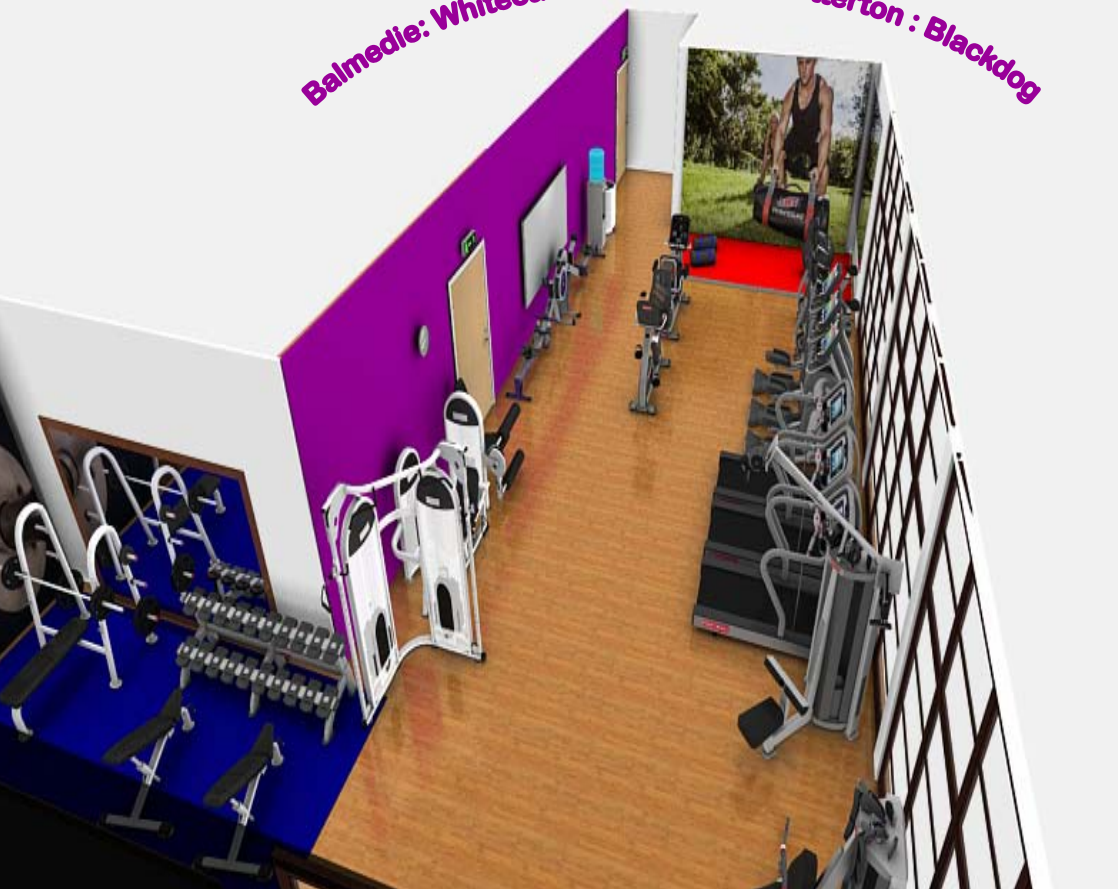


BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie: Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog



EDITION 14

MARCH 2013

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EDITORIAL – Belhelvie’s Year of Volunteering?

As I look forward to the spring and summer, I wonder if any of our parishioners have been moved to volunteer to help at the Commonwealth Games or the Open Golf Championship and then it occurred to me that we need not go far to give a little of our time as there are so many opportunities on our doorstep.

As the material came in for this edition I was acutely aware that we have a volunteering theme, and with this in mind I am delighted to be able to offer **places on a workshop on Funding Opportunities** with Formartine Community Planning in mid **April**. Email the Banter if you are interested, but not on our contributors’ mailing list.

Our youth organisations are constantly on the lookout for volunteers. Balmedie House Care Home welcomes volunteers, The Gala is looking for help, Tarts and Crafts is sadly under resourced – please, please help, to keep it open. Start a sewing, knitting, quilting, painting group on one of the “closed” days, or give a few hours in the cafe.

Where are all our gardeners? Only Balmedie has established a village improvement scheme. Where are the Potterton potters, the Blackdog backyard gang? Time to come out of the shed!?

But I have a serious point I really want to get across to all ‘banterers’. I am acutely aware that most of our neighbouring parishes have in place either established **Public Access Defibrillators** or have a **Community First Responder Scheme**.

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Chris and David Stewart of Collieston tell me that, in conversation with a nursing friend following Chris’ heart valve replacement surgery, it was decided that it would be great to have a defibrillator in the village. Things snowballed, and a small group decided to fundraise under the banner “Collieston Bravehearts.” “We were astonished to find that in a very short space of time - with some donations and sponsorship - we raised almost £3000, more than enough to fund the unit and its installation. It is designed to be used by anyone, though some training for those interested is in the pipeline. The defib is now “live” and we are keen to get some publicity - not for ourselves - but to encourage other small communities to think about doing something similar.”

So I throw down the challenge to Belhelvie-ites let’s make 2013 the year of volunteering in the Parish. **Interested?** email belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or

Tel: 07814 254 301 Audrey Jeffries, Editor

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POLICE NEWS

As some of you will know, we are currently moving towards the formation of a single police service for Scotland on the 1st of April 2013. This will undoubtedly mean that some changes and adjustments may be made to the way we manage ourselves but, overall, our hope is that it will be very much business as usual in terms of the service we provide to you all.

Your Local Community Policing Team here at Formartine will continue their efforts towards dealing with the things that you have told us cause you concern.

We will work with you and our partners to combat Antisocial Behaviour. We will continue to carry out Speed Checks, and will also give attention to the areas of congestion around our schools as part of our efforts to further reduce road casualties. We will continue to attend Community Council meetings and other forums to ensure we remain community focused and will endeavour to continue to provide a visible and accessible service to you all.

As you will know, Formartine remains a very safe place to stay and recorded crime is low in comparison to many other areas. I would still, however, ask that you all consider whether there are any improvements you could make to your home and vehicle security. We have recently experienced some increased levels of car theft from outside people's homes, and on occasions these thefts have occurred with the use of car keys stolen from within the house or even the car ! It would appear that the keys have been easily accessible and sometimes stored behind an insecure front or back door or even left in the ignition. There are very simple measures we could all take to avoid being the victims of crimes of this kind - ensuring vehicles are locked, house doors are locked and keys are not kept in obvious places or next to doors.

We have also recently seen some instances of rural properties being targeted by housebreakers and would ask that you all be vigilant in reporting anything at all that you feel may amount to suspicious behaviour. We have had many success stories as a result of people phoning in suspicious behaviour to us so, if in any doubt, please give us a call.

Finally, can I please ask that you all drive within the speed limits and with due care and courtesy to other road users and pedestrians. We are regularly carrying out Speeding and Static Road checks in an effort to reduce Crime and Road Casualties.

Should anyone wish to contact us, please feel free to call in at Ellon Police Office, send an e-mail to us or contact our Service Centre on **0845 600 5 700**.

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AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Well 2012 has passed without an apocalyptic incident, and unlike the dinosaurs, we are still here! Thankfully the interpretation of the Mayan Calendar was wrong and it shows that life is wonderfully unpredictable, full of uncertainty, and that prophecy is clearly not an exact science!

It is just this uncertainty and unpredictability that makes life as a General Practitioner very interesting, at times rather scary, but still highly rewarding. This is also the aspect of the job that is hardest to explain. So rather than nag you all again about being active and eating well, I thought I'd try and give an insight into what a GP does.

Many think that all we do is see a few sore throats, coughs, the occasional snuffly child, the odd bad back, and then head off to the golf course!

Whilst this sounds quite straightforward it is not entirely accurate. (I should open a sweepstake now as to how many of you I will meet on my way to, or from, the golf course!!) I must admit that the job would be very boring if all days were like that, also my golf game reflects just how little chance I get to play!!

To go back to the snuffly child, how do we know we are not seeing a child in the early stages of meningitis? Is the painful back the sign of an underlying condition, or is it just from carrying the better half's bags back from the January sales? Get these assessments wrong and the consequences are grave, but we cannot send all ill children into hospital nor can we scan all people who have a sore back, so what do we do?

Fortunately it is usually a matter of speaking to the patient or parent, listening to what has happened and looking for certain things on examination. Once we pull things together, we usually have a good idea of what is going on and act accordingly, giving advice, treatment, and if required asking hospital doctors to see the patient.

This simple sounding process is actually very complex and is called the consultation, and is the bedrock of general practice. Get this process right and you are a long way down the road of helping your patient. A doctor wishing to be a GP faces a minimum of 5 years training after completing 5 years at Medical School. They also have to pass a three stage examination before they are licensed for independent practice.

During this time the consultation is studied in detail and some of you will have had the experience of a video camera recording your consultation, not to look at you, but to help train the doctor. This process is analysed and picked apart so that we are sure that the doctor-in-training is listening properly and making the correct decisions.

Part of the qualifying examination requires them to travel to London to do a simulated surgery. This involves seeing 13 patients, played by actors, with each consult marked by an accompanying examiner. Each consult lasts 10 minutes, and the icing on the

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cake is that they pay £1694 for the privilege! Prior to this they have to pass a knowledge test, this exam costs a mere £504!

After all this we hope that a GP is able to sift through your symptoms, know what to look for and be able to help treat you, or know somebody else who will be able to do so. An important guiding principle is “above all, do no harm”, and so, for example, the potential harm from drugs, or doses of radiation from x-rays or scans have to be considered.

The challenge here is to be able to deal with uncertainty, and manage the risk of knowing when and, even harder, when not to do further tests, or hospital investigations. This risk management is usually not too difficult, for example most people coming in with a headache do not need a CT scan, (the radiation dose of this is about 100 times that of a chest x-ray with modern scanners) as the story usually points as to what is wrong, the hard part is explaining why!

Another thing that helps a doctor is knowledge of disease and what is likely to be wrong from the story told: age, gender, and past history of a patient and even their job! The important thing is to be always able to reassess, question your ideas and be prepared to change your mind, whilst explaining why to your perhaps bemused patient.

This role is challenging and carries the added burden of the knowledge that there is a huge pressure to save money. By not doing tests, and not sending a patient to hospital, less money is spent from the NHS budget. This latter aspect is why you hear our political masters going on about the importance of Primary Care and has led to Commissioning in England, all because a GP is trained to cope with uncertainty! Being a GP is a challenging and interesting job, and can be compared to being on a rollercoaster. It is fun and can be scary but much more enjoyable than the boring merry-go-round!

Dr. Alasdair Forbes

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PROMISE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Members of local Belhelvie Young Farmers Club have made their 2013 New Year's resolution to give more of their time and effort towards good causes in the area.

The first event for the team's calendar started back in 2012 – with a trip to the Ellon Kirk Centre in December to donate blood. Several young farmers attended the donor clinic and gave five pints collectively with the fastest donation given in under three minutes! The members discovered their blood type and all really enjoyed the experience. Call **0845 90 90 999** or visit **www.scotblood.co.uk** for more information on local blood donor clinics and how to donate.

In January, six members of Belhelvie Young Farmers attended a First Aid Course, hosted by the British Red Cross. The course covered how to deal with emergencies from: unconsciousness, choking, bleeding and burns, to heart attacks, CPR, strokes and neck and spinal injuries. Those who attended found the course very interesting and learnt how to be competent and confident first aiders. The course is fully certified and provides the members with First Aid Qualifications, which they can continue to refresh in future years to keep up-to-date with the latest procedures. More information on the British Red Cross, or to find out about First Aid Courses can be found at: **www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk**. The course was very informative and has been highly recommended by our members to anyone interested in learning about first aid, or who want to refresh their skills.

This followed on to the Club's New Year Appeal to donate food items to Instant Neighbour, a homeless charity based in Aberdeen City. Non-perishable items were collected at a local stock-judging and donated to the charity's centre at 5 St. Machar Drive, Aberdeen. Donations included tinned fruit, instant coffee, biscuits, and porridge, soup and pasta sauces. This time of year is especially difficult for the charity as the Christmas rush has passed and many people are counting the cost of the festivities and trying to save. The food items will all go to families on benefit or low incomes who are struggling to afford a basic diet. More information about the charity can be found at: **www.instantneighbour.com**

Belhelvie JAC will hold their annual dinner and dance on Saturday 9th March in The Station Hotel, Ellon at 6:30pm for 7pm to celebrate the Club's successful year. Tickets are £22 and available from any club member. This fantastic night out closes our year in style before our AGM in late March, when we assign new office bearers and continue our progress. For more information on how to join our thriving club, meet new people and experience new skills or to arrange tickets for our dinner and dance, please contact our Secretary at: **belhelvieyoungfarmers@gmail.com**

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November and December may usually be quieter months in the garden, but there was no let-up in Better Balmedie activities! We hosted an “Enchanted Polytunnel” event with our site lit up and Santa in his grotto, with gifts for the children and mulled wine for the adults. It was our way of saying “thank-you” to our supporters, so we hope you enjoyed the evening. We also had a stall at the Whitehorse Inn’s Santa and his Reindeer event, and thoroughly enjoyed the day despite the appalling weather in the morning.

Sales of our Calendar went very well, many thanks to all who sponsored, sold and bought them. We now have approx. £2000 which will go towards the proposed Sensory Garden – this is still at a very early stage, but I hope to have more to tell you in the next issue of Belhelvie Banter. If you have any thoughts about the garden, what should be in it, how it should be designed, do get in touch as we want this to be a garden for all the community, of all ages and abilities.

On 25th January the Whitehorse Inn hosted a very successful Burns Supper with profits going jointly to Better Balmedie and the Christmas Lights Group – a great time was had by all. Many thanks to all who were involved in creating a great community event!

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!

We are now planning another very busy year ahead. New members and visitors are always welcome. We now hold our monthly meetings, with a variety of speakers, at the Leisure Centre (see Dates for your Diary) – you’ll be very welcome! We also have workshops and outings planned which you may enjoy. Or come and see us at the polytunnel on Wednesday and Saturday mornings... there may be plants for sale on our Sales Table!

To find out all about Better Balmedie please look at www.betterbalmedie.org or www.facebook.com/BetterBalmedie



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CAFÉ AND FITNESS SUITE EXTENSION

(see photo on cover)

Well it's the start of a New Year and the start of a very busy and exciting year for Balmedie Leisure Centre. As many of you will be aware over the past year we have been producing plans to extend the leisure centre with the moving of the main entrance to the front of the building and the addition of a new café and fitness suite.

We now have full planning permission along with building warrant approval for the construction of the new front entrance, with work beginning in April. Plans have also been submitted for building warrant approval for the main stages of our development, which we hope to have approval for in the next couple of months.

We are also working hard at raising the funds for the whole development and are happy to announce that the project is being part financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community Rural Aberdeenshire Leader 2007-2013 programme.

This funding has seen the Leisure Centre now able to move forward with the construction of both the new entrance and café. It is also anticipated that we will have funding in place for the fitness suite prior to the start of the construction and are doing our planning with the view that all finances will be in place.

If any of our centre users can help with fundraising or know of any funding options please make contact with Shona (Centre Manager), who will put you in touch with me.

To give users an idea on how the centre will look we are having images produced for the fitness suite and café. You will be able to see the fitness suite images now with the café images coming soon.

As the project develops we will be announcing a membership scheme for the centre along with other exciting proposals including the setting up of a youth café!

If anyone is keen on assisting us with setting up and running the youth café please get in touch. We are also keen on speaking with any of our younger centre users who would be keen on helping out with the setting up of the youth café.

As you can imagine there is a lot of work ahead for staff and the centre committee and we look forward to your continued support this year.

We will have regular updates over the next few months so please look out for them.

Lee Scott, Balmedie Leisure Centre, Management Committee.



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PARISH THREADS - PROTECTION

I have been a bit slack with the housework lately. First of all there was the month I spent hardly able to walk after I was knocked over by an enthusiastic Labrador. Then I was writing a story about cleaning and growing older and that sort of distracted me from actual work. Then there was Christmas and visiting our grandchildren in America. With them we holidayed and sailed in a boat that once belonged to a Beverley Hillbilly...(If I was making that up don't you think I would have thought of someone more famous?) That meant more weeks of not cleaning here.

However the good news is; sometimes slackness pays off. One morning last week one of my guests noticed that the middle diamond from her engagement ring was missing... gone. It had left a nasty black hole, if not of stellar proportion, she was at least several carats short of her usual carbon abundance. The band of gold representing her marriage was damaged and she was distressed. She went into work and searched the staff room but no luck. A kind cleaner apparently vacuumed and then went through the bag of dust with a fork from the canteen. Perhaps he or she didn't have a fine-toothed comb; who does any more? No joy, and my guest came back here dismally thinking about loss and insurance companies, St Anthony and shoddy ring makers. Then making her way to bed, past the shower she noticed a sparkle...yes the diamond was lying in the shower tray! It hadn't swirled away to oblivion because I hadn't addressed the slow draining water. The diamond had sunk, leaving the water to quietly creep away. I mention this as a shining reminder of frailty and our value systems.

Talking of value systems, I was at a goodbye party recently for some young people relocating in the Oil and Gas industry. The subject of handbags came up; in particular a well-known brand we might call 'Skyfruit'. Girls will know what I mean. These young women were thrilled about the possibility of owning a handbag that had a price tag of a good-sized diamond. 'You should have one, they said 'It makes you feel really great when you go out! Look at this one... Come over Lauren.' They beckoned, and I was introduced to a large exquisite leather bag with a small girl behind it. Feather soft and beautifully made, I waited for my heart to beat faster. I tried to get excited and I tried again. Nothing fizzled within me, not a flicker. I don't think I can be the right audience or at the right stage in my life. When I go out I don't need the protective talisman of a special handbag... I am familiar with the places I visit, the lanes, the farms, the people, the streets. However I do remember when I first had an engagement ring and Tony Blackburn was playing 'Band of Gold' by Freda Payne most mornings, I felt different. Lonely during the week, I was dependant on that symbolic ring to get me through.



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In Belhelvie it's a new year for the group of volunteers who continue to help nurture the Parish sense of identity. 'Better Balmedie' they are called (go along it's fun) they enhance the village while the Community Council tend the other tubs around the Parish. Better Balmedie have developed a poly-tunnel gardening project behind the Leisure Centre and are growing-on plants for the cheerful looking planters that have been appearing around the village. At Christmas it was renamed 'The Enchanted Poly-tunnel'. Santa visited and then advised them to Hoe! Hoe! Hoe!

When I went to see them this month I discovered that a poly-tunnel does move me, stirs my heart. Why? Perhaps because it provides a shield against the thing I can do the least about, the weather. As well as providing a warm place for work, chat and coffee as the one in Balmedie does, plants enjoy growing in there too. I have worked out that a medium sized one would cost less than a high-end hand bag and then I could grow my own Skyfruit.

There is a plan afoot in Balmedie to raise funds for a sensory garden, but I think they may have created one already. Gardening engages all the senses and working with the soil and plants can be delightful enough. Lewis Grassic Gibbon called the smell of the farmyard: '*fine and heartsome...*' and continued: '*They sell stuff in Paris in little bottles with just that smell, and charge for it handsomely, as they may well do for it is the smell that backgrounds existence.*'

So, I have rescued a diamond, avoided a handbag and committed to a poly-tunnel. Now I can look forward to Spring when our Parish will be encircled by enchanting tubs of flowers; Belhelvie's own Band of Gold.

Mary Cane

McKenzie Print advert to be added

NEW YEAR – NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE FORMARTINE FAIRTRADE GROUP

It's all systems go with Fairtrade Fortnight only a month away and the highlight of the Formartine Fairtrade group's activities will be a baking competition, '**The Fair Bake**', on Saturday 9th March 2013. The competition is open to all with classes for adults and children and the group hopes individual and members of community groups will support the event and help to raise local awareness of the importance of Fairtrade. Beth Bruce Gardiner, coordinator of the competition said, "In my business I use as many Fairtrade ingredients as I can. I expect to get a fair reward for my work and I think it only right that the people who produce the ingredients I use also get a fair price for their products."

Each entry must include at least 2 Fairtrade ingredients and be brought, together with the recipe(s), to a coffee morning on March 9th where the judging will take place. The local venue has yet to be confirmed but will be announced shortly. Entry at the door will be £2.50 and includes tea/coffee.

Anyone short of recipe ideas may find www.fairtrade.org.uk helpful and there is a wide range of Fairtrade ingredients available locally including sugar, chocolate, nuts, bananas, apples, honey, dried raisins, dates and apricots, and lots more. If you need help sourcing ingredients contact Anne Aspden 01651 842329 or Beth 01651 872351.

Prizes will be awarded for the following categories: Something Sweet: Something Savoury; Recipe using the Most Fair Trade Ingredients; Confectionery – 'The Technical Challenge'! Best Primary School Age Entry; Best Secondary School Age Entry.

Anyone wishing to enter the competition should register by 23rd February – by contacting Beth Bruce-Gardner 01651 872351 or email beth@thefriendlyfoodcompany.com (who will also be happy to email all the details) It is not necessary to have decided on your recipe before registering, and for those who haven't heard about the event before the 23rd February some late entries can be accepted.

Commenting, Anne Aspden, Chairman of the group said "We hope to have a really good response-there's a great tradition of home baking in this area and whilst quality is important we also look forward to seeing entries that show enthusiasm and imagination. Locally, this event complements this year's Comic Relief with their Big Bake. They are raising money to give direct aid to particular projects. We, on the other hand, are encouraging the regular use of Fairtrade products by local shoppers so the producers have the dignity of earning a fair wage and the opportunity to educate their children.

Members of the group will also be assisting at an in-service day for teachers at Tarves Primary School, on the subject of Fairtrade in the curriculum and how to become registered as a Fairtrade school.

Info – Anne Aspden 01651 842329 or Beth Bruce-Gardner 01651 872351

To catch up on all the group's news look at their new web site
<http://fairtradeformartine.wordpress.com>

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BELHELVE PARISH CHURCH

Looking out the window at fields covered with snow; with cars needing scraped and kids jumping for joy because school transport's cancelled, Spring feels a long way away. In reality, it won't be long before we begin to see the changes in nature that remind us that even a bad winter doesn't last forever.

In getting ready for this quarter's Banter, I remembered this reading by a writer called Joyce Rupp, and thought I'd pass it on. It's from an anthology called "*Out Of The Ordinary*"

I remember many springtimes when I'd awaken in the morning, look out the window, and zap, there this green grass would be. Robust, vibrant grass. It seemed like it was an overnight kind of thing, brown one day and bright green the next. This greening always came in the springtimes when we had drenching rains. One year, however, we had very little rain and many more cold days than usual. Each day I looked with hope, expecting to find fresh green pushing its way through the drab wintered spears of dryness. But each day I saw, instead, the same dull color before me.

When I looked closely, however, I could perceive little hints of new life and a slight changing in the color of the lawn. I could almost feel the earth straining, trying to draw forth new life from within it. I knew the green would come again, that it would just be a matter of time before warmth and moisture provided the right conditions for change and growth. Eventually, the green did return, but not until I had waited a long time for rain to come and drench the land.

This process of the earth's greening after a long winter reminds me of the spirituality of Easter; the inner transformation and rebirthing that comes after we've had a long winter spell of the spirit. The dead, brown grass is there for ages in our hearts, or so it seems. No amount of hurry, or push, or desire can make the green happen any sooner.

I think of people I know who are longing for an inner greening, but are still in the grip of a spiritual winter: someone who's lost a family member to death; someone whose family are beginning to fall apart; someone who's new to the area and hasn't yet made good friends; someone trying to leave behind a past they'd rather forget and make a new start in life. Each one needs an "eastering," a bright greening, and oh, how they long for it to come soon.

But it may be a painstakingly slow process; a tiny bit of life gradually weaving through the pain and questions. New life doesn't always come quickly. Rising from the dead takes a long, slow greening time that can't be hurried.

We need to keep believing that joy and new life will come for us, even though it may not be there for us right now. Easter doesn't flinch from the reality of the cross and the tomb, but it points us beyond them to the hope of resurrection and new beginnings.

Some of the key dates in our worship at Belhelvie over the next few months are listed on the back cover in **Dates for your Diary** – please feel free to come and join us at any of them. Services start at 11am

Rev Paul McKeown, minister

PARISH SENIOR CITIZENS



The Belhelvie Parish Senior Citizens Christmas party of 80 guests was a great success, a lovely meal nicely presented and served by the friendly staff of the White Horse Inn was much appreciated this was followed by

music from the CD tunes for dancing and games or to sit and just listen, relax and enjoy.

Just as the end was drawing nigh, Santa arrived with his sack of goodies each guest received a packet of shortbread. The evening ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne and grateful thanks to everyone who helped make it such an enjoyable event.

The next social events will be a whist drive in March a date to be arranged followed by the summer outing on the last Saturday of May (25/5/13).

Doreen M Fowler.

TARTS AND CRAFTS

Tarts and Crafts café and art gallery is situated behind the library in Balmedie, just follow the signs in the village. We have good parking and facilities for disabled people. We serve delicious home-cooked food, catering for all tastes and special dietary requirements. Food for vegetarians is one of our specialties. All soups, cakes and bread rolls are baked on the premises using fair-trade ingredients where possible. Our tea and coffee is fair-trade and we have a wide selection of herbal and fruit flavoured teas. Children are most welcome and our snacks and drinks are child friendly.

We are currently closed for refurbishment and will re-open in late March
Usual Opening times – 10am to 4pm on Thursday to Saturday
Watch out for posters and adverts in the local press for more information

We are always on the search for volunteers and no offer of help will be turned down. If you are considering volunteering with us do not hesitate act now. Contact us either by calling into the café, by phone or email. You will be welcomed to the team and supported by an experienced volunteer while you are learning the ropes. Why not check out our website?

Phone: 01358 742002 Info@tartsandcrafts.co.uk www.tartsandcrafts.co.uk

BURNS SUPPER



A Burns Supper, followed by a ceilidh dance was held in the Whitehorse Inn on the 25th January and this proved to be a very successful and enjoyable event. The aim of the evening was to raise funds which would be shared equally between Better Balmedie and Balmedie Christmas Lights Group, with all monies going towards village enhancement! Profits for the evening resulted in £672 which will be shared equally between the two organisations.

Speakers for the evening were Audrey Jeffries, Allan Jeffrey, Graham Paul, Bill Brown, Manson Merchant and Innes Christie and the event was chaired by Euan Bain of The Whitehorse Inn. The piper for the evening was Willum Jessiman and HipFlask Ceilidh Band provided music for the dance which followed.

Pic shows Innes Christie presenting Holy Willie's Prayer. ADS



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BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Our Services are at the Leisure Centre
Eigie Road, Balmedie

Every Sunday at 11 a.m.

Everyone Welcome

Christmas is past, and we are into 2013.
Our Christmas Services were meaningful
with a really pleasant atmosphere.

Jesus commanded Christians to go into
all the World.

As we look back over the past year, our
tiny Church has had an exciting 2012,
involved in a Church Planting for the
second year in a row, 2011 in Glen Clova
– Esk, 2012 at Northfield, Aberdeen.

Jesus said – He brought Good News to
the Poor.

As a Church we have supported the
Father's House in Sierra Leone, where
civil war orphaned children were given a
roof over their head, food, medical bills,
education and a new family. The Charity
name has changed and is now known as
Kids Action, based here in Aberdeen, but
UNICEF instructed that all children
should be re-housed with an extended
family – any family member. Kids
Action has done that, but now pays
families to look after the young people
and to educate them. Our tiny Church
has sponsored the young people now for
over 12 years.

Jesus said - suffer the little children.
During 2012 we supported the Royal
Aberdeen Children's Hospital and the
Butterfly Trust.

**FUTURE - This year we plan to revisit
whether we can build our own tiny
Church building in Balmedie. We
will keep you informed.**

Minister, **Rev. Andy Cowie**
01224 703248

POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

For some time now our Potterton Church
has met weekly at 6p.m.. Sometimes we
have gathered at the Stead Inn but we do
have plans to meet every week at
Potterton.

If you have an interest, please contact our
Minister, Rev. Andy Cowie 01224 703248

Over the Christmas Period we held joint
Services, with Balmedie and Danestone
Congregational Churches, as well as
meeting on a weekly basis. It was good
for our tiny Church to gather with others
to worship God. The Christmas Eve
collection was in aid of Tear Fund, an
International Charity which helps fight
the world's poverty.

While Churches around the country are
dwindling and closing, our tiny Church is
part of the growing number of
Congregational Churches in Aberdeen.
There are now 7 Churches in and around
Aberdeen: Potterton, Balmedie, Cove,
Danestone, Woodside, Kittybrewster and
Northfield. Most grew by at least 10%
last year.

Our denomination is unusual, in that 25%
of its Churches in Scotland are new –
established in the past 25 years.
Congregational, means that every Church
is independent, and is run by its members
– all decisions are made by the members,
and they run on the principle of where
two or three are gathered – there is Jesus
– there is a Church.

Our Church is here to help and support,
be it a happy occasion or sad, we are here
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Minister, **Rev. Andy Cowie**
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POTTERTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

We would like to welcome the new pupils to the class and are pleased to say everyone has settled back into the routine of playgroup quickly after the festive season.

Just before Christmas we had the Critter Keeper visit us with lots of bugs and lizards. The children got to hold them and even some of the parents and leaders held them. The children thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

We are currently visiting different countries in "our journey around the world" project. The children are role playing at the travel agents to plan their trips, going to the airport and being on an airplane or other modes of transport. The children have enjoyed making passports, tickets and looking at books about each country and exploring the different cultures of each country.

Mother's Day and Easter are coming up and as spring and summer appear, visits to the park and exploring the village will be very important.

With the ever changing weather the children chose to do a weather project so are doing a "cloud chart" at the moment, looking at the sky, movement of the clouds, colour and how many there are in the sky. They will continue further with other forms of weather, rain, sun and wind.

Children who are going to school after summer will be preparing for that transition period which will include Rising 5s, visits to the school and a teacher visiting the playgroup, it's a very exciting time for them all.

For those children who will be starting school after summer we would like to remind you that school forms for entry in Aberdeenshire will have to be in by the last week in January, forms are available at the school.

Potterton Playgroup will be hosting the Potterton Spring Fayre at the Community Centre Saturday 27th April so please come along for raffle, stalls, tea/coffee and a fine piece. Great way of meeting new people in the village and seeing old faces.

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.



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2ND BELHELVIE BROWNIES

We meet on a Thursday night at Balmedie School from 6.15 pm to 7.45 pm. Last term we had lots of fun doing a “Christmas Challenge Badge” and also going along to the Panto at Inverurie with some other Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides. We have also been working on our First Aid badge which we have now completed in January this year.

This term we are also having another District Event on 22nd February 2013 at Pitmedden Hall to celebrate Thinking Day. This is going to be an indoor campfire/singsong. We have just had our “Pow Wow” which is when the Brownies get to say what they would like to do in the next term. We have picked some craft activities, some outdoor activities for when the weather hopefully gets better, and some games. The planning is in process for us to go on a Brownie Holiday in June this year to Fyvie House.

Anyone interested in joining Brownies should now log onto www.girlguidinguk.org.uk and on the “get involved tab” it will let you register your daughter. Please feel to have a chat with one of our leaders:

Karen Morrison on 01358 734415, Marianne and Laura McIntosh on 01358 724231 and Liz Michie on 01358 743961.

SWRI (Rural)

EIGIE HOUSE 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7-30pm

January has come and gone I hope the snow didn't disrupt too many activities. We look forward to our February meeting when Rosie Nicol from Better Balmedie is to give a talk on the progress of the gardens etc. Before long it will be March and we have our own Bulb and Handcraft Show in Egie House. The SWRI Ellon Group that we are part of is to hold their Annual Bulb Show in the Victoria Hall, Ellon on Saturday 9th March. Look out for the Posters in the Local Stores. Come along and see a superb display of handcrafts and baking, bulbs etc.

Ladies you don't have to be expert at these crafts; you don't even have to be good at them; come along and enjoy sharing experiences and have the opportunity to learn new skills, or even just come along for a chat and a cuppa. You will be made most welcome – don't be shy.

Egie House is so warm and comfy, there is ample parking and access for the less able is no problem. If you wish to contact me my name is **Elaine Strachan** and I am the present secretary of the **Belhelvie Institute**.

My phone number is **01358 743173**

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1ST BELHELVIE RANGERS

We are currently looking for new members as we've just lost one (to being a full blown leader) and that means there's just two Rangers and me! We still have a good laugh but the more the merrier. Rangers are for women aged 14-26 years old who want to try new things and have fun; plus it looks good on your CV/ University application form. 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. We meet fortnightly on a Thursday in Potterton but you are welcome to attend whenever you can.

In the meantime we will be working on some challenge badges, attending the District indoor campfire, and chatting incessantly! Our LED Christmas cards looked fab last term so perhaps some more mad science too. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining as a member or as a helper. Hope to see you there.

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

Did you lend us a Guide Uniform ?

A few years ago, someone was good enough to lend the Guide unit their old Guide Uniform (possibly from the 70's). The name of the original owner has been forgotten in the mists of time. If you think it might have been you, or if you know who it was, could you please get in touch with Susan Osbeck? Thanks.

BALMEDIE CRAFT CLUB

The craft club is held in the school on Thursday 6.30-7.30 p.m. costing £1.50 per night.

We have been running for over 5 years and welcome all school age boys and girls.

We always make something that the children can take home with them at the end of the night. We make things for special occasions such as Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Easter and of course Father's Day. Something messy is always a favourite, especially baking. We will also be having the chocolate stall at the Gala again this year.

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Let's join forces and make the Magic Wood a magic place



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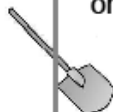
Work started in February with workshops on constructing educational features in the outdoors, recording wildlife, making bird boxes and log animals and constructing paths.

These events will continue in March and April:

Mon 25/03 & Tue 26/03
Building a sensory path

Sunday, 07/04
Event with free workshops:
Wildlife recording, installing bird boxes and log animals and joining efforts to do whatever still needs done to bring a sparkle to the beautiful Magic Woods. There will be more tea, coffee, cake and biscuits...

Please let us know if you want to come along so we can make sure we have enough tools, gloves and biscuits!! Contact Pete or Yvonne on 01224 724884, 0776465568 or via email: Aberdeen@tcv.org.uk



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3RD BELHELVIE BROWNIES (POTTERTON)

Since our last article in Belhelvie Banter we have been very busy. We have learnt about the plight of the moonbears and the charity Animals Asia that rescues them. We are collecting stamps to help. We have also joined easyfundraiser to help boost our funds. Anyone can help us raise money by shopping through easyfundraiser having chosen our Brownie unit as your chosen charity.

We made Christingles for Belhelvie Church for the Community Action part of our programme. It is good fun sticking sweets onto cocktail sticks and then into oranges. We had a disco to celebrate the end of term for Christmas with 2nd Belhelvie Brownies (Balmedie) and really enjoyed ourselves. We also went to see the pantomime at Inverurie with the rest of the Brownies and Rainbows from the District. We really enjoyed that and are looking forward to next year.

We are now working on interest badges. Some of us are doing our cooks badge, some are doing Animal Lover, others are doing Artist or Toymaker. We are having good fun getting everything ready for being tested.

Two Brownies moved up to Guides having finished their Brownie Adventure so we have room for more Brownies. We are aged between 7 and 10 years old. We can be contacted either by phone, **Katherine Hebron-Scott on 01330 833448 or Pauline Wood on 01354 743002 or email katherine@hebron1.orangehome.co.uk**

GRAMPIAN SYMPTOMS STUDY

Have you had a sore throat, chest pain or a persistent cough in the last two weeks?

If so, and you are over 18, a University health researcher would like to hear from you.



Alison Thornton is leading the Grampian Symptoms Study, which aims to find out more about how people think about their symptoms and what they do about them. “The study involves talking to me about your symptom and filling in two short questionnaires.

Everything is kept confidential.

It should take less than an hour in total and can be done wherever suits the participant—either in their own home, or at Foresterhill.”said Alison, who is based at the University’s Centre of Academic Primary Care.

Alison added: “We need around 45 volunteers for the study and are looking to include a wide variety of people – men and women of different ages and from all walks of life.”

“Anyone who is interested in getting involved can call me on Aberdeen 437216 or email ajthornton@abdn.ac.uk and I will send them an information pack telling them more about the study. I can also come to community groups and tell them more about the study.”

“This is an opportunity to get involved in some community based research and we’d love to hear from anyone who thinks they might be able to help.”



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BALGOWNIE ROTARY CLUB

The Club has been quite active in the last three months - in addition to our regular Thursday Club nights. We have had outside visits to the new CLAN facility in Westburn Park, a tour of the International School of Aberdeen at Pitfodels, and the new Aberdeen City Council offices in Marischal College. All were well-attended by members and partners, and were followed by a meal. More visits are planned for the spring and summer this year.

Fund-raising events have been: packing bags in Asda, filling and despatch of 40 shoe boxes destined for African refugee camps, participation with other Aberdeen Rotarians such as selling raffle tickets for the new Mini in the Bon Accord Centre (raffle raised £63,000 to be divided between CLAN cancer support and other charities), and a pre-Christmas Santa Collection complete with Santa, sleigh and elves!

We spend our locally-collected funds in various ways such as: donations to Aberdeen-based charities, national and international Rotarian projects, and developing our relationship with Nagasaki, Japan through student exchange, celebrating our local hero Thomas Glover (1839-1911) who was brought up in Bridge of Don.

For the younger folks in our community, the club continues to organise the first round of the Primary Schools Quiz for eight schools in Bridge of Don, and we select and fund two secondary school pupils for the week-long Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) camp at Abernethy outdoor centre. This is a mix of physical training, group competitions and social events designed to develop new skills, experiences and friends. Participants always return enthusiastic and somewhat exhausted!

2012 has seen a major push for the whole Rotary movement with the Bill Gates Foundation to raise funds for the international effort **“End Polio Now”**. A huge amount of money has been raised and Balgownie Rotary has done its bit by raising more than £2,000. The job is not quite finished with 2 or 3 pockets of polio still occurring in Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. There were only a few hundred cases last year but we have to eliminate polio completely to prevent its proliferation from the small pockets left. But what a success story! Most of us can remember polio victims in Britain when we were younger. Now it's almost eliminated from the world!

All this has been in addition to our weekly meal, get together and speaker. The topics for the speakers have ranged far and wide – native American reservations in Idaho, touring Japan, the John Muir Trust and a quiz on local landmarks, to name but a few! If you are interested in finding out more about Rotary, give me a call, then why not come and visit us? We meet at 6.30 pm every Thursday at Mains of Scotstown, Bridge of Don – we are the nearest Rotary club to Belhelvie. There are also clubs at Ellon, Dyce and Aberdeen if a different evening would suit you better. Come along and bring a friend.

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Leigh Alexandra

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2013 BALMEDIE GALA
SATURDAY 8th JUNE 12 NOON TO 4 PM
BALMEDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following a very successful Gala in 2012, the Gala committee are now busy planning and organising an even better event for 2013. We cannot do this alone we need YOUR help!! We are currently looking for volunteers to help ensure that we have the best gala ever. This could include helping with the raffle or in the tea room, handing out flyers, being on the committee or baking, any little help makes a big difference.

We still have a balance left from last year and are looking to donate to local groups. This will be done in the month of February and we do apologise for not having the funds donated sooner.

This year we are hoping to have over 50 stalls and are looking at different entertainment for the children including bouncy castles and children's entertainers. So far we have confirmed a visit from **The Critter Keeper** who will be doing a demonstration with all his exotic animals.

To start the Gala weekend off there will be the 5-a-side football competition held at the Leisure Centre Football pitches; this will be for **ALL** ages (depending on how many teams enter) so make sure you get your teams in. Team forms and £25 admission fee should be paid in advance to the Leisure Centre by the 24th May.

Due to the parade not having the turn-out we had expected last year, there will be no parade this year and we do apologise.

I'm really looking forward to coming back after having my baby and leading the community to holding the best gala ever. If your community group or business would like a table at this year's Gala please contact **Louise Carstairs on 01358 741863**. Stalls cost £5 per community group and £15 for businesses plus a raffle donation. All monies raised are donated to local community charities and groups. Also if you are interested in joining the committee please don't hesitate to call me and I can inform you of the next meeting so that you can come along.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the Balmedie Gala and hopefully we will have some new faces on our committee. ☺ **Zara Wilke 01358 741874**

(check out our event on - Facebook - Balmedie Gala 2013)



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BOOKENDS

Our small friendly book group meets on the first Thursday of each month in the White Horse, Balmedie, at 8pm. Reading choices are varied, and range from relaxing, non-demanding reads, to more challenging, thought-provoking items. We source our books from those available through the local library. New members are always most welcome. If you are interested in coming along to see if this would appeal to you, please contact **Ailhlin** on **07904097795**, e-mail: ajc2804@abdn.ac.uk, for further details.

NEW!!! Potterton Under 5s Group – Started January 2013

We opened our doors for the first time on 18th January and what a great response - 13 children ranging from 18 months to 4 years of age all playing nicely and the mums having a cuppa and a fine piece!

It was lovely to meet all the mums new to the village and surrounding areas and to see familiar faces taking advantage of such a great group on their doorstep!

So if you are at a loose end on a Friday 930-1130am 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, story and song time and snack (included in the entrance fee)

£2.50 per child, £1 per additional sibling.

Non-profitable organisation – all money collected will be fed back into the group in the form of 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. This is extremely important especially in this snowy weather it may be cancelled for safety reasons.

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

CHEST HEART & STROKE SCOTLAND – working in Grampian



Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland [CHSS] improves the quality of life for people in Scotland affected by chest, heart and stroke illness, through medical research, influencing public policy, advice and information and support in the community. Our services are available across the country with a number of sources of support in Grampian.

The CHSS Advice Line opened in 1995 and is staffed by four Specialist Nurses from 9.30am-4pm Monday to Friday. Calls to the Advice Line on **0845 077 6000** are confidential and charged at a local call rate (we are happy to call people back so a longer call is not expensive for them). The Advice Line answers around 2,500 enquiries each year and gives information, advice and support to people affected by chest, heart and stroke illness, and their relatives and carers.

We also give healthy living advice and information to people wanting to reduce their risk of developing these illness. We are frequently asked for information about practical issues such as CHSS PersonalSupport Grants, travel insurance, driving, equipment, and help available in the community.

The Advice Line also refers callers to CHSS services (eg. support groups) and signpost them to organisations offering other services or information that they require. CHSS has recently affiliated The Grampian Cardiac Rehabilitation Association (GCRA) who provide exercise classes for people affected by Heart Disease. GCRA run 34 classes with a membership of around 650 across Aberdeen and shire. For more information or to find out where your nearest class is email info@gcra.co.uk or call 01888 569160

Our Voices Scotland Programme supports people living with chest, heart and stroke illness to become involved in improving local NHS services and anyone interested in opportunities to get involved with local health professionals can access free training and support. For more information contact Nicola Cotter, Voices Scotland Lead on 0131 225 6963 or email voicesscotland@chss.org.uk

We support health professionals too, in Grampian 266 people received Training in Stroke Care during 2011-2012. Training is available in the Grampian area to Social service and Community staff working with Stroke patients. The Stroke Training Coordinator and the Flexible Therapy Team from Woodend Hospital also offer a one day course 'Working with Stroke'. For enquiries and information contact: desmondchrystal@nhs.net /01224 556150

CHSS also offers a wide range of free to order health information on all aspects of living with a chest, heart or stroke condition. The full range is available to view on our website (www.chss.org.uk) or for individual orders you can also call the Advice Line to discuss your needs.

BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GROUP

The Group were delighted to be able to add some festive cheer to the village once more this Christmas, made possible by the generosity of all those who kindly donated their time and money to the effort.

Each year the group must raise in excess of £1500 in order to display, maintain, store and insure the light decorations. We were helped towards these costs by a very welcome donation from Belhelvie Community Council. We have also been delighted this year, to have the support of The Whitehorse Golf Society, who not only donated a much needed cash-boost but also made it possible for Santa's visit with his sleigh and helpers. Thanks to Bob, (Premier Store) for kindly supplying all the sweets enjoyed by the children, and to Grant, who got Santa and his sleigh mobile on the evening!

We enjoyed a busy, but fun morning raising funds at the Christmas Farmer's Market, thanks to all who visited and supported us, to Euan and the Whitehorse team for including us in the day, and for bringing the beautiful reindeer to the village.

The group has shared some joint ventures recently with the Better Balmedie Group, these have been very successful, which just goes to show what can be achieved when we all work together!

Both The Lights Group and Better Balmedie benefitted from a hugely successful Burn's Night, organised by Euan and the team at the Whitehorse. A great night – raising funds whilst raising spirits! We were very grateful for the participation of all the contributors to the evening including the Piper, Speakers and local band Hip Flask.

In the next Banter we hope to update you with plans for a permanent living Christmas tree, watch this space.....

GRIT FAIRIES

Ever wondered what these yellow bins placed at road junctions and the side of the roads contain? Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department have provided, very visible yellow, grit bins at strategic places around the settlements and filled them with grit/salt, so that during inclement weather the public can help themselves by gritting the roads. **These bins are refilled on a regular basis by the Roads Department. Anyone can use this grit to **grit the road**, (not for use on private paths and driveways). All you need is a spade or trowel and the will to help, not only yourself but also other road users. There are people who go out of their way to spread the grit and help others, some of them don't even drive!**



Just to clarify: According to Aberdeenshire Council's website there are no legal issues preventing members of the public clearing snow from public footways. If you know of a place that would benefit from having a grit bin, which will be used, please let Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department know and they will investigate. **A grit fairy**

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REMEMBER ...

**Copy date for next
edition May 3rd 2013
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VILLAGE ORDERLY – BALMEDIE – PAID WORK AVAILABLE

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.

Rosie Nicol 01358 742557 or email rosie.inform@lineone.net

BELHELVIE RAMBLES (BRAMBLES)

In the last edition of Belhelvie Banter I asked people throughout the parish who are interested in starting a walking group to contact me. 16 people got in touch, and on 21st January Belhelvie Rambles (BRAMBLES for short) was founded! The plan is to take turns to organise monthly walks around Aberdeenshire, over gentle terrain to begin with...We hope also to have local walks around the parish on a set day of the week. The next meeting is on February 15th at the Whitehorse when we are going to work out a programme of walks for the year. So, if you are interested in joining us, please get in touch.

Rosie Nicol 01358 742557 or email rosie.inform@lineone.net

BOOKBUG'S LIBRARY CHALLENGE

Bookbug's Library Challenge has started again and runs until the 27th April. This is open to all children from birth to four. Come into the library and pick up your Bookbug card and every time you visit the library you will get to choose a sticker and when you have six stickers on your card you will get to choose a lovely certificate to put up on your bedroom wall. The child who has collected the most stickers at the end of the challenge will get a prize. We are looking forward to seeing you.

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***Copy date for summer edition 3rd May 2013

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	Dates for your Diary		
March			
Sat 2	Litter Pick	Polytunnel, Leisure Centre, Balmedie	10am
Thurs 7	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.30-12.30
Thurs 7	Bookends	Whitehorse Inn	8pm
Sat 9	Belhelvie JAC Dinner Dance	Station Hotel, Ellon	6.30 for 7pm
Sun 10	Mothering Sunday	Belhelvie Church	11am
Tues 12	Friendship Group Talk on Solomon Islands	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 13	SWRI Mini show and competition	Eigie House	7.30pm
Sun 17	Communion Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
Sun 24	Palm Sunday	Belhelvie Church	11.30 on
Tues 26	Friendship group Entertainment	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 27	SWRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 28	Better Balmedie Planning meeting	Leisure Centre	7 - 9pm
Thurs 28	Maunday Thursday Service	Holyrood Chapel, Newburgh	7.30pm
Thurs 28	Term ends:	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon	
Fri 29	Good Friday Service	Belhelvie Church	7.30pm
Sat 30	Better Balmedie Workshop - Spring Gardening	Poly Tunnel	11am-2pm
Sun 31	Easter Sunday All-age Worship	Belhelvie Church	11am
April			
Thurs 4	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.30-12.30
Tues 9	Friendship Group Beetle Drive	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 10	SWRI AGM	Eigie House	7.30pm
Mon 15	Term Starts:	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon	
Tues 23	Friendship Group Ythan Singers	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 24	SWRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 25	Better Balmedie Wildflowers of Donside	Leisure Centre	7-9pm
Sat 27	Litter Pick	Polytunnel, Leisure Centre	10am
May			
Thurs 2	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.30-12.30
Thurs 2	Bookends	White Horse Inn	8pm
Mon 6	May Day Holiday:	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon	
Tues 7	Friendship Group Annual Meeting & Bingo	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 8	SWRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs 9	Bookends	Whitehorse Inn	8pm
Tues 21	Friendship Group Entertainment	Eigie House	2-4pm
Wed 22	SWRI (Whist - last for season)	Eigie House	7.30pm
Sat 25	Belhelvie Parish Senior Citizens Summer Outing		
Thurs 30	Better Balmedie Cheese and Wine	venue TBA	
June			
Sat 1	Better Balmedie Plant Sale	Poly Tunnel	10am-2pm
Tues 4	Friendship Group Entertainment	Eigie House	2-4pm
Thurs 6	Bookends	Whitehorse Inn, Balmedie	8pm
Sat 8	Balmedie Gala	Balmedie Primary School	12-4pm
Wed 12	SWRI Last meeting before summer	TBA	
Tues 18	Friendship Group Outing to Deans of Huntly		2-4pm

Copy date for next edition May 3rd 2013
belhelviebanter@live.co.uk