

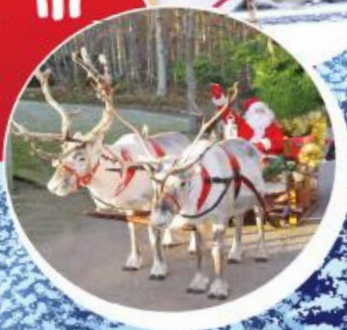
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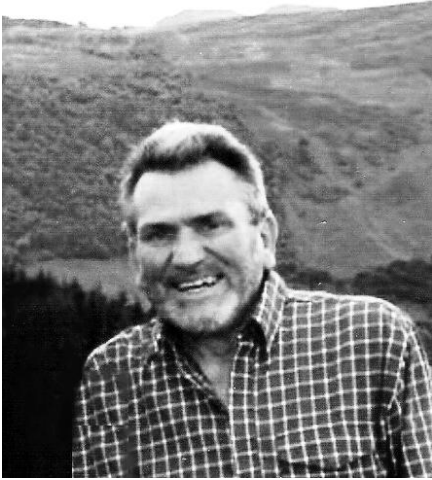
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EDITORIAL



It is with a great sense of loss that I write a short tribute to a dear friend, **Mike Daw** a long time advocate for Belhelvie Parish.

Mike was a founder member of our Community Council. He then served on the Council as Chair and then Treasurer for nearly 30 years and was a founder member of the Belhelvie and Foveran Community Trust. He edited the original Belhelvie News for 10 years, and contributed, proof-read and delivered the Banter when he was able.

Mike with his wife Dilly farmed the 65 acres at Hillhead of Craigie until 10 years ago when they retired to Newmachar.

He was my neighbour, my colleague, my long time friend and wise counsellor.

As an economist and adviser in Agriculture at Aberdeen University, Mike travelled widely completing more than 90 missions to 40 different countries on 5 continents working for agencies like the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. He had a particular relationship with Ethiopia in the 80's and 90's, forecasting food supplies and famine risk. Mike was equally at home in the company of UN ambassadors or poor small scale farmers, his interest was people. Mike taught extensively at University and developed a very popular Masters degree in Agricultural Development.

There are so many memories of his life in this community – the Millennium Bonfire on the hilltop at the farm, his delight at driving the councillors in a borrowed minibus, on the annual tour of the Parish and so many projects, fundraisers, public enquiries and debates. Too many to mention save to say we had an eloquent speaker who stood up for the Parish in various arenas and gave a measured, factual and convincing presentation on whatever subject challenged the community.

Mike lived a full and active life despite several serious illnesses; these appeared to be merely hurdles on life's race, a life he ran with grit, spirit and determination yet compassion and generosity. He made a difference – changed lives. **Editor.**

FIRST RESPONDERS

you can play a part, it's a simple role but will be so appreciated.

We are still looking to recruit volunteers either as Responders or fundraisers. You can give as little or as much time as you have to spare. PLEASE! Help us make a difference. Phone me: 07814 254 301

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BETTER BALMEDIE

Summer is now just a memory of glorious, sunny days, flowers that seemed to bloom forever and mouth-watering fruit and veg. It is time to clear out planters and restock for winter/spring and harvest the results of our labours. Yes, 2013 has been a good year for gardeners and all things horticultural. All volunteers take great pleasure in working hard to keep the village looking cared for and tidy and it is encouraging to hear comments of appreciation from friends and strangers alike.

The leaping dolphin display will remain in place throughout the winter. Our new 'train' planter has been placed outside the library and is looking nice and fresh with plants in the wagons and the coal bunker including smoke from the funnel in the form of long grass which sways realistically in the wind. Keep looking for our new surprise planter which will appear sometime next year.

The Better Balmedie calendar for 2013 was a great success and £2000 was set aside for the provision of a sensory garden. Negotiations with Aberdeenshire Council have taken place regarding a suitable site within the village but no final decision has yet been agreed. It is proposed that the calendar will be produced every second year as a fund-raiser for the garden.

One of our members has been litter picking throughout the summer months and her hard work and thoroughness has to be commended. Not all dog walkers remove their best friends' deposits and I would suggest that the job of litter picking would be more pleasant if they did so.

There are about thirty members of the group with up to fourteen being present at any one time. If you would like to offer your help we operate between 10.00am-midday on Wednesdays and Saturdays and would offer a warm welcome (we break for tea/coffee, biscuits and a chat at 11.00am) it's all very convivial and a wonderful way to meet new friends. No particular skills are necessary. If you can dig, weed, plant, compost, water, paint, cut grass, cut/shred wood, build planters, lay paths, reinstate drystone dykes, write, organise or anything else which may be useful then we need you. **Phone 01358-743851** if you want any further information.

Unfortunately one of our green, four-wheeled, drop-side trolleys has 'gone missing'. If anyone knows its whereabouts please phone the above number so that we can arrange its uplift and return.

Allan Jeffrey

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All welcome !



BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BCC supported Blackdog residents in their opposition to plans for an electrical sub-station linked to the controversial offshore wind farm. The proposals were rejected by 9 votes to 1 at the meeting of Formartine Area Committee. The developers - a partnership between Vattenfall, Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group and Technip - will now have to decide whether to appeal against Aberdeenshire councillors' decision or submit plans for an alternative site.

Permission has been granted to extend Balmedie Primary School, giving two additional classrooms and to providing a larger teaching area with extra storage for equipment and a medical room for the nursery.

BCC was saddened to lose one of its most active former 'office-bearers' with the death of Mike Daw. Mike served in most of the office-bearer capacities including chairman, treasurer and minute secretary. He also received an award from Aberdeenshire Council in honour of 25 years' service as a councillor. Mike is remembered with affection and respect.

Belhelvie Community Council AGM on Mon 17th Feb 2014 at Balmedie Library.

New members would be made very welcome.

BCC wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



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1ST BELHELVIE RANGERS

Last term we tackled one of the Millennium Development Goals to Improve Maternal Health by raising money to help a mum in a developing country, have a safe birth. This got us our “Together we can Fundraise” Badge.



This term we are working on a new Goal: Empowering Women. We will be looking to either Advocate or Raise Awareness on the subject.

Other things we will be doing this term include our Halloween Party, attending a Remembrance Service, Christmas crafts and the Christmas Party. After the holidays things might be a bit quiet as exams come up but we expect to start back on the 16th January 2014.

A few years ago the Rangers made gift jars for a fun and frugal Christmas present and I thought you might like the recipe.

One 8 oz jam jar (recycled if possible)

3 oz self-raising flour
1 tbsp cocoa
2 oz caster sugar
1 oz chocolate chips



- 1) Layer the ingredients in the jar in the order listed (or as artistically as you like)
- 2) Include the following instructions on the label:

Mix ingredients

- Rub in 2 oz margarine and form a dough
- Make 6 slightly flattened balls on a greased baking tray
- Bake for ~15 minutes and eat warm!

Rangers are for women aged 14-26 years old. We meet fortnightly on a Thursday in Potterton. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining as a member or as a helper.

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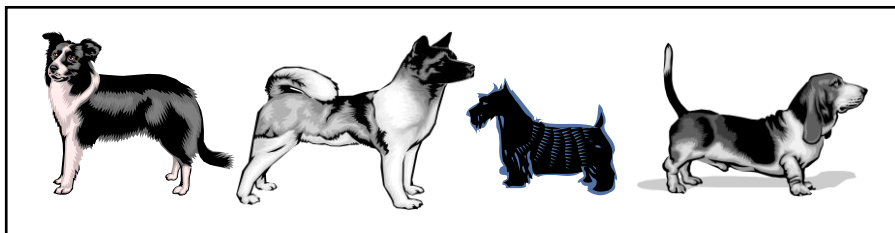
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HAPPY STRESSMAS!!

It is hardly credible, but it is THAT time of year again! The shops are filling up with shoppers chasing special offers, sifting through the piles of Christmas decorations, enjoying the jolly music blaring away and already there is a tangible tinge of fretfulness in the air! Yes, that one day which comes with so much baggage that many end up not enjoying it at all!

Sadly these days Christmas is far from unique in generating stress as it seems that the pace of life is ever increasing and we need to run faster and faster to stand still. We need to make sure we keep up with our e-mails, Facebook and Tweets, not to mention remembering to watch X-Factor, Strictly, at least one soap so we can keep up with all the gossip at work, and then all the other stuff of family life as well. Small wonder we all feel so busy!

It seems to me that hardly a week goes by without some poor frazzled soul attending my surgery, and when we stop and think about our modern life, it is not that surprising. So why is stress bad for you?

The main problem is the way our bodies respond to external or internal events or, to use a medical term, stimulus. We have a hormonal response which increases adrenaline; hence you can feel butterflies in your tummy, your heart beating more quickly, or feel a bit shaky. Steroid molecules are produced as well. This is fine, and indeed can be beneficial, if the stimulus is short lived, but if this becomes more prolonged, then problems can result. Chronic, that is long term, exposure of our bodies to the stress response can dampen our immune systems, making illness more likely, and there is some evidence that the brain can also be affected causing loss of function. This can affect the ability to concentrate, do intellectual tasks, affect sleep quality, and ultimately can possibly cause a lowering of mood. So stress is not good for you if you are exposed for too long.

I am not going to advocate that we ditch everything, though I would not be bothered if X-factor vanished! Nor do I think we all should run off and join some hippy commune and “drop out”. We just need to learn to slow things down a bit at times, and learn how to recognise when we are beginning to find the hamster wheel of life spinning just a bit too quickly.

We all have the ability to do this; it just gets a bit forgotten in the hurly-burly of modern life. A key factor is to realise that we do need to make time for relaxation and leisure, hence the “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” adage. The importance of making sure that you take a break has long been recognised, it is even enshrined in Genesis! Even the factory bosses in the 18th and 19th centuries eventually realised that their workforce performed more profitably if the workers had some time off, so this is hardly something new!

So what can we do? The most obvious thing to do is make sure that you try and keep time away from work for yourself and family, and (here I go again!) being active,



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such as walking, or doing sports. This helps reduce the stress response, promotes well-being, as well as helping battle any excess flab! Taking the time to look after yourself is time well spent and is likely to make you feel, and indeed, be healthier. An additional benefit may be that you get better at your job, as you will be more refreshed and perhaps have a brain that is working better as well!

If you do feel shaky and edgy and are aware of your heart racing, what can you do? An easy thing to practise is very SLOW controlled breathing. Taking a long slow deep breath in, holding it for at least 15 to 20 seconds and then blowing out slowly will help blunt the stress response and make the unpleasant effects ease off. This is important as it does help you feel that you are in control of things, and with practice can help you relax and unwind.

I hope that you all have a really enjoyable and stressLESS Christmas and a prosperous 2014.

Dr Alasdair Forbes



A THANK YOU FROM MARY

Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning

Mary Watson of Homestead, Whitecairns has asked me, through the pages of Banter,

“to say a Big Thank You to everyone who donated to my coffee morning and helped raise the grand sum of £1712. My helpers deserve a special mention for all their hard work as I would not manage without them.”

I went along later in the day, this year and the house was just as busy, with lively conversation, a lot of laughter, a magnificent spread and hardly a vacant seat in the house.

Well done Mary and Co (you know who you are!)

Ed.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IN BELHELVIE

.. has been quiet recently, but we have decided to try to have a meeting on Thursday 5th December in the Green Hut in Belhelvie at 1900. We are hoping to have a member of the police force there to give a talk about security in the winter at home. There have recently been incidents of houses being entered in the area. One was in Belhelvie and the residents had two cars taken.

The Police reminder is to lock doors at home and put car keys away. Neighbourhood Watch members did receive a safety item to help in this matter!!

We are trying to gain more members to The Belhelvie Neighbourhood Watch scheme. You can join up at WWW.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk and once you have signed up there, you'll need to search for the Belhelvie scheme and click to join us!!

Hope more Belhelvie residents can sign up to join us.....and hope to see people with ideas at The Green Hut on December 5th!!!

Paul Collier

Something You can do for Peace and Goodwill This Christmas



Good things are happening in Formantine to help everyone trade fairly and receive a reasonable price. We all shudder when we hear stories of working conditions in factories in Bangladesh, or the power of large corporations to push down prices. So what are we doing?

There is now a **Fairtrade Shop** in Ellon. At the moment it is only open on Fridays in the Ythan Centre (between the library and the shoe shop) from 10am - 2pm. There is also fresh fruit and veg supplied by CFINE at very competitive prices. The shop is staffed by volunteers from the Ellon Resource Centre who gain experience working in the community. Come and see what we are doing when you are in Ellon.

Closer to home, there is a Fairtrade stall in the Forsyth Hall on the first Sunday of every month from 12am - 1pm. We run this while the Church Guild is serving soup lunches, priced £2.50. Why not come and join us? Everyone is welcome.

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PARISH THREADS - EARTHLY DELIGHTS

by Mary Cane

Have you noticed that earth just stays where it's put? I mention this because a mystery mound at the base of a granite wall here at Ardo was explained recently when I watched a man scoop out the usual lump of leafy muck from our gutters and drop it below him. I reckon, over decades that action has been repeated many times. The vegetable matter just decomposes and stays ever so quiet as it solidifies and inches up the wall.

In the last few years more earth has been moved in Belhelvie than mankind managed in all the previous millennia. Whole hillsides have been altered. Lorry loads of waste have filled in the space between sandy hills. Tons of subsoil has been taken on unexpected journeys.

Hillside and seashore, crag and woodland, whin and muir, Belhelvie has such a variety of topography. Old droving ways, now tarmacked curl around the parish avoiding the outcrops of Belhelvie rock that poke out of the earth like giants knees and elbows. Rooks caw, Gulls mew. On showery days when there is accompanying sun we have glorious cloud formations and rainbows. Rain *bow* we say not Spectrum of light or Heaven's curve, because we named them long ago in the days when men carried a bow and arrow not a Samsung Galaxy.

It was only the other day I realised that Orion the hunter has a bow of stars up there in the sky as well as his sword and dog. He would have needed one of course he would. Consider the impossibility of hunting without a bow. Trudging along, never getting close enough to the prey to catch and dispatch it, the heavy sword and scabbard clanking, the dog never bringing anything back...hopeless.

This summer from the garden we looked up at the sky near Orion. We sat in the chairs wrapped in blankets with hot toddies to hand and watched the meteor shower before the clouds came over and the show ended.

The bio fuel boiler has now been installed here to keep us warm and smug, sorry snug. We felt we were moving heaven and earth to get it done, having to take off a roof from the old dairy so the hot water tanks could be craned in. However it's done. The vacuum mole sucks up the wood pellets and sends them scuttling along plastic tunnels to the burner and sweet smelling wood smoke comes out of the central heating chimney.

Our family from Michigan visited us as planned and we all had a good time although it's hard to surprise world-weary young grand boys. They had been space invaded and lego-ed out. They have been brought up with cartoon super heroes, been partied, swum, cycled and taken to fairground and circus. Never more than 10 seconds from a distraction, few things move them to the edge of their seats. What could we, Grandma and Grandpa 'Faraway' offer in Belhelvie we wondered? Night adventure and curious vegetables that's what, it turned out. With the parents away

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we were left in charge. Leaving the house at dusk to visit the badger sett up on the hill, we carried torches and a favourite plastic pirate sword for protection. We held hands and made our way through late summer grass to the old stone quarry. The stone here in the 18th and 19th centuries was dug out of the hill to make the field walls and the sides of our lane on the West side of Ardo. Holding back the weight of the hill, part of the lane is lower than the field like an ancient Hollow way. Of course we were making far too much noise to actually see a badger and even if they were at home they would have been holding their paws over their poor badgered ears. The shrieks outside their front door were piercing. I had to wrangle a skinny five year old, hopping and scratching his leg, away from the edge of what was a surprisingly huge hole in order to prevent a 'Child stuck in a Badger Sett' incident, whilst trying to answer the question 'Why do badgers have stinging nettles by their front doors Grandma?' Cows ambled over to see what all the fuss was about and loomed large in the gloom. We lost the pirate sword in the grass and decided to beat a slightly hasty retreat back over the hedge to the lane. There, while the cows watched us over the hedge, we were able to relax and relish the moment. Owls hooted and bats swooped against the moon. The boys 'wavered' their lights up through the tree branches as we walked back down to the house and cups of reviving hot chocolate. In the retelling for parents, that outing sounded like a pretty decent adventure.

Next morning we took them to the vegetable garden to find carrots. Picture this: Child in vegetable area standing amongst feathery foliage. Hands go out, flip over and are pushed outwards and upwards in the universal gesture that says: Oh Grandma, I'm afraid, (but not surprised), that you are wrong; carrots as we know them in America are long and coloured orange and there are none to be seen here. 'Ah ha,' think I, 'Watch this my little unbelievers'. I bend down, gather a few of the fronds together and pull. The soil releases a perfect carrot with a satisfying little '*thwock*' and I hold it aloft. For an instant their faces showed complete surprise quickly followed by a, 'Yea, oh yea that's where you find them, we knew that all along' but they happily set to, pulled more out of the ground and helped cook dinner.

Ghandi said: 'To forget how to till the soil is to forget ourselves'.

I hope those little boys tucked those experiences into their sword belts of knowledge gathered up their bows of memory and returned to urban America with good stories to tell at their Primary School news time.

By the time you read this, my fellow Belhelvians, I shall be in New Zealand again but with luck and a following wind I will send you back musings from the far South for the March issue.

Meanwhile,

'Til charcoal sprouts... Mary Cane

N A Thompson

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BALMEDIE BEAVER SCOUTS - “Harry Potter Sleepover”

On September Friday 13th Balmedie Beaver Scouts held their first Beaver Sleepover and went on a hunt to find Harry Potter who was somewhere in the Bridge of Don.

The 21 Beavers were “sorted” into different houses then took part in a range of activities to help them earn “house points”. They went to potions class, helped in the Hogwarts kitchen (made lots of cakes for lunch) and created their own magical creatures. They also made magic wallets, played Quiddich, went on a Dragon Egg Hunt and took part in the Triwizard Challenge.

By the end there still no sign of Harry Potter then we looked closely around the room. We had 21 children all wearing black robes and round glasses, carrying wands, and with a lightening bolt scar on their forehead. **We had found 21 “Harry Potters”**



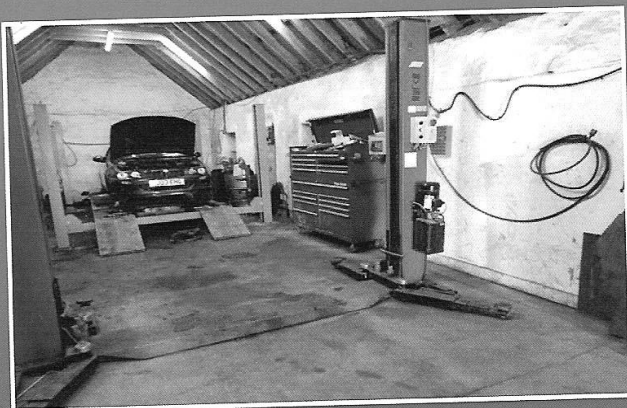
The event finished with the Hogwarts Feast and the awarding of the various cups and chocolate frogs.

The Beavers and Leaders had a great weekend, although the Leaders could have done with a bit more sleep!!

We would like to thank all the parents and supporters who helped make it such a success.

Elaine Neil Beaver Leader

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Christmas At Belhelvie Church of Scotland

LONG WALK PART OF GIFT

An African boy listened carefully as his teacher explained the traditional reason why Christians give presents to each other on Christmas day. *"The gift is an expression of our joy over the birth of Jesus and our friendship for each other,"* she said.

When Christmas day came, the boy brought the teacher a seashell of exceptional beauty. *"Where did you ever find such a gorgeous shell?"* she asked.

The boy told her that there was only one spot where these particular shells could be found. When he named the place, a bay many miles away, the teacher was left speechless

"Why ... why, it's gorgeous ... wonderful, but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get the gift for me."

His eyes brightening, the boy smiled and said, "*Long walk part of gift.*"

A couple of years ago I almost got the health and safety folk on my case because I started my Nativity Service talk perching on the top of a stepladder on the Forsyth Hall stage. (see photo!). I was trying to show the arc of the journey Jesus started at Christmastime – a journey that took him all the way from heaven to earth, from the stable to the cross, and from the tomb back to the Father’s side. A long and difficult journey; but the long journey was part of the gift, and it demonstrates the measure of God’s love for us.



One of the early saints once prayed: *“Remember, Lord, that I am the cause of your Christmas journey”*. I pull that quote out of the hat every Christmastime, and though I’m sure my church folk are tired of hearing it, I never tire of telling them! In an age when so many things conspire to make us doubt our self-worth, the fact that God would go to those lengths for you and for me speaks volumes about how much he values us.

This Christmas we have the usual blend of services and social events going on in the church – it would be lovely to see you at some of them if you are able to make it.

Every blessing for the season and for 2014 from all of us here at your local Church of Scotland.

Paul McKeown (minister)

Coming Up....

Saturday 23rd November - Christmas Coffee Morning in The Forsyth Hall from 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. There will be a great selection of quality, seasonal items for sale plus refreshments and a Prize Draw.

Sunday 1st 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.

Friday 6th December Quiz Night - 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 Jean McLeish on 01358 742142 .

Sunday 8th December 11 am The award-winning Bon Accord Silver Band lead our carols.

Sunday 22nd December 11am Nativity Service (held in the Forsyth Hall)

Tuesday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 4pm Community Carol Service (Held in Balmedie Leisure Centre). An informal, fun service aimed at folk with younger children.

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

Wed 25th December (Christmas Day) 11am Christmas Day Service. A short service to welcome Christmas Day – kids are encouraged to bring along a new present to show us!

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CHARITY FEATURE: When Elaine Strachan told me Balmedie SWRI were to have a talk on Mary's Meals I asked that she get an article to share with our Banter readers. I am grateful to Jane Hamilton for the following:

FEED THE WORLD, MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE.

When Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi in 2002 and met a 14-year-old boy whose mother was dying from AIDS, neither of them could have imagined what would follow, partly as a result of their conversation.

Magnus asked the teenager, Edward, what his dreams were in life, and his reply — “I want to have enough food to eat and to be able to go to school one day” — inspired the Mary's Meals campaign.

In 2002, Mary's Meals began supporting 200 children in Malawi with one cup of vitamin-enriched porridge (locally called likuni phala) every day they attended school. Ten years on, Mary's Meals is providing 792,621 children with a daily meal in their place of learning, across 16 countries where hunger and poverty often prevent children from gaining an education.

Mary's Meals has grown into a global charity, setting up school feeding programmes in some of the world's most deprived communities. Serving food in school draws hungry children into the classroom where they can achieve skills and knowledge that can set them free from poverty in the future.

Former child-soldiers in Liberia, semi-nomadic children in Kenya, and working Dalit children in India are among those whose lives are being changed by this simple, community-owned initiative. The average cost for Mary's Meals to feed a child for a whole school year is just £10.70.

Much of the charity's growth has come as a result of volunteers and supporters spreading the word about its work through fundraising events and presentations in local clubs, churches, and schools. This grassroots support is vital and helps the charity to keep costs low.

Mary's Meals is committed to making sure at least 93p of every £1 donated is spent directly on charitable activities and could not function without the support of thousands of volunteers both in the UK and overseas. In addition, there are 16 support groups currently registered worldwide who fundraise on behalf of Mary's Meals, stretching from Canada to Croatia and Austria to Abu Dhabi.

Volunteers are also the life-blood of the school feeding programmes themselves, with community members — often parents and grandparents of children receiving Mary's Meals — working on a rota basis to cook and serve the daily meals. In Malawi alone, there are thought to be over 65,000 volunteer cooks helping to prepare likuni phala for 622,554 school children across the country.

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Recruiting volunteers to staff the school feeding initiative is essential, as is commitment from the community to partner with Mary's Meals in order to join the programme. Certain other criteria must be met, such as suitable roads and access for the Mary's Meals trucks to deliver necessary ingredients to each school.

In countless cases, the introduction of Mary's Meals brings communities together in unexpected ways, and sometimes, even the desire to be part of the programme is enough to build strong bonds and give rise to determined community groups.

Earlier this year, a small community from a remote area of Malawi — where many children were hungry and out of school — approached Mary's Meals in the hope of joining the programme. Unfortunately, despite the clear need and support from willing volunteers, there was no proper road into the village and therefore no way the local primary school could be added to the list of schools receiving Mary's Meals.

However, led by the headmaster Daniel Masika, the community sprang into action and mobilised the support of seven surrounding villages to rebuild the road and erect a bridge to provide access for the Mary's Meals trucks, in the hope they could be involved. Following this mammoth effort from the community and its neighbours, Kaphilikwete Primary School has been added to the list of 435 schools now receiving daily meals in Malawi.

“The arrival of Mary's Meals has changed lives, especially the lives of the children,” Mr Masika told us as he explained how school attendance has increased following the introduction of the daily meal.

Through Mary's Meals, children who otherwise might resort to begging or working to eat can attend a place of education where they are safe and given a daily, nutritious meal that helps them to concentrate on their learning, which could one day lift them out of poverty.

The opportunity to receive a good meal in a place of education is genuinely life-changing for so many children, especially those who have been left orphaned. One such child, who is now thriving thanks to Mary's Meals, is 13-year-old John from Malawi. However, a few years ago, it was a very different story.

After losing both of his parents to AIDS at a very young age, John was moved between relatives' houses before ending up on the streets begging for money and food. His day-to-day life was a struggle and he had to travel to hospital on foot to pick up his medication, which he needs to keep him alive.

When he heard about Jacaranda School for Orphans, his life changed. The 400 children attending Jacaranda School for Orphans receive Mary's Meals every school day. For John, the porridge served in school provides life-saving nutrition as it enables his medicine to work properly.

“When I started here I received my uniform, then I received my porridge ... just like everyone else, so I felt the same as them.”

And not only has John learned to read and write— thanks to Mary's Meals and Jacaranda, his writing has been recognised by the Queen, who he recently met after writing the winning entry to the Royal Commonwealth essay competition.

“As an orphan, I have nothing. This porridge is so important to me, it gives me power to see, read and write. It gave me the power to write my story for her Majesty.”

He was invited to Buckingham Palace in recognition of his achievement and his journey—which took him on three planes—has inspired his new life goal to become a pilot. His essay, called “The day I wore my best clothes”, tells the story of his transition from a street beggar to well-dressed student and fended off competition from another 8,500 entries.

Stories like John's — stories of health, happiness, and hope — are made possible by the amazing support Mary's Meals receives from groups and individuals all over the world. However, with over 57 million children out of school and thousands many millions more unable to concentrate in class because of hunger, the work of Mary's Meals is only just beginning.

2nd BELHELVIE BROWNIES (Balmedie School)

2nd Belhelvie Brownies joined with 3rd Belhelvie Brownies on 7th November in a trip to the Satrosphere where the girls saw some demonstrations and get some time to explore. We are also going to the Panto in Inverurie in December along with several other units in the district. This is something that the girls really enjoy and it is a great opportunity to meet other Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from other areas.

Next year will be the Brownie 100th Birthday and there are going to be several events both being organised through Scottish headquarters and Gordon. We have had it confirmed that the girls will be attending an event in Perth next year.

We currently have 18 girls and we have a young leader just about to start with us. If anyone is interested in joining 2nd Belhelvie Brownies we meet at Balmedie School on a Thursday between 6.15 pm and 7.45 pm please contact:

Marianne McIntosh on 01358 724231.

CUBS



The first weekend in October, 14 of the older cubs went to the Fyvie Brownie house for a sleepover. We arrived on the Saturday morning and never stopped until the Sunday afternoon, well it seemed like that! The cubs made solar ovens, had a tour of Fyvie castle, a walk round the grounds with the NTS ranger and on the Saturday evening after the ranger had come to speak to everyone about the wildlife at Fyvie, all the cubs went on a bat hunt, complete with bat detectors, at the castle! Sunday morning the cubs made s'mores and attempted to cook them in their solar ovens but unfortunately the sun decided not to shine.

FIRST RESPONDERS UPDATE

We have several keen volunteers (BUT WE WOULD LIKE MORE) and a lot of support, advice and encouragement from our neighbouring responder teams. Our next meeting will be early December, to complete the initial round of form filling, with training commencing in the New Year.

We aim to fundraise to have Public Access Defibrillators installed in accessible locations in the main village centres and a team of trained volunteers who can respond to callouts. We ask that you come along to lend your support as a fundraiser or as a volunteer and be part of this worthwhile venture. We hope you never will need, but you never know when you might need a First Responder. A little of your time would be so much appreciated. **“YES YOU CAN”** **07814 254 301**



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We are commissioned by the local authority to provide Pre-school Education. This means that the staff is trained to nursery standard and we are inspected by HMI and the Care Inspectorate. We follow the Curriculum for Excellence.

The session times are Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 – 12 noon, 1.00pm – 3.30pm: and Wednesday 9.30 – 12 noon. Children that attend Playgroup can enjoy our private lunchtimes run by Childcare at Home this then allows the children to stay the whole day.

Congratulations to Lily Bremner, Beau Donald, Ollie Cooper, Alfie Sweet and Eesha Patel for the rhymes they created; we received notification that they are to be published in “My Nursery Rhymes – Scottish Rhymes”. The competition was run by the Young Writers. All the children received a certificate and a bookmark. Parents and staff are delighted for the children. They showed their creativity and developed their skills in literacy and rhyming words.



We also won one of the Halloween Packs from “Fitstars”. This was an activity to develop skills in physical play which also incorporated a story. The children really enjoyed this activity!

This is a busy term for the children at Potterton as they will be encouraged to look after the environment i.e. feeding the birds over the cold winter months, looking after the garden and walks round the village. They will also be celebrating St Andrew’s Day, Space, Day and Night, Christmas crafts, a Christmas concert and their Christmas Party where Santa may drop in to say” hello”.

We have a few vacancies; so if your child is three years old and interested in a place please call **01358 743335 for information. Ask for Jenny, Joyce or Emma**

BEAVERS CUBS SCOUTS EXPLORERS

BEAVERS – For 6&7 year old boys & girls. The Wednesday night colony is very popular, supported by 4 Beaver leaders. They meet in Balmedie School at 6p.m.

CUBS – For boys & girls aged from 8 to 10½. Ours Cubs regularly get out and about. Our two Packs meet Monday & Tuesday nights in Potterton Community Centre at 6:30p.m.

SCOUTS – Our Scout Troop for 10-14 year old boys & girls. Meet Friday nights 7-9:30p.m. in Potterton and are always out and about.

EXPLORERS – Our 14-18 group for girls & boys usually meet in Potterton on Fridays from 7:00-9:30pm.

HELP, HELP, HELP.

To better facilitate both boys and girls at Scouts we are seeking to add a female adult or couple to join our team of Leaders at Scouts. We currently have five leaders at Scouts so you would join an established team.

We are the victims of our own success and are overly in demand at Beavers. We are considering forming a second Beaver Colony, possibly in Potterton or Belhelvie. Whilst this is a genuine wish, it can never become a reality without sufficient adults, both women and men coming forward with the will to make it happen. Training and support would be available to get things moving.

If you would like more information about becoming an adult volunteer in Scouting and what the commitments are in becoming a leader, get in touch.

To contact any of our sections give me a call.

IAN THOMSON

Group Scout Leader. 01358 743156

e-mail - balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com

BALMEDIE CRAFT CLUB

The first week back after the October holidays we had great fun with a Halloween party with plenty of food and games. The craft club meets in the school (out of school room) on Thursdays 6.30-7.30pm (the cost of £1.50 per night) and is open to all primary school children. We do lots of different crafts: painting, modelling, sewing and a special favourite is baking. Coming up in the next few weeks we will be making special things for St Andrews Day and of course Christmas, finishing with our Christmas Party on the 12th of December.

The craft club will start up again on January the 16th when we will be making crafts for Burns Day in January and of course a special Valentine's item in February.

Catherine 01358 743114.

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The first Thursday of each month (term time only), there is a Rhymetime session for under-fives, please note that the sessions now run from 11.00 -11.30.
Come along and join in the fun.

We would like to say a big thank you to all the children who took part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge, you certainly kept us all busy! The Challenge was a great success and well done to our competition winners.

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Have a lovely Christmas and a very Happy 2014



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BLACKDOG OF YESTERYEAR

With so much media coverage being given to it at present, it's perhaps not surprising to be writing about Blackdog. However, this short article focuses not on present events concerning offshore wind turbines but on a fascinating activity

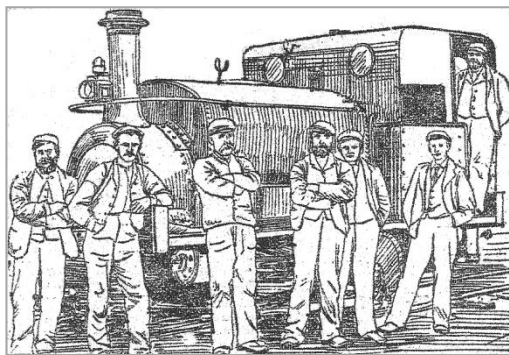


which dates from about one hundred years ago. Have you ever wondered why there is a tenement block on the A90 at Blackdog when passing? It relates to the Seaton Brick and Tile Company which was located there at Strabathie.

Nearly one hundred people were employed at the works and the company even constructed a light railway to transport their products to

their large depot at Bridge of Don. The train comprised a locomotive and five wagons; it travelled from Bridge of Don, following a route to the west of Balgownie Links and along the dunes to Strabathie. As well as using the railway, which was three and a half miles long, to transport fired clay products, it also transported the employees to and from the works every morning and night (no gridlock on the A90 for them!).

An article published in 'The Aberdeen Daily Journal' on 23rd November 1903 describes the works as being capable of producing 5,000,000 clay bricks, 1,750,000 drain pipes and 'immense quantities' of chimney cans, flower pots, fancy fern baskets, etc. every year. The clay was extracted by hand from the clay fields at Strabathie, then loaded onto wagons and



transported to a platform fifty feet up at the top of the clay mill where it was processed through a series of rollers, crushers and mixers before being shaped into bricks, pipes, etc. Cutting machines could produce 40,000 bricks per day; they were then transported to the drying house (150 feet long) for three or four days before being loaded into one of the two huge kilns to be fired. One kiln could contain almost quarter of a million bricks! About three tons of coal was used for each firing which took about 24 hours.

(Pictures courtesy of Aberdeen Daily Journal)

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BALMEDIE LEISURE CENTRE

Here at Balmedie Leisure Centre we have been working very hard to create a centre that caters for all residents of Balmedie and the surrounding areas. We have listened to your requests and have fitted a new entrance with sensor activated doors. This is already making a big difference to our disabled users and those with pushchairs.

The next phase of development will see the extension of our building to include a purpose built café! Hopefully this will be ready to be enjoyed by Spring 2014.

2013 has seen a variety of new fitness classes added to our timetable, all are proving to be a big success. We have included a large selection of classes with no need to pre-book and suitable for all adults of any fitness level. We have also included classes that progress during a block such as our “6 Week Challenge” and “The Christmas Trimmings”. Both of these have proved to be very successful. Please feel free to pop in and see our timetable. Whether you want to “Zumba” your way to the new you or if “kettlebells” is more your thing, we have the class for you.

Our Staff and customers have all worked very hard to improve the Centre and raise vital funds to support our extension project. We would like to take this opportunity to say a big Thank You, we really appreciate all the support we receive.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you all along with many new faces in the New Year.

Balmedie Leisure Centre Management Committee



S W R I

The clocks have gone back an hour, the evenings are colder and darker; why not cheer yourself up by coming along to Eigie House lounge on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

The welcome will be as warm as the lounge is always cosy. We have a varied programme of speakers, making Christmas table centre pieces and self entertainment all coming up in the next few months. A cuppa and biscuit/cake are all part of the evening as well. There are no parking problems and there is a ramp for the less able if you would like to join us and have problems with transport please don't be put off because transport could be arranged.

Please contact **Elaine Strachan on 01358 743173** if you wish any more details.

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY TRUST

A steering group has been formed to discuss the creation of a voluntary Community Trust to serve the parish of Belhelvie - Belhelvie, Potterton, Balmedie, Whitecairns and Blackdog, and all other dwellings in between the villages. A Trust would be an "umbrella" organisation, to support existing projects, clubs and organisations and to develop new projects as identified by residents of the parish. There are lots of things going on locally, but many organisations struggle to get volunteers, funding etc. The Trust would pool resources and hopefully make it easier to make things better in our neighbourhood.

Developments of the Trust are very much at an early stage, but we'll keep you updated via "Banter". If you want to know more, or could help in any way please phone **Rosie Nicol on 01358 742557** or email rosie.inform@lineone.net

TARTS AND CRAFTS

Tarts and Crafts café and art gallery is situated behind the library in Balmedie; find us by following the signs through the village. We have good parking and facilities for people who are disabled.

We serve delicious home-cooked food, catering for all tastes and special dietary requirements. Food for vegetarians is one of our specialities. All soups, cakes and bread rolls are baked on the premises using fair-trade ingredients where possible.

Opening times – 10am to 4pm on Saturday

In addition to relaxing in front of our wood burning stove with one of our home bakes and a freshly made hot drink you will be surrounded by our display of art and crafts. If you have a hidden talent why not approach us to display your creations?

Our hours of opening are limited due to a lack of volunteers and we are always on the search for volunteers. 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.

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



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SHARE: Volunteering for Medical research made easy



NHS Grampian and the University of Aberdeen have a great reputation, internationally, for undertaking many pioneering medical research projects which have improved patient care and our understanding of a variety of health conditions. Clinical trials are vital to the development of new medicines and other new life saving treatments for use within the National Health Service. One of the biggest problems for researchers in Scotland and throughout the world is in recruiting people to studies. Yet we know that many people would be willing to help with research if they knew about projects particularly those relevant to problems they or their family might have.

SHARE (Scottish Health Research Register) is an exciting new NHS Research Scotland initiative to establish a register of people, interested in participating in health research and who agree to allow SHARE to use the coded data in their various NHS computer records to check whether they might be suitable for health research studies. The register resides entirely and securely within the NHS. SHARE will use established and approved record linkage methods developed within the Scottish Health Informatics Programme.

The medical research can be anything from just filling in a questionnaire about your diet and exercise regime, to a clinical trial for an illness you may have. Alternatively, if you have no significant health problems you may specifically be invited to take part in research which requires healthy people. All **SHARE** does is let you know about studies which may be relevant to you. If you are interested and want to know more then we let the researchers know. However, if after reading about it you don't want to take part you just say no.

The vital ingredient in many important breakthroughs made in Aberdeen, such as MRI imaging, potential new treatment for Alzheimer's disease and new insights in the fight against superbugs and Cancer were simply local people volunteering to help us. You can remove your name from the register at any time and your routine healthcare will not be affected

I have signed up for Share and if you would also like to help, please read about it and sign up online today at **www.registerforshare.org**. Please also try and get

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- A prescription collection service from the following local surgeries:
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- Disposal of Unwanted and Expired Medicines
- A NHS supported stop smoking programme
- Emergency Hormonal Contraception
- Minor Ailment Service
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- Chronic Medication Services

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another 10 of your friends or family to sign up. It will only take a minute and no further action will be required from you. There was a public launch of Share on the 10th of October when the Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Cllr George Adam, NHS Grampian Chief Executive, Richard Carey and University of Aberdeen Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Sir Ian Diamond signed up to the register.

We have a target of **110000** volunteers in Grampian and we will be very grateful if you register. **Please also encourage another 10 of your friends or family to sign up.**

It will only take a minute and no further action will be required from you.

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Christmas service times for St Columba's Catholic Church, Braehead Way, Bridge of Don, which serves this area.

Carols by Candlelight, December 15th at 3pm; a break from the frantic Christmas shopping, maybe.

Christmas Eve 9pm, Christmas Day 10am. Parish Priest is Fr Gabor Czako

TO CONTACT: email:belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or tel: 07814 254 301

Our current advertising rates:

Full page (A5): £60 (Black & White) £90 (Colour)

Half page: £32 (Black & White) £50 (Colour)

Quarter page: £18 (Black & White) £27 (Colour)

Copy of articles (Font: Times New Roman 10) and adverts for the next edition due out in **March 2014** required to be with

belhelviebanter@live .co.uk by 17 January 2014

If you would like to assist in delivering Belhelvie Banter in your area please contact us.

**Read current and back issues of Belhelvie Banter on line at
www.belhelviebanter.org**

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*IFC Inside Front Cover

*IBC Inside Back Cover

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	DATES FOR YOUR DIARY		
December			
Sun 1	Christingle	Belhelvie Church	6.30pm
Tue 3	Friendship Group	Eigie House	2pm
Thu 5	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.00 am
Thu 5	Bookends	Whitehorse Inn	8pm
Fri 6	Quiz night	Forsyth Hall	7.30pm
Sun 8	Bon Accord Silver Band	Belhelvie Church	11am
Wed 11	SWRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Sun 15	Carols by Candlelight	St Columba's RC Church, BoD	3pm
Tue 17	Friendship Group	Christmas Party Eigie House	2pm
Fri 20	School Term ends Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy		
Sun 22	Belhelvie Church Nativity Service	Forsyth Hall	11am
Tue 24	Community Carol Service	Balmedie Leisure Centre	4pm
Tue 24	Midnight Mass	St Columba's RC Church, BoD	9pm
Tue 24	Watchnight Service	Belhelvie Church	11pm
Wed 25	Christmas Day Mass	St Columba's RC Church, BoD	10am
Wed 25	Christmas Day Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
January	2014		
Mon 6	Start of Term Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy		
Wed 8	WRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tue 14	Friendship group	Bingo Eigie House	2 -4pm
Wed 22	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tue 28	Friendship group	Talk on Gomel Eigie House	2 – 4pm
February			
Thu 6	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.00 am
Tue 11	Friendship group	Eigie House	2 – 4pm
Wed 12	WRI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Fri 14	Mid Term	Balmedie Primary, Ellon Academy	
Fri 14	School In-service day	BoDA	
Mon 17	Mid-term	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy	
Tue 18	School In-service day	Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Acad	
Wed 19	School In-service day	Balmedie Primary, Ellon Academy	
Tue 25	Friendship group	Eigie House	2 – 4pm
Wed 26	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
March			
Thu 6	Rhymetime	Balmedie Library	11.00 am
Tue 11	Friendship group	Eigie House	2 – 4pm
Wed 12	WRI Mini Show	Eigie House	7.30pm
Tue 25	Friendship group	Eigie House	2 – 4pm
Wed 26	WRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
April 4	School term ends Balmedie Primary, BoDA, Ellon Academy		