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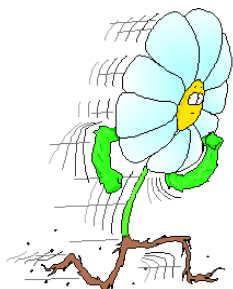
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NEWS FROM THE BEAT

Spring has brought that inevitable change to the countryside and the Community Policing team has also had some changes in recent months. I continue to lead the Community Policing Team for the Formartine area, Sergeant Phil Lamb who had responsibility for the Belhelvie Community Council area has moved on, to be replaced in the meantime by Sgt Lorraine Mackie, who heads across to the Ellon Team having been based at Inverurie for a number of years.

The 1st birthday of Police Scotland ended what has been a busy year in terms of us adapting to being part of a bigger policing family, but at the same time not really changing what we do in our local communities. It has been a message from the Police Scotland Executive that Community Policing is at the heart of what we do. This has been evident through the process of ensuring that we keep the same numbers of officers on your Community Policing Team. The difference is we are now recruiting from across Scotland and beyond and as evidence of this, our latest recruits include officers from Aberdeenshire, Motherwell, Ayrshire and Northern Ireland. They are all starting their careers in our local area and they are all fitting in well to our team.

One of the changes we saw recently was the formation of a Flexible Policing Unit; this is a team of officers who can deploy anywhere in Aberdeenshire. In April, we deployed them along with Local Officers, Roads Policing officers with Automatic Number Plate Cameras and plain clothes officers in Balmedie, Belhelvie and Potterton as part of Operation Barwick. This operation combines high profile patrolling with intelligence gathering to deter the travelling criminals who have been committing sneak in thefts in our villages in the last year. This operation will be back to the Belhelvie Community Council area in the future. While we have had a short period of respite from the car thieves, I would urge everyone to continue to double check that they have locked their cars, garages and house doors, particularly when you go to bed for the night. An additional security step is to ensure you do not store car keys or valuable items such as mobile phones and electronic tablets in open view near house doors.

The return of the brighter nights and better weather also sees many of us spending more time on sports pursuits and in our gardens. Many in our communities spend hard earned money on items such as golf clubs and pedal cycles. Again the advice is to secure them when not in use, preferably out of sight. While bike stamping is generally a thing of the past, an Ultraviolet (UV) marker pen is a great way of marking your postcode (or mobile phone number), on sports equipment which will assist in reuniting it with its owners should the worst happen, it also acts as a deterrent to opportunists. This advice applies equally to gardening equipment.

My final Crime Prevention advice tip relates to the must have gadgets that many now carry, such as mobile phones, and electronic tablets. Many of these items have a locator ability, this enables the owner to find where the device is from a home computer, and this helps if you lose your device or if it is stolen. In the last three months we have had over £2000 worth of found mobile phones handed in at Ellon which are unclaimed, had the owners activated these devices or marked them with UV Marker we may have been able to reunite them with their device. Many mobile phones contain a person's full life history on

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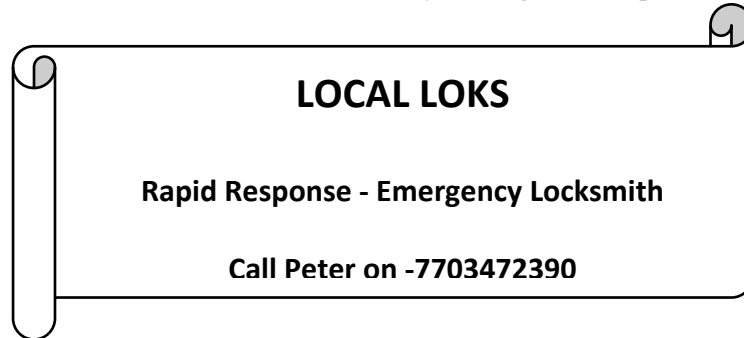
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them and the loss of such items can be expensive, so please look after them and activate all the security features as soon as you purchase them.

In closing, I will take this opportunity to let you all know what our focus will be for the next year. We remain committed to Local Policing and maintaining a visible presence in our communities, we will continue to respond to complaints of speeding in our communities and we will deal with those who park near schools in a manner which puts children in danger. Antisocial Behaviour will continue to be dealt with robustly particularly where groups of people disturb residents near their own homes. We have also added that we will focus on reducing crimes of theft from homes in the future through increased patrolling and pro-active policing to detect and deter those responsible.

Remember you can contact us 101 at any time to pass information or report non-urgent incidents, we can be contacted by email at MidFormartineCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk. You can also follow us on twitter: @ShireCPolice **John McCluskey**

Community Policing Team Inspector



BELHELVIE WAR MEMORIAL

The war memorial at the church lists the names of men from the parish who died in the two world wars, 26 in World War 1, 9 in World War 2. At the Remembrance Day service the names of all these men are read out, but we do not know where in the parish all of them originated. Working through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records it has been possible to discover the relatives of most of them, but sadly there are some for whom no home address or next of kin was given. There had to have been a local connection for the name to go on the memorial in the first place so I have listed them here and ask anyone who can has an idea as to family or home address to contact me:

Sergeant A Pirie	Private E Campbell
Private J Bain	Master Seaman R Montgomery
Private J Adair	Private J McDonald
Sergeant W Reid RAF	Sergeant D Duguid RAF

Contact: Malcolm Ross, Balmedie Farm, Tel 743398

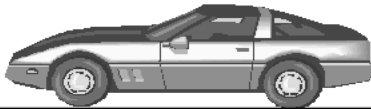
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PARISH THREADS

Living Dangerously...

by Mary Cane

...Yes, we are living dangerously. Back in Belhelvie from a winter away in New Zealand we are outside wearing hard hats and carefully passing wedges of mortar from hand to hand. Gently tucking wall stones back into place without dislodging the overhanging boulders that could fall on us.

Trees are like children they show us the passage of time. Walls on the other hand are frozen at the moment of their building. They exist in a state of somnolence. They just are, until they return to the ground in a hurry. Part of the front face of our eight-foot high garden wall collapsed four years ago after a fall of snow. It was too big a job for us at the time so we braced and propped the remaining stones hoping it would somehow mend itself. Of course it didn't. It did what walls do...nothing and it's only now that we have summoned up the energy for mending it.

Working underneath the stones is a delicate business. Our strategy is to do a small section, leave it to harden and return. We use the concrete mixer a decent distance away to avoid the vibration setting off a rock fall. We are watched by the Speedwell eyes of the Green Alkanet plants that have taken up residence in the spilled lime mortar. Plum blossom prettily fluffs around us and the sun is shining creating long shadows along the rest of the wall. We make steady progress.

I wonder where all this stone would have come from. It is a mixture of fieldstone and granite. Most likely it will have been quarried from the fields around here and brought in by horse and cart in the 1800s. The large quarry hole in the field in front of the house that the badgers have taken advantage of is the best bet. The smaller hole where we once found pale green bottles behind the house is the second. I pick up shards of a brown pot by the wall that had tiny holes where the glaze has bubbled. Although old, it would be more recent than the beakers in the Aberdeen Museum that were found in graves near here. This area retained the habit of interring people crouched up with a pottery urn for two hundred years longer than the rest of Europe. Mind you loyalty to the house of Stuart persisted long after the revolution of 1688. There is a theme here. Oxen were still used for ploughing in Belhelvie when horses became the norm. It has been said that in the North East the people have always been, not renegade exactly but dissident, independent, able to keep secrets and mind their own business.

Our history is still around at a distance and in memory. One of my friends was having some work done on her farm recently and the digger driver uncovered a small, handled granite implement. Looked at closer, it turned out to be a hand held oil lamp from the Stone Age. A small reservoir had been patiently pocked out of its centre and the handle had an indent for a thumb. Belhelvie has stony ground. As well as useful whinstone from the quarry and bricks from Seaton brick works, this parish has produced massive amounts of gravel and sand for concrete. They must be using

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plenty for the expansion of the airport now. Have you seen it lately? It's hard to recognise this description of Friday night travel from London by Lord Tweedsmuir in 1963:

'It's another world dropping into the Aberdeen airport at dusk. It is a very cosy airport. Oyster Catchers sit on the runway and you smell the air of the hills as you come down the ladder and feel deep country around you. As it is only six miles from Potterton it is an almost miraculous way of reaching home on an end of week evening. We can do a whole days work in London and not leave the city 'til five and still be back at Potterton at about 10 o'clock and on a summer evening admire the garden in daylight...'

We have been bored lately by conversations with our young people. We have been told about their gym sessions and running times, core strength, food intolerance and power diets. Friends have had similar experiences. (hash-tag, Generation gap). When Chris returned from working away in Norway the other week we exchanged our own variety of chit-chat and found it so much more entertaining. I described a programme I'd seen about dog-sledders who had carried diphtheria serum hundreds of miles across terrifying terrain to save the people of Nome in Alaska. (It's a dream of mine to drive a team of huskies.) He, a long time fan of Irish folk music had found out why the Clancy brothers always wore those Arran sweaters on stage. Perfection.

There has been progress on our poly-tunnel. Bought last year but with no time to put it up, this month, we have brought out the components and laid them on the ground. Stored in the shed over the winter we found that mice had eaten down through the folded edges of white plastic. Opened out there is a raggedy repeat pattern of tooth marks along one side. I could mend it with the white tape supplied for accidental damage but I wonder if there is a possibility of patching with clear coloured plastic. It might create a stained glass effect. Just imagine, the sun shining over the newly mended wall and through the polythene, sending streaks of rainbow light over my lettuces and beans. Until next time.

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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

1st BELHELVIE RANGERS AND VOLUNTEERING WITH GIRLGUIDING

The Rangers had a great time having an “almost” electricity free night in the dark and having a go at making fake blood for our Brownie 100th Birthday badge (not at the same time of course). We also did a bit of serious stuff where we learnt some first aid to go with the fake wounds. Unfortunately, due to my work commitments, we are having a break from regular meetings and won't be back until after the Summer holidays. Please get in touch now though, if you are interested in being a member (young women 14-26 years old).

In the meantime, I thought I would tell you a bit about volunteering with Girlguiding and how it can benefit you. Not only does volunteering look good on a CV, it can also give you lots of skills and can build confidence. Leaders are given lots of support and training. There are even online courses to build your skills: <http://glow.waggs.org/>

There are several ways to volunteer, not just as a leader; we welcome unit assistants, shoppers, accountants, fundraisers, equipment keepers, campers, and crafters. Whether it's an hour or two every few months or a regular weekly commitment, every bit is appreciated. Adult volunteers can be female or male aged 18 years+.

Currently the Guide unit, which meets on a Tuesday night in Balmedie, is looking for more regular helpers. Get in touch if you want to be part of it.

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

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*We always welcome features, items of news, poems
and stories, events information and anything which
you think other 'Banter' readers may find interesting.
Please submit material to:
belhelviebanter@live.co.uk*

Thank you, Editor



FIGHT OR FLIGHT

The year is slipping away with alarming speed, the clocks have sprung forward, and I can scarcely believe that I have to scratch my head again for inspiration! Sometimes it is straightforward, but at other times it isn't, just like many things in life. This time I felt that I should write about something which is very common, but not that well understood. This problem is one which we doctors encounter on a very regular, if not weekly basis, and can be quite a challenge for patients. What I am referring to is a range of symptoms which are gathered together and classed as Anxiety Disorder.

So what do I mean? We are all familiar with feelings of nervousness; imagine walking home alone on a dark night and suddenly you are aware of footsteps behind you, your pulse quickens, you feel "butterflies" in your tummy, you may feel your mouth go dry, you breathe a bit more quickly, you are getting ready to run, or maybe fight off a potential mugger. You glance round, your senses at fever pitch, your heart is thumping, fists clenched and.... your friend says "hello, thought it was you!" Instantly you relax, maybe you swear at them, but in a few minutes you are at ease again. Now imagine if the same thing happened for no obvious reason when you were sitting quietly at home watching the telly, and found that you couldn't just switch it off? Almost certainly you would feel very alarmed and understandably worried, thinking "what on earth could be wrong?".

Sadly in many cases there is no obvious cause, and the fundamental issue in Anxiety Disorder is when this anxiety response is switched on at an inappropriate time. So what is happening in the body?

When a threat is perceived, we have an automatic response which is activated. The adrenal glands pump adrenaline into the blood stream, causing the heart to beat more quickly, breathing increases in depth and speed, all to increase the amount of oxygen in the blood so that the muscles have the fuel to enable a burst of vigorous activity. Another effect is that blood is diverted from the digestive organs to the muscles, so you may feel sick or need the loo, especially if you have just eaten. All this is fine if you are going to have to run for your life, but is a problem when you do not need to, so what happens then?

The extra oxygen breathed in causes the body to lose carbon dioxide, so there is a subtle change in the body's pH, causing a slight rise, often causing tingling in the hands, feet and face as well as tightness across the chest. This is very alarming, so then more adrenaline gets into the blood stream and things can get worse. By now, this, along with the thumping, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing and a sweaty feeling, the person experiencing this is feeling very unwell, probably fearing a life threatening condition like a heart attack. Indeed many people who experience this for the first time will often land in A&E as chest pains are often part of this, but can end up feeling very concerned when having felt so unwell, are then told that everything is fine. This is amplified by the accompanying built in brain response which is programmed to tell you "something is really wrong, get out of here or get ready to fight!"

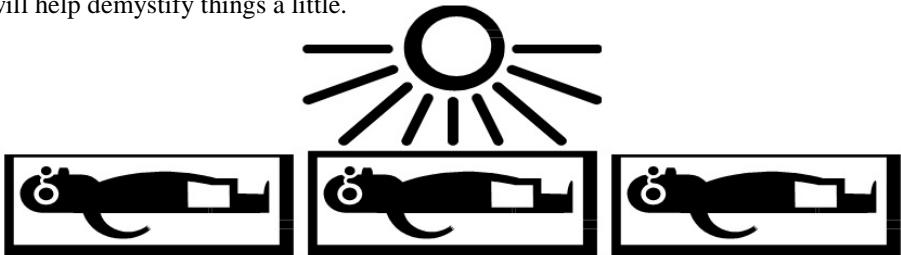
As a doctor we need to be careful to be sure that we are indeed dealing with anxiety, and so often will do many tests to be sure. This can often be a double edged sword as each negative test can increase the worry that something must be really wrong, or things are being missed. This is why this is such a complex and challenging problem for many people.

Anxiety disorder is therefore a normal pre-programmed response which we all have “hard wired” into us, being activated inappropriately. Many times when a patient comes in and gives me a history of this, because I know what happens, I can make them feel surprised by being able to tell them what symptoms they have been having before they tell me. This is not because I can read minds (just ask my better half!) rather it is just because I know what happens, and I find that this can help demystify what can be a very scary thing for patients.

So what can be done to help? Clearly there are medications that can be used, and indeed there are times that pills are necessary. However in many cases a careful explanation, detailing what is happening, and sharing the frustration that medical science has yet to fully explain this, gives understanding and thereby the chance to start controlling things and so get better.

The main problem is how awful you can feel when this happens, so you need to work hard to regain control. Firstly you need to use up the un-needed oxygen by breathing in a very slow deliberate way. A slow, deep breath in, followed by 15 to 20 seconds of holding it, then breathing out slowly and waiting 10 seconds to repeat this, is a very effective way of reducing the high oxygen level. The key word here is SLOW as rapid breathing will make things worse! Once the oxygen level begins to drop, the unpleasant tingling and tight feeling eases, and control can be regained and the symptoms ease. This takes practice and really needs to be combined with seeing a trained health professional.

Clearly this article may make some realise that they may have this problem, as it is very common. Many find that a drink or other drugs can help, but sadly this can cause more problems, so speaking to your doctor is a key way to get help. If you do feel this has struck a chord, do seek assistance. Many don't, fearing that they will be dismissed as “silly” or “don't be daft, it's all in your mind”. This is not the case and I hope this will help demystify things a little.



Have a good summer and fingers crossed for a repeat of last year's sun!

Dr. Alasdair Forbes



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BELHELVIE PARISH CHURCH

“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people together to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea” – (Antoine de St Exupery)

Go through the doors of any church on any Sunday morning and what you’ll find – at least on the surface – is largely mundane. If it’s your local church you’ll see folk you know as neighbours, or recognise from the shops or the GP surgery. Folk you like, folk you may not get on with, folk you don’t know. There will be the usual round of songs, prayers, readings and sermon; an offering will be taken and there will be lighter moments with the kids as they come in from Sunday School to show off their latest craft masterpieces. Some folk will stay for coffee afterwards, generating a buzz in the Church Hall. And then, once the tables are wiped, the floor swept, and the doors locked, the last stragglers will head home to get on with the rest of their day.

All very ordinary, it seems.

What brings folk there, though?

A moment’s thought suggests a host of reasons – habit, duty, nostalgia, faith, yearning, need, grief, desire. As I look around my congregation on Sundays, I read all of those in the body language of my people. But it strikes me that beneath them all is the kind of longing that St Exupery describes in his opening quotation. That longing for *‘the endless immensity of the sea’*.

For some, that longing is close to the surface, for others it’s buried deep in their psyche, but I’m convinced that all of us know that same pull. A sense that life is more than we yet know. Sometimes it’s wonder and joy which spark that recognition; sometimes it’s the challenges of life, when they shake the foundations of all we thought was secure. More often, though, we suppress thoughts of *‘the immensity of the sea’* because life on the land is just so busy. We don’t have the time or inclination to pursue those kinds of thoughts, and – to be honest – we’re more than a little worried about where they might lead us.

Church is a community of folk who – for an hour a week at least, and hopefully more – are willing to set aside all the other things we might be doing so that we can get in touch with that unnamed longing within us and not pretend it away. We don’t have all the answers, but we have an inkling of one who does and it’s he who’s our focus when we gather together on Sundays. Church isn’t, and has never been, a community who think they’ve arrived – they’re a community who are on the way. Trying, through faith in Christ, to answer the longing for meaning and purpose we’ve found hidden in the depths of our own hearts. The door is always open to anyone who wants to come and start looking along with us – you’re always more than welcome.

Want to know more about faith, but no place to ask your questions?

Have you been thinking about coming about the church, but wondering how to get started?



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We're running a Christian basics course for four Sunday evenings in June and you're warmly invited! Over food and conversation we'll look at some of the basics of our faith – thinking about who God is, how to begin to pray and how to engage with the Bible. The course begins on Sunday 1st June, but the week before is the Pot Luck supper and that would be a great time to come along and meet folk before the course begins.

If you're interested and would like to know more, please contact myself:

Rev Paul McKeown on 01358742227 or pmckeown1@btconnect.com

Please Note – Change of service time from 11am to 10am on Sundays 6th July – 17th July inclusive. We tend to make our summer services shorter and more child friendly.

We are taking a break from Summer Holiday club this year, but will keep you posted about other children's activities later in the year.

BEAVERS CUBS SCOUTS EXPLORERS

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

CUBS – For boys and girls aged from 8 to 10½. Our cubs regularly get out and about. Our two packs meet Monday & Tuesday nights in Potterton Community Centre at 6.30pm.

SCOUTS – Our Scout Troop for 10 -14 year old boys and girls. Meet Friday nights 7-9.30pm in Potterton Community centre and are always out and about.

EXPLORERS – Our 14 – 18 group for girls and boys usually meet in Potterton on Fridays from 7 – 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 victim of our own success and are overly in demand at Beavers. We are considering forming a new 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 74315

email:balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com

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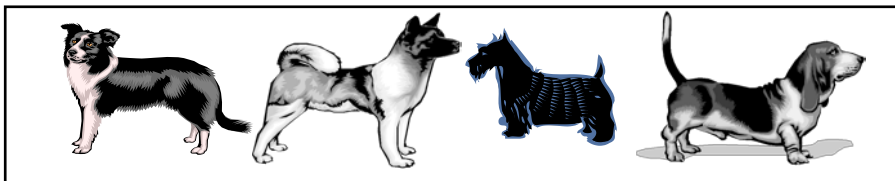
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SPRING WALK IN BALMEDIE

A lovely spring-like day on Sunday 9 March 2014, and I thought I'd take advantage of it to walk around Balmedie village. Alders and hazel have had catkins hanging from twigs for the past few weeks, and other trees and shrubs are now showing signs of breaking into bud. Double flowered Snowdrops have been creating a good show for a good while now in the Magnificent Sevens Wood, and in patches elsewhere, and the crocus planted by the volunteers in Better Balmedie have also been making an appearance for some time. The daffodils that the same volunteers have been planting around the village each autumn, some with the help of children from Balmedie Primary School, are also thrusting up from the ground and it won't be long before their yellow flowers are turning heads once more. The smaller yellow flowers of the gorse have been on show for a few weeks, especially where their heads can catch a touch of the sun. Soon flowering currant, forsythia, and spirea in our gardens will also open their buds for early flowering.

The birds too are active. They are beginning their spring songs lustily, and practising their calls for attracting mates. They are also busy hunting out likely sites for building their nests. A Blackbird has been busy singing from 4.30am in the morning from a high perch near the Whitehorse Inn since the middle of February. Starlings have just arrived in the first week of March from abroad and are strung out along the telephone wires to catch their collective breath. If you are lucky you may be able to catch the song of another spring migrant - the Chiffchaff - along the Eigie Burn, in the Magic Woods near the school, or at the Magnificent Sevens Wood. The rooks in the high tops of the trees at Balmedie Eventide Home can be heard constantly rasping and cawing as they tussle with one another over nesting sites, or the acquisition of twigs and small branches to reinforce existing ones. They will mob Buzzards that fly overhead to warn them to keep away.

On a bright day like today it used to be pleasant whilst walking around the south side of the village to see some eight miles down the coastal curve of dunes and shimmering seas that mark the edges of Aberdeen Bay, towards the silhouette of Girdleness lighthouse on the headland of Balnagask at Aberdeen. This gave us residents a valuable sense of place. Now, however, since Aberdeenshire Council approved an extension to the Easter Hatton tip, that pleasant view has been blocked off. We can now only see the huge ugly mound of the tip traversing the coastal strip from east to west, interfering with the natural north-south flow of the natural landscape. To the eye when facing southwards, the tip now practically links with the mothballed tip at Wester Hatton with its upstand ribs onto which nets used to be attached over the waste piled underneath to stop the birds getting at it. A similar proposal to extend the tip at Tarbothill was refused a few years ago because of an anticipated intrusion into the landscape; no such luck here. Formartine Councillors ignored the objections of local people and the Belhelvie Community Council to the planning application. Instead, the councillors voted to allow this ugly blot on our landscape, and I shall never forgive them for ruining our view for ever. It is so sad that at a time when there is so much burgeoning spring beauty around us that others can come and wilfully spoil it. C'est la vie!

Ian Nicol



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THE STORY OF THE ABERDEEN WAPINSCHAW

(Held annually at the Blackdog Rifle Range)



The Wapinschaw, or weapon-show, was devised to compel the inhabitants of burghs and parishes to gather periodically to exhibit their arms and to show not only that they possessed weapons appropriate to their individual stations in life, and in good order, but that they were able to use them.

The first Wapinschaws were held over 580 years ago, for in 1424, in the reign of James I, Parliament, sitting at Perth, passed what is probably the shortest Act in the statute book.

'It is ordanyt in ilk scherifdome of ye realme ther be maid Wapynschawing four tymis i' ye zer'

It was probably the brevity of this Act that made it necessary only one year later for Parliament to pass another Act which described the procedure to be followed at these meetings, the persons by whom they were to be conducted and the penalties that would result from failure to obey. From then on for more than 300 years there are numerous enactments in the statute book and the proceedings of the Privy Council of Scotland relating to 'Wapinschawingis' and preparedness to defend the realm.

In Aberdeen, the earliest reference to such a gathering in the minutes of the Town Council occurs in 1496 when the burgesses were required

'to compeir personalie one Monunday the XVIII day of July instant at the Cunnegar Hill'

The establishment of the National Rifle Association which held annual competitions in England led to the development of the Aberdeen Wapinschaw into a 3 day meeting in July 1862 with competitions for rifles, carbines and artillery, the 68 pounder guns firing at targets floating almost a mile out in Aberdeen bay.

In 1869 Queen Victoria presented the first of the prizes which she gave annually throughout her lifetime. Thereafter King Edward VII continued the practice and King George V presented a challenge cup. This generous encouragement has been of inestimable value to the Wapinschaw and the present Association is very proud that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is its patron.

With the exception of the years of the First and Second World Wars, the Wapinschaw has been held annually since 1862. Throughout, the Association has attempted to keep

the competitions reasonably in line with current shooting practices whilst at the same time trying to maintain the traditional atmosphere of the meeting.

In more recent years the Wapinschaw was financially supported by the Highland Territorial and Auxiliary Volunteer Reserve Association (TAVRA) (now Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)) and in 1996 Highland RFCA assumed the running of the event. Highland RFCA supplied members of the Committee, premises and financial support. The Committee was drawn from RFCA, tri-service Reserve Forces and Cadet Personnel and Civilian Gun Clubs.

In 2004, 51st (Scottish) Brigade became the sponsor of the Wapinschaw, supplying manpower, materials and infrastructure in support. In 2010, due to financial cutbacks in the MoD, 51st (Scottish) Brigade removed all support for the Wapinschaw. HRFCA continues to give financial support. The Committee comprising volunteers and members from the Cadet and Gun Club organisations assumed the running of the Wapinschaw.

A magnificent collection of trophies is presented for competition and this year sees the 134th event. **A.J. Reproduced by kind permission of The Aberdeen Wapinschaw Association**

BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Every Sunday at 11 am - Everyone Welcome

All our Services are at Balmedie Leisure Centre, Eigie Road, Balmedie.
Our Sunday Services are informal and family friendly - you are invited to come visit us – without any obligation.

LADIES GROUP

Every Wednesday morning, we gather a small group of ladies together for a coffee. If you would like to join us, please phone Margaret on 01224 703248

YOUTH - Our Minister is involved in organising an Annual Summer Camp, for our group of Churches (Primary 5 and upwards). It is planned for the first week of the school holidays from 7th to 11th July. This year children from other Congregational Churches in Scotland have been invited. **Destination – Perth.**

An interesting programme is planned.

If you have questions, please telephone me Rev. Andy Cowie 01224 703248

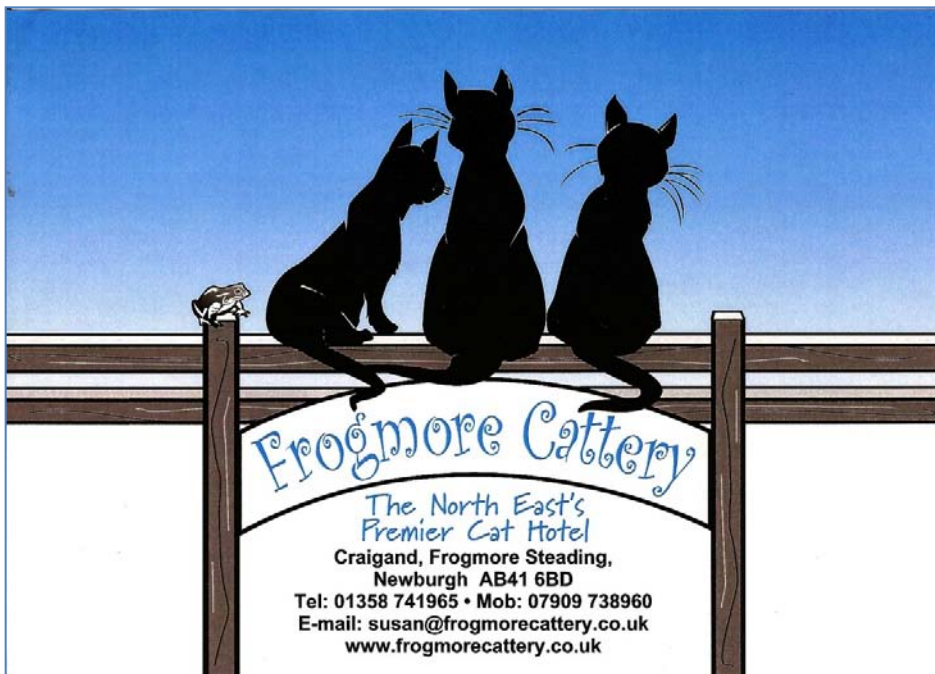
POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Our Services now take place at Potterton Community Centre every Sunday at 6pm and everyone is welcome

FUTURE - We are looking ahead and want to help establish groups that are of interest to the residents of Potterton. If you have any suggestions, please contact Rev. Andy Cowie.

Our Church is here to help and support; be it a happy occasion or sad, we are here for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or if you simply need a listening ear.

For further information, please contact: **Rev. Andy Cowie 01224 703248**



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BELHELVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

WESTER HATTON LANDFILL SITE

A response was received from Formartine planning service with regard to the restoration of Wester Hatton Landfill Site. A discussion was held with the operator FCC Environment and a timeline identified for the restoration process.

Amongst issues agreed is that a public consultation should be held in line with the legislation. If the application is approved, by early April 2015 the restoration scheme will commence.

Let's hope this long running affair can be drawn to a successful conclusion and this time next year the restoration process will be well under way.

EASTER HATTON LANDFILL TAX CREDIT SCHEME

We have received a response from Easter Hatton Environmental; they will consider any suitably registered and compliant Environmental projects submitted for funding by Belhelvie Community Council. BCC will put forward local Environmental projects up to the date when the scheme ends on 31st March 2017. An approach for 3rd party funding has been made to Rod Gunson of Aberdeenshire Council for his assistance so that we can expedite the process. We will keep you updated on progress.

FLOWER PLANTING

We are to receive our allocation of annual flowers for planting from Aberdeenshire Council in the 1st week of June. Belhelvie Community Council as always will oversee the planting of the settlements of Whitecairns, Belhelvie, Potterton and Blackdog. The Better Balmedie Group will oversee the planting in Balmedie.

VILLAGE TIDY SCHEME

In line with an agreement with Aberdeenshire Council's Formartine Area Committee, Belhelvie Community Council is looking to engage village orderlies to keep the settlements of Balmedie, Potterton and Belhelvie tidy. An honorarium is paid and duties entail routine maintenance such as sweeping, litter picking, weeding etc. on a once a week, adhoc basis. Tidy up tools and gloves will be provided. The honorarium for Balmedie is £1,000 whilst Potterton and Belhelvie receive £500 each. Orderlies are expected to work during the months of June – September. If you are interested in any of these positions or know of any person who would be interested, please call David Watson 01358 7421118 or email details to eagg@hotmail.co.uk

PLANNING FOR REAL: BELHELVE, BLACKDOG, POTTERTON & WHITECAIRNS

This project is now in the hands of Sophie Humphries and Annette Holland of Aberdeenshire Council, who are currently working on the first draft of the report. This will be put forward for comment to BCC in June and hopefully it will be published and made available to the local public in September 2014.

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BALMEDIE BEAVER SCOUTS EARN THEIR CHIEF SCOUT BRONZE AWARDS



Beaver Scouts take part in many activities which go towards earning six different Challenge Badges. For each badge they have to take part in four activities. If they successfully complete all six badges they earn the highest award in Beavers the "Chief Scout Bronze Award" from our Chief Scout Bear Grylls. In February we had nine Beavers who had all earned their Bronze Award. As this was such a special occasion we had a big presentation and

invited the parents of all the Beavers to attend.

The boys had looked over all they had done to gain the award and read out the activities they had enjoyed the most. These included: playing parachute games, planting seeds, flying round the world (in one evening), collecting money to help Scouts in Malawi, visiting the fire station, going on a treasure hunt, trading with pasta to learn about Fairtrade and attending the Gordon Beaver Fun Day where they tried going over rope bridges and cooking pancakes on a fire.

Balmedie Group Scout Leader "Mr T" gave out badges and certificates to Samuel, Jamie, Ross, Angus, Matt, Brodie, Nathan, Lee and Cameron.

Well done to them and all the other Beavers who have earned this award.

Elaine Neil Beaver Leader

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BETTER BALMEDIE

As I write, the wonderful show of spring flowers around the village is coming to an end as the daffodils die down. Earlier this year brought a fabulous display of crocuses and now we busy ourselves with the task of clearing the planters, ready for the new summer flowers to be bedded in. The poppy seeds, in memory of the sacrifices made in the First World War, part of a nationwide initiative - have already been sown, both around the village and around the school, with the help of some of our most junior gardeners. We are busy behind the scenes, bringing on plants in the polytunnel in anticipation of the PLANT SALE, which this year will take place in the polytunnel (behind the Leisure Centre), on Saturday 31st May between 10a.m. and 2p.m. We look forward to seeing you there; your support for this event in the past has been most heartening; let's hope for a morning of sunshine. The following Saturday, 7th June, the polytunnel will again be open for sales in conjunction with the Summer Fete being hosted by the Leisure Centre on that day.

Village support is much appreciated; we have again been fortunate to benefit from the collection tins the Co-op has kindly displayed for us - thank you again to them, and to their customers who have so generously contributed their loose change. The recent gift from a local resident of his green-house is another example of generosity which is much appreciated; thank you.

Over the winter, I think we have all enjoyed the latest feature provided by Better Balmedie, the little train puffing its way along (clever use of plants...) in front of the library - the result of many happy hours of labour put in by some of the men in our group - thank you to them for putting those smiles on our faces!... By the time you read this, we will have had another visit from our good supporter Tim, the Head Gardener from Leith Hall, who at the end of April did a workshop on growing vegetables. No doubt this will not be Tim's last contribution; he is a valued supporter of what we try to do.

Litter picks have been ongoing, sadly a most necessary activity. We have been joined in these by some classes from the school, with the active support of their teachers, and by some parents with their children out of school hours - well done to all concerned. We would like to encourage more families to join us in these events in the future. We are lucky to have got some new brightly-coloured litter bins in the village, so hopefully an improvement to the litter problem could be in sight? In relation to the litter problem, sadly the dog-poo situation does not seem to be going away, a real problem for families going for walks around our lovely village with small children, who only too often do not notice what is underfoot until it is too late. Thank you, of course to those many dog-owners who do pick up, but maybe cause for thought for those who do not always...

Our plans for a sensory garden in the village have not been forgotten. This would be a big project, and is to be taken forward by the recently-formed Belhelvie Community

Trust, once suitable land is available. The funds raised by Better Balmedie, with the generous support of the village, have been transferred to this body for this specific purpose.

Finally, as always, visitors, and potential new members, are always welcome, both at the polytunnel (Wednesday and Saturday mornings 10 until 12), and at our monthly meetings on the last Thursday evening of the month, 7.30p.m. at the library.

For more info.: www.betterbalmedie.org or www.facebook.com/BetterBalmedie, or contact allan_jeffrey@ymail.com (01358 743851).



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

We also have a very friendly Knit & Natter Group every Thursday 10.30 – 12.30 so if you like knitting come along and join us and have a cup of tea/coffee and natter.

Look out for the Summer Reading Challenge which will be starting again towards the end of June.

Last year's Challenge was really successful and for the second year in a row Balmedie Library had not only the most participants for our size of library but we had the most children who completed the Challenge, so well done to all who took part, do you think we could make it three in a row?

We look forward to seeing you during the summer break.

Did you know that being a member of your local library allows you access to so much more than what is in the physical building? Every library within Aberdeenshire provides free Internet access and many of our libraries offer free WI-FI access. This gives members the chance to use many resources, such as encyclopaedias, newspaper databases and ancestral archives for FREE within the library.

Most of these resources are also available to use at home and are available 24/7 to library members.

It doesn't cost anything to become a member of the library – just bring photo ID and proof of your name and address (Something like a driving licence is ideal) and library staff can join you there and then.

Why not step into your local Library and find a whole new world where our helpful staff will assist you to get the most out of your library experience.

Maureen Muirden

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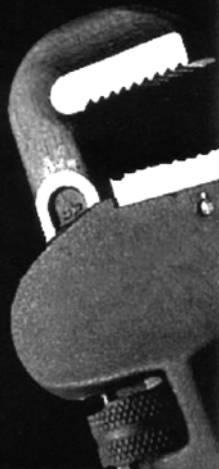
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BELHELVIE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH UPDATE

The Belhelvie Neighbourhood Watch continues to be active in the village, even though we've not felt it necessary to hold a meeting since we had a visit from Police Scotland to highlight the security methods we could use at home.

There have been numerous reports of travellers setting up camp in the local area recently, and although we can't jump to blame them for any break-ins, it's always worthwhile checking your security & locks on outbuildings and garages.

There haven't been any reports of housebreaking in the village, but Police Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch are still recommending locking doors and double checking them...especially at night!

We will arrange a meeting late in the summer and we are always welcoming new members from Belhelvie and surrounding areas. You can join up by registering at **www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk** and after you have signed up, you need to search for the Belhelvie group and join the group there. If you don't join the Belhelvie group at that stage, I won't have notification that you registered.

It would be great to have more households in Belhelvie joining the group. If you require more information, you can contact

**Paul Collier on 07825216233 or
01358 743233**

BOOKENDS

Our small friendly book group meets on the first Thursday of the month in the White Horse at 8p.m.. We read a variety of books, and try to alternate more challenging titles with more light-weight ones to ring the changes. We try to source most of our books through the local library. If you think this might appeal to you, contact **Ailhlin on ajc2804@gmail.com**



*Balmedie Beach Easter
Sunday 20th April
members of Belhelvie
Parish Church
congregation. The
service was conducted
by the Rev. Dr. Paul
McKeown who led
almost 40 people in this
celebration service.
Arthur Nicolson.*



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3RD BELHELVIE BROWNIES (POTTERTON)

We have just come back from our Brownie camp at Crathes Castle.

We all had a great time, leaders and brownies alike, all 6 Brownies.

We were involved in every part of the camp from pitching our own tents to cooking to cleaning the toilets and taking the tents down again.

We chose the theme Frozen and decided to make snowflake biscuits, Fimo model Olafs and ice palaces. We had new names for our sixes, we were The Trolls and The Mini Olafs, and we renamed our leaders, they became Elsa, Anna, Prince Hans and Marshmallow. Luckily our Elsa didn't freeze anyone and our Marshmallow didn't turn mean. We also went for a long walk round the woods and lake looking for items to list that began with the letters in Frozen. Our walk took us to the adventure park and to the shop to spend our money. We walked the short way back past the castle, thank goodness, because we were tired out.

We were all doing a camp badge. We have two, the Brownie Camper badge and the Brownie Camper Advanced badge. For part of the advanced badge we had to make up a game for everyone to play. We had "Frozen Corners" and "Frozen Fish".

Here are things we said about our camp:

"I liked making the Olaf snowman with Fimo"

"I enjoyed washing the dishes for some strange reason"

"I liked putting up the tents"

"I liked sleeping in the tents"

"I enjoyed having fun with friends"

"I liked going on the walk to the adventure park and shop"



Katherine Hebron-Scott 01330 833448

katherine@hebron1.orangehome.co.uk



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CUBS



The Tuesday night cubs were treated to visit to a local stable in Potterton where we learnt 101 things we never knew about horses, including how to make a horse to laugh, road safety near horses, how to feed a horse without losing fingers and why extra strong polo mints buys you friendship with horses. Our thanks go to Mrs Sophie McKen and the star of the show, Spook the horse.

SCOUTS NEED YOUR HELP! THINKING CAPS ON!

Our Scout group is looking for your help.

We have been unsuccessful in finding a Lockup/Garage which will keep our equipment secure but afford us easy access.

1. Do you know of any lockups/garages available locally at a reasonable rate for our trailer and some equipment?
2. Do you know of a small accessible plot of ground for lease suitable for building a lockup?

If you can help or know of the availability of either of the above, please let us know.

Ian Thomson, Group Scout Leader. 07743844040
balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com

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BALMEDIE SCHOOL

We have another busy term ahead of us. Special events include a celebration of the Commonwealth. Classes will be working to gain an understanding of what the Commonwealth is. This will be studied in the context of the Commonwealth Games. We hope to mark the occasion with a special event.

Further details to be confirmed.

The work for the nursery extension and two mobile classrooms is well under way. Work is scheduled for completion at the start of the new term.

A successful Eco Sustainability Theme week was held last term. Classes learned about different forms of sustainable energy.



Our P7s worked with Baker Hughes and learned about oil rigs. We are very grateful to Baker Hughes for their input.

We look forward to an eventful term. The last day of summer terms ends on 4th July.

Allison Conner Depute Head Teacher

FIRST RESPONDERS

Belhelvie Community First Responders are currently fundraising and recruiting within the Parish with a view to setting up a scheme in 2014. We are indebted to Newmachar Freemasons for their recent generous donation of £100.

The need for such a scheme has been under discussion for some time. Several local schemes exist and operate very successfully in neighbouring areas (Bridge of Don, Newmachar, Pitmedden & Inverurie) - this has prompted formation of a group of local volunteers. These volunteers need help with fund-raising, and are awaiting training by The Scottish Ambulance Service.

Our aim is currently two-fold, firstly, to raise funds for the purchase of Defibrillators to be sited at various locations within the Parish & to train a good number of local volunteers in the use of these; secondly, to raise sufficient funds to start up a Community First Responder Scheme (approx £6,000 start-up cost & a further £3000 per year to maintain) - such funds will be necessary for the purchase of equipment, uniforms and provision of transport. We will also continue to recruit volunteers to staff the scheme. Supplementary information can be found here:

[/www.scottishambulance.com/YourCommunity/role.aspx](http://www.scottishambulance.com/YourCommunity/role.aspx)

Fiona Clark

Coordinator

email belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or Call Audrey Jeffries 07814 254 301 for details

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

If are interested in co-ordinating a neighbourhood watch group, going on their mailing list, or you would like a reminder of the meeting nearer the time please contact banter by e mail belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or 07814 254 301



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*IBC Inside Back Cover

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	DATES FOR YOUR DIARY		
May			
Mon 26	Community Trust meeting	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Wed 28	SWRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Sat 31	Better Balmedie Plant Sale	Poly Tunnel	10am-2pm
Sat 31	Senior Citizens Summer Outing	Venue TBA	
June			
Sun 1	Memorial Service	Belhelvie Church	11am
Sun 1	Brambles Walk	Muir of Dinnet	
1,8,15,22	Christian Basics Course	Forsyth Hall	Evening
Tue 3	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall	10 – noon
Tue 3	Friendship Group	Eigie House	2pm
Thu 5	Bookends	White Horse Inn	8pm
Fri 6	Pitmedden Music Festival		6-11pm
Sat 7	Balmedie Gala	Balmedie Primary School	11am -4pm
Sat 7	Better Balmedie at Gala	Leisure Centre/Poly Tunnel	
Sat 7	Pitmedden Music Festival		11am-2pm
Tue 10	Friendship Group	Annual Outing	
Mon 16	Belhelvie Community Council	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Mon 23	Community Trust meeting	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Wed 25	SWRI Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thu 26	Better Balmedie	Evening visit to Duthie Park	
Sun 29	All Age Worship & Sunday School Picnic	Belhelvie Church	11am
July			
2-4	Bridge of Don Academy Footloose	Aberdeen Arts Centre	7.30pm
Mon 21	Belhelvie Community Council	Belhelvie Community Centre	7.30pm
Thu 3	Bookends	White Horse Inn	8 pm
Fri 4	School Term ends	BoDA, Balmedie, Ellon	7.30pm
Mon 28	Community Trust meeting	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Mon 28	Better Balmedie	Visit to Birken Cottage, Inverurie	
August			
Thu 7	Bookends	White Horse Inn	8pm
Mon 18	Belhelvie Community Council	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Tue 19	School term resumes	Boda, Balmedie, Ellon	
Mon 25	Community Trust meeting	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Tue 26	Friendship Group Bingo	Eigie House	2pm