10 and £5 for seniors and children. Any salads or baking for buffet welcome. Tickets **from Sandra Galloway, Viv O'Brien or Jean McLeish on 01358 742142 .**



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BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CRAFT CLUB

At craft club we always have lots of fun. We welcome primary school children and meet on a Thursday night at Balmedie school 6.30-7.30pm (£1.50 per night) since returning from the summer holidays we have made lots of different items including a harvest hanger, autumn leaf pictures and have just had our Halloween party. From now till Christmas we will be making lots of different things and not forgetting something special for St Andrew's day.

After the festive season we will be back with our special burns night and Valentine day treats.

Catherine Cassie 01358 743114

POTTERTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

All parents of small children born between 1st March 2009 and 28th February 2011 have to apply for their pre-school nursery place between 19th-26th November instead of January 2013.

No parental duties but a very active PTA group where parents can get involved if they wish.

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.

Pick up your form and see the facility from Potterton Community Centre, Laingseat Road, Potterton from 19th November.

POTTERTON PLAYGROUP sessions are:

9.30-12noon Tuesday and Thursday

1-3.30pm Tuesday and Thursday

9.30-12noon Wednesday

A lunch time crèche does operate 12-1pm (at an additional cost) to enable a full day at playgroup on a Tuesday and Thursday. The children bring their own packed lunch on these days.

Any further questions, queries or to organise a visit to our facility please dont hesitate to call: 01358 743335 and ask for Jenny/Joyce or Emma.

The children have had a fantastic autumn term where they have learnt about stranger danger, being safe at Guy Fawkes and Fireworks, seasons, nursery rhyme characters and space.

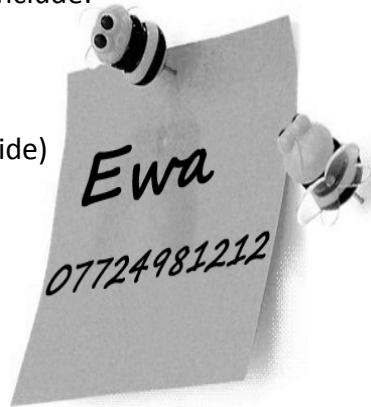
Up and coming activities that the children (and parents) are looking forward to are putting on a Xmas Pantomime and Concert and the Xmas Party where Santa will be visiting.

Kelly Buchan



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 - ▶ End Of Tenancy or Pre-tenancy Clean
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NEW!!! POTTERTON UNDER 5'S GROUP
Starts 7TH January 2013

Are you at a loose end on a Friday 9.30-11.30am and have a child/children under 5 years of age? Why not drop in and let them play while you can have some down time.

Toys and free play, stories, song time and snack (included in the entrance fee)

£2.50 per child, £1 per additional sibling. Non-profitable organisation – all money collected to be fed back into the group to buy new equipment and seasonal gifts.

Contact Leyonee (07545 634 550) or Kelly (0776 4747 183) to put your name on the registration list and to get more information.

Parents are required to stay and can have a tea/coffee, biscuit and chat while the children play with their friends.

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL IN THE NEW YEAR!!

BALMEDIE SCHOOL

The school is holding a Christmas Enterprise Fair on Sat. 8th Dec.10-12 noon.

We are continuing our fund raising for King David School in Uganda and we will be selling some of their crafts at the Christmas Fair.

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Keeping in Touch and *Taking Part*



Do you find it difficult to get out and about due to long-term pain?

Are you aged 65 or over?

Would you be willing to take part in a research project?

My name is Gillian Dowds and I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Aberdeen. If your answer is yes to all three questions, and you are prepared to give up some of your time, then I would like to hear from you!

I am looking to recruit **men and women** who are aged **65 or above**, who live in **rural Scotland** and who have been living with **physical pain for more than three months** (also known as 'chronic pain') to take part in my research project.

I am interested in finding out about **how** older people living with chronic pain **keep in touch** with their friends and family, the types of **social activities** they enjoy participating in and their **involvement with the local community**. Participating in this project will help to add to existing knowledge and inform a wider project on helping people with chronic pain to remain engaged in the activities they enjoy.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me during office hours:

☎ Office phone number: **(01224) 274080** / Mobile phone number: **07716 025 933**

✉ Email: **gillian.dowds@abdn.ac.uk**

Thank You!

This research project is supervised by Dr. Lorna Philip (l.philip@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr. Judith Masthoff (j.masthoff@abdn.ac.uk) from the University of Aberdeen.



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***** Deadline for copy for next issue: 1st February 2013**

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Meet
Santa & His Reindeers
at The White Horse Inn

Saturday 15th December
from 10am-2pm

Visit Santa in
his grotto



White Horse Inn : 01358 742 404

Old Road : Balmedie : whitehorseinn.co.uk : bookings@whitehorseinn.co.uk

Dates for your Diary			
December			
Sat 2	Christingle Service	Belhelvie Church	6.30pm
Tue 4	Friendship Group	Eigie House	2 -4pm
Fri 7	Christmas Charity Quiz	Forsyth Hall	7.30pm
Sat 8	Christmas Enterprise Fair	Balmedie Primary School	10– noon
Sun 9	Bon Accord Silver Band Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
Tue 11	Friendship Group Party	White Horse Inn	
Wed 12	SWRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Sat 15	Farmers' Market & Craft Fayre	White Horse Inn	10 – 2pm
Sun 16	Informal Communion Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
Fri 21	End of School term	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon	
Sun 23	Nativity Service	Forsyth Hall	11am
Mon 24	Community Carol Service	Balmedie Leisure Centre	4pm
Mon 24	Watch-night Service	Belhelvie Church	11pm
Tues 25	Christmas Day Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
2013			
January			
Mon 7	Start of school term	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon	
Mon 7	Potterton Under 5's Group	Potterton Community Centre	9.30–11.30
Wed 9	WRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tues 15	Friendship Group	Bingo Session Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 23	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tues 29	Friendship Group	Talk on Medieval Aberdeen Eigie House	2-4pm
Thurs 31	Better Balmedie	Talk on Crop Rotation White Horse Inn	7.30pm
February			
Fri 8	Midterm (In service)	Balmedie (BoDA)	
Mon 11	Midterm	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Tues 12	Friendship Group	Talk on Cornerstone Eigie House	2-4pm
Tues 12	In service	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Wed 13	In service	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Wed 13	WRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tues 26	Friendship group	Gordon Skinner & friends Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 27	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 28	Better Balmedie	Talk on health with herbs White Horse Inn	7.30pm
March			
Tues 12	Friendship group	Talk on Solomon Islands Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 13	WRI	Mini show and competition Eigie House	7.30pm
Tues 26	Friendship group	Anne & Andy Tough Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 27	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 28	Better Balmedie	Talk-title: TBC White Horse Inn	7.30pm