

BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie • Whitecairns • Belhelvie • Potterton • Blackdog



BALMEDIE LEISURE CENTRE

SUMMER FÊTE 2015

Sat 13th June - 11.00 - 3.00

Balmedie Leisure Centre, Eigie Road

Fun Day for Everyone!! Admission Free



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EDITORIAL

Summer at last – and it seems to have brought with it a wave of activity across the parish. Folk are bursting with ideas and projects are blossoming. So much so, that it has been difficult to find space for all the wonderful contributions sent in to Banter, so I'll keep this brief and let you read on.

This edition is full of examples of how things are being made better for everyone in Belhelvie parish - defibrillators and life-support classes; floral displays and plant sales; litter-picking and dry stane dyking; celebrations and visits... the list is endless. So, do get involved and enjoy all summer has to offer.

Jess Petrie, Editor

IN MEMORY OF MIKE E. DAW, WHITECAIRNS



Retired local farmer Bill Reid, Meadowbank and Mrs Dilly Daw, formerly of Hillhead of Craigie and now of Newmachar met up recently in Whitecairns to try out the new bench which has been erected there in memory of Dilly's late husband Mike.

(left) Mrs Dilly Daw and Mr Bill Reid at Whitecairns

Dilly and Bill enjoyed reminiscing about some of the highlights of 32 years service to the community. The photograph, which also shows the late Bill Mitchell, of Mill of Ardo, was taken at their 20-year awards' presentation evening, which was held in the Whitecairns Hotel in 1995. Mitchell Brae in Balmedie was named in memory of Bill Mitchell.

(below, left to right) Bill Reid, Bill Mitchell, Mike Daw



(right) plaque on bench at Whitecairns

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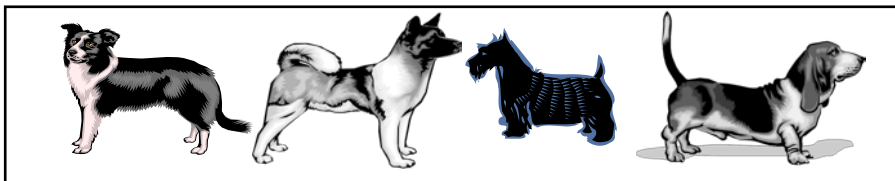
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BELHELVIE BOWLING

Belhelvie Bowling green opened on Sunday 19th April, amid lovely sunshine. Lorna Forman, wife of the president opened the green by throwing the first jack. Everyone had a great time. Why not come along and join us? Monday is "Try Bowls" night at 7 o'clock. New or inexperienced members of any age are very welcome. **Marion Donald**,
Secretary - Tel 07929 817718



BALMEDIE LIBRARY

We are open Mondays and Wednesdays: 2.30 - 4.30 and 5.30 - 7.30; Thursdays 10.00 - 1.00; Saturdays 10.00 – 1.00. Sorry, we are closed Tuesdays and Fridays.

The first Wednesday of each month (term time only), there is a Rhymetime session for under-fives, please note that the sessions now run from 2.00 – 2.30pm. Unfortunately, Rhymetime on Wed 3rd June is cancelled but it will take place on Wed 27th May instead. Come along and join in the fun!

Our popular Knit & Natter Group is going from strength to strength and producing some really lovely garments. They are a very friendly group and extend a warm welcome to new members. Join us - it's every Thursday morning from 10.30-12.30.

Look out for the posters advertising our Summer Reading Challenge, which starts again in June. The children in Balmedie and surrounding areas are always enthusiastic participants and we really enjoy seeing you all. This Challenge is a great way of encouraging children to continue reading during the summer.

You can become a member of the library for free – just bring photo ID and proof of your name and address and join right away. Alternatively you can become member of the digital library only.

We look forward to seeing you. Balmedie Library is on Eigie Road, Balmedie (AB23 8YF). Contact details: telephone 01358 742045 or email

balmedie.library@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

[Find out about Aberdeenshire Libraries at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries)

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The Beachside Coffee Shop offers everything, from an early breakfast, daily specials, homemade soups, pasta dishes, filled rolls, toasted sandwiches and baked potatoes, to a selection of scrummy home bakes. It is an extremely pleasant place to relax, enjoy a meal alfresco in the lovely summer weather. And, guess what? Nothing says summer more than a Village Fête!

It is a tradition that spans generations. The world may change around it but the spirit of the festive fête remains. We, at the Leisure Centre and Coffee Shop, are determined it should never lose its important place in village life.

No two fetes are ever the same, and it is this that gives the Village Fête its charm and appeal. There is something for everyone, including lots of entertainment, refreshments, traditional village games and stalls selling local produce and crafts.

Should you wish to become a fête volunteer, the Twos Group require good quality toys and help with their stand. If you would prefer to donate a prize to this year's raffle, then please deliver this to the Leisure Centre or contact our manager Shona 01358 743725.

Make sure you note the date - Saturday 13th June 11:00 – 15:00. Do come along to Balmedie village Fete and help us to keep local traditions alive.

Bill Murray, Voluntary Committee Chairman

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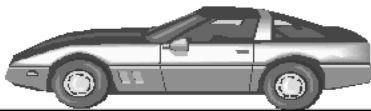
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BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(presently meets Balmedie Leisure Centre, at 11a.m every Sunday)

Exciting times for Balmedie – Our church building is now being constructed, on Rowan Drive. All church members are delighted and cannot believe in our 20th year of praising God in the Leisure Centre, we will finally do it in our own undisturbed place of worship.



The building has come about through many prayers, a humungous amount of belief in Balmedie expressed by Reverend Cowie and the people living in the village. Over the years, Balmedie Church has held many fundraisers that have been well supported by church members and the public alike. We are eternally grateful to all of you who have contributed to our ambitious dream of opening a church in Balmedie.

Eternal thanks have to go to our builder, who has single-handedly offered to build our church at near cost. Thank you, Jim Still. Thanks also go to Barratts at Balmedie for the fencing and to Councillor Paul Johnston for the container. Our path has certainly not been smooth and our thoughts go to Louisa McLeod who passed away a few years ago but was the catalyst for the Balmedie Church.

In addition to all this, we have the exciting news that we may have a new Pastor for the opening of Balmedie Church, we are waiting to hear from America - fresh new starts and beginnings for all.

*"For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning."*

- T.S. Eliot

"Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for Him to act!"

- Holy Bible: King James Version

Our members are now starting to plan how best this new building can be used, yes to worship God, but also for the community to use. If you know of a group looking for a home, please contact us on 01224 703248.

Julia Stewart,
Church Secretary.

(Photograph is of the ground breaking for the Church.)

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WHAT A SHOCKER!

As I write, I am not referring to the unseasonal snow and hail swept in by the North wind - who'd have thought we would have more snow in April than the whole winter?! Nor am I referring to the fact that I will spare you some nagging for once, though I am sure you are all doing your 20 minutes exercise daily! What I am on about is the new IPADs soon to arrive in Balmedie, Potterton, and Belhelvie, and they are nothing to do with the late Mr Jobs!



So what are these IPADs? Last time I said in my article that 20minutes could save your own life, well these are the machines you use to save someone else's life. IPAD stands for Intelligent Public Access Defibrillator, the machine used to "jump start" the heart. We have been able, through the Belhelvie Community Trust, to get three machines from the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

If someone has a heart attack, the interruption in blood supply to the heart can trigger a condition called Ventricular Fibrillation, or VF. This effectively stops the heart beating properly and so blood is not pumped round the body. The only effective treatment is defibrillation, and the sooner this is applied the better. Basic Life Support (BLS), that is chest compressions and "mouth to mouth" are only used to buy time by keeping some oxygenated blood going to the brain whilst a defibrillator or defib is taken to the patient. So the closer the defib is, the better.

The key thing about these new machines is that they are designed to be used by NON-medically qualified people, and so they are really straightforward to use. There is considerable experience from across the world that easily accessible defibs improve outcome in cardiac arrest. The sooner one is applied and used, the better. The Ambulance Service keeps a fast response vehicle north of the River Don, but in reality we are all not going to be reached within the 3 minute window our brain has in a cardiac arrest. Beyond this time, irreversible damage is likely.

Therefore we need these IPADs and people who know BLS to help save lives and you all can use them. The locations for these machines have yet to be fully finalised, but one will be in Potterton, Belhelvie and Balmedie.

Now I am certain that many of you will be keen to know more and maybe learn a bit more about using these machines and also learn about Basic Life Support or BLS. To address this we will be holding classes as the BHF have also supplied fantastic

educational resources to help train you in BLS and the use of these IPADs. It is hoped that these classes will be run in late May and or early June, depending on demand. Final details and locations will be advertised closer to the time. I really hope that several of you take the opportunity to refresh or learn BLS and give yourselves the skills to save a life. We will be asking for a £10 donation towards the balance of the cost of these machines and to help support the soon to be established First Responder group.

If you are interested, please contact the Banter by email belhelviebanter@live.co.uk / phone 07763314579 / post to Belhelvie Banter, c/o Potterton Community Centre, Laingseat Road, Potterton AB23 8UE. Alternatively, you can visit Belhelvie Community Trust Facebook page and leave a message. Please take the time and come along, you will gain valuable skills and maybe save a life.

These machines will sit in easily accessible public places and are MEANT to be used by the public. Do not be afraid about using them on an unconscious, collapsed person, the machine is in charge of the shock, not you, and it tells you what to do. It is virtually impossible to do harm, unless you drop it on the patient!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the BLS sessions and I hope that the opportunity will be taken up by many. Have a great summer and keep up the walking so you will lessen the chances of YOU needing the IPAD. Oh dear, another shocker, I did nag in the end!!!

Dr Alasdair Forbes

COFFEE AND ZUMBA

A warm welcome awaits you at the following events, at the Forsyth Hall by Belhelvie Church:

COFFEE HAVEN - tea, coffee and home bakes are served on the first Tuesday of every month from 10am to 12 noon, but please note that we are closed during July and August. We restart Tuesday 1st September 2015.

GOLDEN ZUMBA – continues throughout the summer, meeting every Monday from 9.45 to 10.30am, followed by a cuppa and a blether.

Marianne Wray & the Pastoral Care Team, Belhelvie Church



NEW NAME FOR BALMEDIE COUNTRY PARK 'RANGERS HUT'



The Belhelvie Community Trust, Hut Development Group, has extensively researched suggested names for this new community project and now we have a shortlist. The Trust is very excited to pass these names onto you, the people who matter - the community. The choices are:

1. **The Wild Lupin**
2. **Beachkeepers**
3. **Shifting Sands**
4. **The Sand Bothy**

We are asking everyone to choose their favourite name from the above list. You can place your vote by one of the following routes:

- email your favourite name to the Belhelvie Community Trust at belhelviebanter@live.co.uk
- post your favourite name to Belhelvie Community Trust, c/o Potterton Community Centre, Laingseat Road, Potterton, Aberdeen AB23 8UE
- send an online message, with your favourite name to the Belhelvie Community Trust Facebook Page (search Belhelvie Community Trust).

Voting will close midnight on Friday 12th June 2015

Only one vote per person and the name with the most votes will be the winner.

S.W.I.

By the time you read this, we will have had our final meeting before the summer break, leaving only our bus trip to Forfar, Dogs for the Blind Training Centre and Letham Hotel for high tea.

You may have noticed the heading of this article is just S.W.I. - the "R" is absent. This is because the powers that be have decided to take "RURAL" out of our long established name. The badge and motto have also changed. Instead of "For Home and Country" the new motto is "Women Together". This is an attempt to encourage new members and maybe attract younger ladies to join. Time will tell.

Hopefully the summer weather will be good and we will return refreshed In September. Our first meeting is Wednesday 9th September when we have a handbag making demonstration. Do join us in Eigie House lounge Balmedie at 7.30pm. The first whist after the summer break is Wednesday 23rd September. We have ample parking, and a ramp makes access easier for the less able. We look forward to seeing you. Contact me if you need to know more (01358 743173).

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Ask the Tattie Bogle

Dear Tattie Bogle

I was interested to read that you will answer questions about Belhelvie. I am new to the area. I have noticed there are a lot of black birds flying overhead. Some of them seem to be in flocks and some make a lot of noise. I would like to know more about them.

Yours, wondering if you are really there in a field.

Romaje.

Aye yes, Romaje, I am here, I am always here. There are several birds that are black here. White ones too that fly in from the sea when the farmers are ploughing. Sometimes the sky over Belhelvie quivers with turning gulls.

One of my jobs is to scare those black birds called crows from the corn and the neeps. I've been doing it for such long time that answering your question is a nice change. Those crows are very often rooks. Most people, even if they have lived here for a long time can't tell the difference between crows and rooks. One way of telling them apart is that rooks have baggy trousers. Another way is to see if they are on their own or not. We tattie bogles have a saying: 'One crow's a crow, two crows is a rook.' The rooks like being with lots of friends you see and they build clusters of nests called rookeries. I can see a few in the tall trees from here. A flock of rooks has been called a 'parliament', perhaps because the variety of noises they make sound like a group of your human politicians debating. In the spring it can be quite something for my turnip ears.

The crow goes about by himself or with his mate and often just says 'crow' in a determined way. In fact he usually repeats it and says 'crow crow crow,' as if saying his name three times makes him cleverer. In the autumn all the young rooks practice their flying high up in the windy air. They swoop and soar over my hill and I like to stretch my arms out and watch as they search for the edges of the sky.

B. Tattie-Bogle

Editor's note:

If you have a question you would like to ask the Belhelvie Tattie Bogle on the subject of Belhelvie Natural History, please send your question to belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or to Banter, c/o Potterton Community Centre and we will make sure he gets it.

THANK YOU LITTER PICKERS

Helen Gauld, who, as Village Orderly, is doing a wonderful job to keep Balmedie tidy, would like to thank all the lovely people out there (her words!), who pick up their litter while they are out walking in the village. Since she has started as village orderly, she has noticed quite a few litter-pickers doing their bit and making a difference. Keep up the good work!

Ed.



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BEAUTIFUL BALMEDIE BEACH – Do you care?

When you see litter on the ground, does it bother you or not? Does it make you angry but you think ‘somebody’ ought to do something about it? Or do you pick it up and deposit it in the nearest bin, happy that at least you are making a positive difference in your community? I used to get angry until I realised that ‘somebody’ wasn’t going to do it and being in a continual state of anger about those who left it there, was not going to keep me in good health! After walking past the same instant barbecues and plastic bags and bottles for months, even years on end, my mantra now is ‘I am happy to keep the beach litter free’ rather than ‘I am really sick of seeing all this litter’!

The worst kind of litter is plastic and although dog mess is, as always an ongoing problem, what is worse is the used poo bags that are then chucked away into the bushes or even into trees! They stay around forever.

The litter problem is especially disgusting during the lovely sunny weather – picnickers enjoy our lovely beach but are sadly too lazy to take responsibility for their leftovers - dumped anywhere and everywhere and include their leftovers, crisp and food packaging, dirty nappies, plastic bottles, drink cans and plastic bags, oh and strangely lots of socks! Then there are the ones who frequent the area at nights with their takeaways and beer bottles, which for some idiotic reason, they have to smash into tiny little pieces so that they cut the paws of dogs and the feet of young children. Then there are the parties – enough said ☹

Although we can’t *make* people change their bad habits and attitudes, we can show a willingness to take responsibility for keeping our environment clean thereby setting a good example, and showing zero tolerance for the litter louts (who, incidentally include locals as well as visitors). We are so lucky to have such a beautiful Beach and Country Park and one of the world’s most unique shifting sand dunes on our doorstep. And ok, it was supposed to be protected as a SSSI and it wasn’t, but even more reason why *we* need to make an effort to protect what we have left. So I decided to set up a new Facebook page to see if anyone out there was willing to be part of ‘Balmedie Beach Litter Squad’ and the response has been amazing! This community is amazing and together we are already making a huge difference. ☺

Also, as part of a team working on the exciting new project at the old rangers hut, we have plans for lots more positive changes to help reduce litter in the area. Attitudes have to change... and change is simple but it’s not always easy.

Lisa Leith

SO, WHAT DOES A MINISTER DO?

Forgive me if this piece is a wee bit more personal than usual, but this April marked the tenth anniversary of my coming to the parish of Belhelvie as the Church of Scotland minister for this area. It's been a very quick ten years and it's been great to get to know many of you as we've lived and worked here as a family. When we first arrived, everyone told us that this is a great place to bring up your kids and we've certainly appreciated the space and freedoms and opportunities that living in this part of Scotland have given us.

I'm also grateful that over my time here many folk in the community have come to know and accept me for the person I am, as well as my being 'the minister'. That inch-wide piece of white plastic I wear in my shirt collar can be both a blessing and a curse. When I visit the school I often tell the kids that my clerical collar is the smallest uniform in the world, but it's amazing – even today – how much significance (both good and bad) it comes with. I'm glad that many of you have taken the time to see beyond it and got to know me as Paul as well as 'the Rev'. In turn, I've appreciated getting to know you and your stories and some of your long and developing history with this particular place.

A quick scan of my desktop folders tells me that over the past ten years I've married 64 couples, performed 51 baptisms of children and adults, taken 224 funeral services and preached over 500 sermons. Those are the bare stats. But they don't come anywhere near describing what I actually do, day in and day out (because yes, we do work more than just Sundays!). The best attempt I've heard to describe a minister's life was by a poet called Stewart Henderson, and I've taken the liberty of including a few stanzas below, with a few regional modifications.

*So, what does a minister do?
mostly stays awake
at Presbytery Meetings;
tries not to annoy the Session Clerk too much;
visits hospices, administers comfort,
conducts weddings and baptisms,
not necessarily in that order;
takes funerals
consecrates the elderly to the grave
buries children, and babies,
feels completely helpless beside
the swaying family of a suicide.*

*What does a minister do?
tries to colour-in God;
uses words to explain miracles which is like teaching
a slug to sing, but
far more difficult.
Answers the 'phone
when sometimes they'd rather not.
Stays for coffee
when they want to get home and see the football.*

*What does a minister do?
tends the flock through word,
sacrament and presence;
would secretly like each committee meeting
to begin with fish suppers and a catch-up;
sometimes falls asleep when praying;
yearns, like us, for
heart-rushing deliverance.*

*What does a minister do?
has rows with their family
wants to inhale Heaven
drinks in the night sky;
attempts to convey the mad love of God
joins the whispering marram grass in prayer.
tries to bring a word in season
to all who'll listen.*

*And listen now, for here's the clergy thing
that folk don't often see.
Beyond the strangeness of their calling
they're flesh and blood like you and me.*

It's been a rewarding, challenging and productive ten years here for me – thanks to all of you who have been a part of it.

BELHELVE CHURCH NEWS

Christian Aid week runs from 10th-17th May this year, and as usual we'll be collecting within the parish. Christian Aid aims to help people in poverty out of poverty, regardless of race or creed, and we hope that you'll be willing to support our volunteer collectors when they come to your door.

Our annual **Memorial Service** will be held on May 31st at 11am. This is a service where we remember those from our parish who've passed on during the year, specifically those whose funerals I've conducted. Their names are read out and representatives of their families are invited to come and light a candle in their memory. Once those candles have been lit, any other folk who are carrying the pain of bereavement are able to come up and light a tealight in memory of their loved one too. Many folk find this a helpful milestone along the way, and everyone is welcome to attend.

By the time of going to press we hope our new **Car Park** will be well on the way. More developments to both Hall and Church are planned for later in the year.

We are thinking about running parenting and/or relationship classes later in the year – please keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information.

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THE MEASUREMENT OF DREAMS

Chris remembers being at home soldering rails for his Hornby Dublo railway listening to radio Luxemburg when President Kennedy died. The subject of train sets came up because we are thinking of activities to keep us going through six weeks of school holidays with the grand boys in America. '*What about your old train set*'? I said. It has been kept safe but apart from a brief outing in the late eighties it is packed away. The boys have nearly finished with Lego and now play Mine-craft on their tablets. I'm thinking they would benefit from mastering the ancient skills of electricity and carpentry, making sponge trees and being introduced to manly swearing when things don't work.

I have my Grandmotherly activity prepared too. I am going to offer cooking and when that loses its charm, I have a 'Cabinet of Curiosities' up my sleeve. The great Rothschild collection is being rehoused in the British Museum this year and that reminded me to look at my collections. Those 'Wunderkammern' or 'wonder rooms' of the Baroque period sound so much better than nature table or a collection of penguins on a shelf. In the Renaissance, manly men with money and time on their hands (no train-sets) created marvellous collections to show off to their friends. We all have them in miniature on our mantle-pieces. We are born to collect and be curious. There were five categories of wonder and I shall encourage the boys to look at or bring me something for all of them: *naturalia*-the natural, *arteficialia*- the manmade, *scientifica* -new technology, *exotica*-finds from different realms, and *mirabilia*- the inexplicable.

We may not have a unicorn's horn or a bejewelled chalice but I have enough weird and wonderful things to start our own thrilling collection. The pebble Nick brought back from Scout camp. '*Err... I didn't find anything to buy but I saw this in the loch and it looked nice...*' is definitely one of my treasures. Then there is the ancient bottle we dug up at Ardo and the silver apostle spoon from my great grandfather.

I have just been clearing out my mother's house so it can be sold. She is bedridden at the care home where she is comfortable but near the end of her long life. Years ago we made a contract that I would do the necessary with her things and so I am doing it now without discussing it further. We just exchanged wan smiles. Mum never embraced consumerism. She was a bit like Aunt Glegg in 'Mill on the Floss'. She could only wear new clothes if they had been laid down like geological strata in drawers for years.

Mum and Dad were both good at collecting. Old implements, letters, pressed flowers, scrapbooks of holidays, minutes of meetings, pencils, stationary. Our daughter joked when we were recycling the many, many, empty margarine containers that if there were an auction, one day would have to be devoted to paper clips, rubber bands and treasury tags.

A neighbour here in Belhelvie is relocating this summer and we helped to sift through her farm buildings. Old pieces of furniture were lurking like guests who had overstayed their welcome. We lit a bonfire and burned a sofa that had supported the family through so many years we felt we should have gathered up the warm springs and put them in a casket. Among the old motors and scrap in the farm workshop there was a bundle of folded metal links tied up with tow. I somehow recognised it from deep within my peasant memory. You know the memory that tells you: 'Ohh... an old blanket, better keep that' or 'Ohh... the blackberries are ripe, better pick them'. There it was, half a stone of metal, 22 yards of links to be laid out on the ground for measuring one tenth of a furlong, the furrow-long ...the distance a horse could plough before a rest. A chain... the length of one side of an acre, a cricket pitch or an allotment. Before decimals we used imperial numbers that seem complicated now. However if you cut a pie and then halve it and halve it again you will see those numbers naturally appearing ... 2 4 8 and 16. Some of you, those of you who remember the death of Kennedy at least, will remember them on the back of our school exercise books. Along with the chain there was the rod or pole, the length of a stick used to prod your team of oxen.

The new road around Aberdeen has been started at last. It will have been measured by now but not with rods and chains. Sadly the satellites and lasers will be too big for my *scientifica* and *exotica* shelves. Imperial weights and measures along with the Magna Carta, which formed the basis of their constitution, were taken to America and they haven't turned decimal so there will be a place there for the chain.

Think of us on a summer evening laying the links out straight in the Kalamazoo sunshine. We'll put the cricket stumps up at either end before going inside to paint tiny figures for the station platform. In my dreams those little boys of 9 and 7 listen carefully to our notions of how to pass the time this summer and they make little astonished sounds like pigeons round a crushed cake.

Live long and prosper.

Mary Cane

CRAFT CLUB

The craft club meets at Balmedie School on Thursdays from 6.30pm to 7.30pm during school term for primary school pupils. The cost is £1.50 per night. We try to make something that can be finished to take home on the night. The children enjoy baking, card making, working with paper, glue, paints and foam etc. Now that our church is being built we will hopefully be able to move into it soon for craft club and perhaps have an extra half hour to make bigger projects. As usual, we will have a chocolate stall at the Summer Fete in the Leisure Centre. Hope to see you there!

Catherine & Diane 01358 743114

THE FIRST DECADE

The congregation was delighted to share in the festivities as Paul and Rhona McKeown celebrated ten years with Belhelvie Parish Church. Over the years, the church congregation and the wider Belhelvie community have really appreciated Paul's Christ-centred ministry, his hard work and the support of his wife Rhona.

In addition to what might be seen as the normal work of a minister, Paul has tirelessly run courses for adults, worked with the children in schools, run 'The Holiday Club', held Christmas services in Balmedie Leisure Centre and encouraged such activities as 'Mainly Music'. Under his leadership we, as a congregation, have developed plans for a new car park, a redesigned area at the front of the church and a new annexe beside The Forsyth Hall. As always his aim is to glorify God and to bring the Good News of Christ to all in this parish and beyond

So it's a big thank you Paul and Rhona, for all your hard work and support of the last ten years. We now look forward to your next decade here!

William Anderson (Session Clerk)



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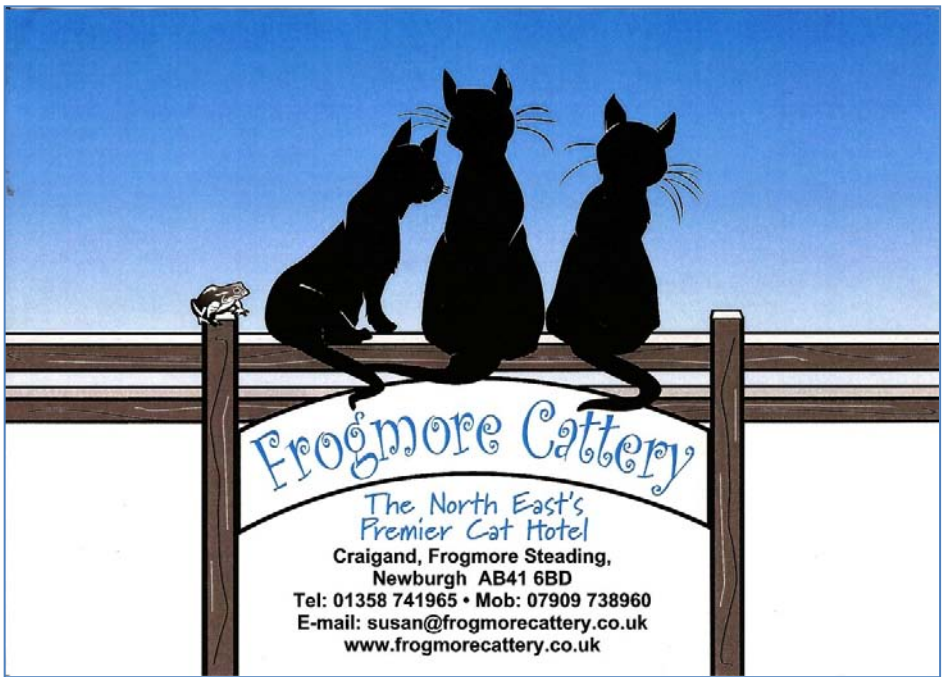
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NATURAL BELHELVIE

Hello folks, I trust that you have all been out and about enjoying the natural world on your doorstep. There is even more reason to forsake the armchair and telly now as we are close to the mid-point of the year, and the sun is sizzling the skin off of the end of your nose (we all hope). While our wildflowers will be blooming beautiful, the birds and the bees will be ...? (In case someone is reading this before the nine o'clock watershed, I leave the answer to your imagination!).



Most folk keep an eagle eye open for their first sighting of the year of the swallow. Their arrival heralds the true start of spring or early summer and they normally begin to be seen swooping and diving above our heads from mid-April onwards. The swallow is a bird that everyone recognises, or dare I say that they 'think' they recognise? I am not casting doubt on anyone's bird identification skills, but it is easy to get swallows and their close relatives, the martins, confused, especially as they all fly around so fast. There is also the swift, but that bird should not prove difficult to identify as it is by far the largest of

this group, all over very dark in colour and is normally only seen wheeling and screaming about the sky way up above our heads.

Anyhow, swallow or martin, that is the question, and for all of you Belhelvie-ites, the choice is threefold. Swallows are the largest bird, glossy black on the back with a white tummy, and a red patch on its chin. The long streaming tail is very noticeable and a good identification feature. Swallows nest *inside* buildings; a garage, old shed or similar, as long as that building has easy access through a door or window.

If it is not a swallow then it will be one of two species of martin that grace the skies above Belhelvie. The house martin is smaller than the swallow, its back is black and again it has a white tummy. There is no red chin but it does have a conspicuous white patch above the tail, a tail that lacks any long streamer feathers. House martins nest on the *outside* of buildings (houses preferred) where they glue their mud nest onto the wall up against the soffits or barge-boarding beneath the eaves.

As you good folk have the Cooncil quarry on your doorstep, you may well have another martin to watch out for: the sand martin. These birds are the same size as their relative the house martin but they are a soft brown colour on the back, with a white tummy, and no tail streamers. They nest in sandy banks, (hence they may breed in the quarry) where they excavate a tunnel at the end of which they lay their eggs.

All of the above species feed on insects that they catch on the wing and they are built for a life in the air, rarely being seen on the ground. The three species will return to the same breeding site year after year, patching up an old nest or making a completely new one close by if the old one has fallen apart.

While you are all outside burning the burgers or scorching the sausages on the barbecue, watch out above your heads for the fly-catchers gobbling up the midges. Have a great summer watching our wonderful wildlife. Enjoy natural Belhelvie.

Bob Davis



BALMEDIE CUB SCOUTS

How exciting is this?

Two groups of Balmedie Cub Scouts pose for photos during their recent visit to Mounthooly Fire Station in Aberdeen.

During the presentation, fire-fighters were impressed with the cubs' observation skills, as they managed to pick out most of the hazards in the scenarios they were given. They were then taken on a tour of the station and learned lots about life in the Fire Service, safety, equipment and training. They were most excited, however, when they got to sit in the fire engines!

Alison Warne



BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

This group is open to all residents over the age of 50 who reside in the parish of Belhelvie. We meet every second Tuesday in the lounge of Eigie House from 2-4pm and have an interesting mix of musical entertainment and talks. There is a small charge to cover refreshments and a raffle. New members are always welcome.

Our next meeting is on the 2nd June and is a Talk by CLAN. Then our annual outing is on 16th June. We have a break over the summer and we resume on Tuesday 25th August with Bingo.

For further information please contact:

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

BETTER BALMEDIE

Long awaited sunny and warm days have arrived at last! What a difference it makes to everyone but most of all to the bulbs and plants which our members have diligently planted around the village in verges and planters. Personally I had just about given up hope of seeing any results from the primulas we planted at the back end of the year. However they are all looking quite beautiful now and with the daffodils and tulips in full bloom the village is looking a lot brighter. The crocuses gave a wonderful show, especially the swathe at the corner of Eigie Road and North Beach Road, which multiply every year. The planters will be re-done in June when we take delivery of supplies of plants from Aberdeenshire Council.



In the polytunnel we are busy planting up seeds, plug plants and cuttings ready for sale at our Annual Plant Sale. It will be at the polytunnel on Saturday 30th May from 10am to 2pm. We hope to see you there!

Two large rotten trees on our site have been cut down, leaving a huge amount of timber which is being chopped up for logs and firewood, bags of which are for sale at the polytunnel for £3 per bag. We have found a site for our greenhouse, generously donated by Atholl Lipp. We have been clearing paths that had become overgrown and are very pleased that Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services have created new paths through the woods next to the football pavilion. We have also enjoyed talks on Iceland and the Bailies of Bennachie.

We have recruited new members this year who are a great help, but we always welcome more. The more of us there are, the more we can achieve. Remember, you don't have to be a gardener, and you don't have to commit to a specific amount of volunteering, there is always a job to suit you..

Alan Leith

For more information visit: www.betterbalmedie.org or
[www.facebook.com/Better Balmedie](https://www.facebook.com/Better-Balmedie) or contact Allan Jeffrey on 01358 743851



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BELHELVE COMMUNITY TRUST



Belhelvie Community Trust is made up of people who have an interest in the parish of Belhelvie, with a particular interest in voluntary projects in the community.

The Trust is now over a year old, and we are pleased to say that our application for charitable status was successful and we became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) on 22nd April 2015.

The Trust's main aims are to create community projects in response to local requests and to support existing projects throughout the parish of Belhelvie.

The Trust is presently negotiating with Aberdeenshire Council to re-open the former Beach Ranger's Hut at Balmedie Beach as a community resource. Do read the article elsewhere in Banter about choosing the new name for the hut – and have your say. We want the community to be involved at every stage.

The Trust has now been given the use of the Magnificent Sevens Woods in Balmedie to create a Community Sensory Garden (this is already a popular walk in the village and access to the woods will not change). We are now drawing up a plan for a garden, but we need all sorts of help...if you can help in any way ...with design, materials, labour, gardening, please get in touch. If you have experience of disability and could advise us so that we make the garden as user-friendly as possible, please get in touch... We will also need money. The Trust will make application to appropriate funders, but if you know of any possible sponsors, please get in touch. Let's make this a real community effort to create an enjoyable garden for us all.

Belhelvie Community Trust recently obtained funding from Landfill Tax Credits to rebuild the drystone dyke, which leads up from Eigie Road to the Magnificent Sevens Woods. This took place over 4 days in April and 7 people were trained in walling by Master Craftsman George Gunn. New skills were learned, friendships made and a wall, which is well over 100 years old, restored. The trainees are already planning their next project!

Please join us.... working together makes things happen!

For more information about Belhelvie Community Trust please ring **Allan Jeffrey** (Chair) on 01358 743851 or **Rosie Nicol** (Secretary) on 01358 742557 rosie.inform@lineone.net
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BALMEDIE BEAVERS BEHIND BARS!

In March Balmedie Beaver Scouts spent an evening at Ellon Police Station finding out what goes on behind the scenes and what it is like to be locked up!



The boys enjoyed seeing the Police uniform with all the equipment and particularly liked being put into handcuffs. They were shown round the cells and were horrified that spending a night there meant no TV or computer games. A particular highlight was seeing inside the vehicles and getting to set off the sirens. They all wanted to be locked up in the back of the police van and had fun seeing the Leaders being locked up too. There

The boys had lots of questions for the Police to answer covering a wide range of topics. They really enjoyed their visit and we have a number saying they will be joining up in the future. We would like to thank the Police at Ellon for a really enjoyable visit.

Elaine Neil Beaver Leader

JOIN THE LOCAL ADULT SCOUTING TEAM

Can you help? Balmedie Scout Group, which offers Scouting for boys and girls from age 6 to 18 in Belhelvie Parish, is looking to recruit additional volunteer adults to augment their impressive leadership team.

Assistant leaders are needed for the Scout section, which runs on a Friday evening. We are keen to attract at least one female with a passion for the outdoors. We would also welcome a couple who perhaps wish to volunteer together. Scouts are for both boys and girls aged 10-14.

We also need several volunteers to join the Leadership Team at Beavers with a view to them creating a second colony once they are established and their training is progressing. Beavers are for 6 and 7 year old boys and girls. The current colony is at capacity with a long waiting list, so we need a second colony. Currently Beavers meet on a Wednesday evening at 6pm.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities or would like to find out more about volunteering with any of the sections including Cubs or Explorer Scouts, please contact me at Balmedie.scouts@btinternet.com or 07743844040.

Ian Thomson Group Scout Leader

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS SERVICE

Arthur Nicolson receives a long service certificate from Rhona McKeown after being 40 years in the eldership of the Church of Scotland.

As well as serving as Session Clerk for three years, Arthur has also served on the Social Committee and helped out with youth work at Belhelvie Church for many years.

William Anderson
Session Clerk

BELHELVIE RANGERS

Last term the Rangers helped at a Beetle Drive, along with the Rainbows and Brownies at Potterton, to raise money for our local Guiding units and Fyvie House, our Guide residential building. The night was a great success and we are very grateful for the cakes and raffle prizes that were generously donated. We managed to raise £120 for local units and £160 for Fyvie House.



It's that time of year again when everyone is busy with exams so we will be having a study skill session before breaking for the exams. We shall also be trying out some relaxation techniques including yoga, meditation, and exercise. Apparently even a 20-minute walk before an exam can improve your performance! After the exams we'll hopefully get out and about with the better weather. Why not try out a bit of meditation yourself with free podcasts from the Mental Health Foundation at <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts>

Rangers are for young women aged 14 to 26 years old. Guiding offers many opportunities, including going to music gigs, local camping, and international travel and volunteering. We meet fortnightly in Potterton. Each meeting costs £3 and you don't have to attend every meeting. Volunteers for Rangers need to be 18 years + and how much time you give is up to you. Please contact me if you are interested.

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Easter Hatton Landfill Tax

Funding has been received for the first quarter of this year. Belhelvie Community Trust have already project-managed the reconstruction of the dry stone dyke in the Magnificent 7 woods and are in the process of erecting 8 finger sign posts in Balmedie. Remaining funds will enable the Balmedie Leisure Centre to install LED lighting throughout the building and cavity wall insulation.

Trump International Golf Links

Members of BCC received an invitation and viewed the second golf course design and proposed residential, leisure and commercial development plans on 5th May at MacLeod House. We are asked to put forward our comments on the development and will provide a report on our comments in the next edition of Belhelvie Banter.

Village Tidy Scheme

We have received notification from Aberdeenshire Council Formartine Area Office that the village tidy scheme is available this year for the settlements of Belhelvie, Balmedie and Potterton. BCC are asking Aberdeenshire Council for Blackdog to be included. A decision on the positions of tidy-up persons will be taken at the next meeting of BCC.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the tidy-up persons who have done an excellent job over the past year keeping our villages nice and tidy. **DW, Chairman**

NEWS FROM BALMEDIE SCHOOL

The past few months have been very busy for Balmedie School. We enjoyed a 'Topsy Turvy' circus where pupils and staff engaged in a range of activities, including a 26-mile Marathon, to raise money for Comic Relief. Mrs Jenny Chalmers reports:

"After a successful fundraiser in 2013 where Balmedie Primary School raised £10,495, we wanted to help even more people by raising a higher total in 2015. On Thursday 12th March 2015 pupils were sponsored to run their 26 mile Marvellous Marathon. They took part in funfair games in their classes and learned about the people they were helping.

On Friday 13th March 2015 the whole school was invited to the 'Topsy Turvy Circus'. Pupils and staff dressed up, attended discos and performed their Red Nose Day routine for the parents in the playground.

We managed to raise over £20,000 for Comic Relief, which the government will match. Thank you all the staff, pupils, parents and the community for their support in raising this amazing total!"



We are very proud of everyone's efforts in raising so much money for a very worthwhile cause. We were so successful in 2013 that three teachers (Mrs Chalmers, Miss Myles and Mrs Glennie) were invited to 10 Downing Street to take part in the Comic Relief Launch event. Having doubled the amount raised this year, I wonder where we'll be invited to next...The White House perhaps?

In other news, all classes are now well in to the new term and are enjoying their new projects. We are also delighted to be welcoming in The Critter Keeper who will be coming to speak to the P7 classes about different types of 'critters' found in Africa. Mr Bisset, a local parent, will also be running poetry workshops in each class.

The P5 and P7 pupils are looking forward to their trips to Kindrogan (P5) and Dalguise (P7). The P7 pupils in particular are looking forward to enjoying a week of fun-filled activities before they move on to pastures new.

Amie Crowder Class Teacher

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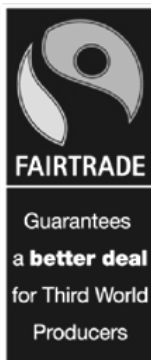
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ETHICAL VINO

There are few jobs more taxing than doing a wine tasting. And if you believe that you will believe anything. But it is the job I had to do for our local Fairtrade group. Yeah, it's a hard life! (www.formartinefairtrade.co.uk).

As the largest retailer of Fairtrade in the UK, I invited the Co-operative to put their Fairtrade wines to the test. They duly obliged. At the Coffee Apothecary in Udney, along with Carol Brown, the wine writer, we taste tested 12 wines from their range. And yes, they were good value!!

Why Fairtrade when it comes to wines?



Particularly in Chile, Argentina and South Africa, despite years of wine growing, rural poverty is ever present. Small landholders and tenant farmers growing grapes, still need to get a fair price for their produce and yet the wine business can be lucrative because of its luxury status. Fairtrade certification allows consumers to identify that the wine brand pays a fair price to the grower, or that the wine is made by small producers where, for both, a small premium is paid by the agents and retailers which goes towards lifting the growers and their families out of poverty. It develops their businesses to make them truly, financially sustainable and supports their community.

This is not a charity, this is just tasty business. The wines are every bit as good value as any in a supermarket but as consumers you will know, because of the Fairtrade mark, that what you buy is ethical and sustainable. If you want to try the wines, go to the local Co-op store and perhaps try these:

White - Co-op Fairtrade Argentina Torrontes-Chardonnay.

This wine comes from a Co-operative called La Riojana and mostly made with fragrant Torrontes grapes mixed with some Chardonnay to produce a slightly off dry wine with rich grapefruit flavours and lots of aroma if not over chilled. Good with Asian Food or any fish and shellfish dish. It rates as one of the best under £6 wines available.

Red - Co-op Fairtrade Chilean Carmenère.

This wine is made by the Fairhills Fairtrade project bringing together small grape growers. The grape called Carmenère is very like Merlot, but with richer wild berry smells. The wine is full bodied with hints of mint and plums and is just the business when you have the Sunday roast on the go. It can also hold up to a mean piece of blue cheese as well. Again, just about the best under £6 wine around.



By Paul Johnston, who has worked for 27 years in wine education and wholesale and retail drinks.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Summer is approaching and our thoughts are heading towards school holidays, a well earned break and also what time the haar will come in and spoil the alfresco barbecue evening! All I can say about the haar is that it commonly occurs when warm moist air moves over the cool North Sea and makes the moisture in the air condense, making pilots and air traffic controllers, like myself, work harder and Balmedie folk shout louder to bring the washing in, before it gets drenched.

At this time, it's worth considering some ideas for summer security:

The first tip is to make your home look lived in. If your home looks empty, it could be a sitting target for an opportunist or planned burglary. A good way to avoid this is to make your home look occupied while you're away. Set timer switches so that it's not only lights that come on and off at intervals, but also music systems too. And do avoid shutting all your curtains as nothing else shouts "we're not in" louder!

Consider telling a trusted friend that you're going away - they could keep an eye on your property and also help out in other ways too. Ask them to park on your driveway, pop in to pick up mail and use/put out your bins. You can then reciprocate when they go away.

It's always tempting to check in online as you check in at the hotel. Do you really know who is reading your Twitface feed? You may have innocently posted a snap from the beach, but Geolocation highlights to many that you really are thousands of miles from home and your house is empty. Why not give your security settings online a thought whilst you think about security at home.

If you're holidaying at home or having a barbecue before the haar comes in, do lock your front door. You'd be amazed how many burglaries occur when folk are only in their back garden.

So while you're crossing off your last few holiday preparations, take time to focus on leaving your home secure - then you'll remember your holiday and not what you came back to!

Belhelvie Neighbourhood Watch is still active - the signs remain on all four entrances to the village. Joining Neighbourhood Watch could give you up to 10% reduction on your annual home insurance - and we're still looking to sign up more households in the area! Find us at www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk and then search for BELHELVIE. You need to sign up on both sections, but it only takes a few minutes. If you need Neighbourhood Watch stickers, do let me know via the site.

Have a great Summer 2015 at home and abroad!

Paul Collier



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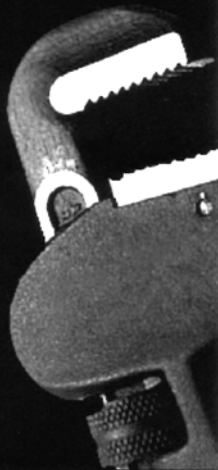
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*IFC Inside Front Cover

*IBC Inside Back Cover

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May	Dates for your Diary		
Mon 25	Belhelvie Community Trust	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Sat 30	Better Balmedie Plant Sale	Polytunnel, Leisure Centre	10.00-2.00
Sun 31	Memorial Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00 am
June			
Tues 2	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall	10.00-12.00
Tues2	Friendship Group	Talk by Clan Eigie House	2.00pm
Sat 13	Balmedie Fete	Leisure Centre	11.00 -3.00
Mon 15	Belhelvie Community Council	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Wed 17	Friendship Group	Outing Eigie House	2.00pm
Mon 22	Belhelvie Community Trust	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
July			
Wed 1	Rhyme Time	Balmedie Library	2.00-2.30
Fri 3	End of school year	Balmedie, BoDa & Ellon	
Mon 20	Belhelvie Community Trust	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Mon 20	Belhelvie Community Council	Belhelvie Comm Centre	7.30pm
August			
Mon 17	Belhelvie Community Council	Belhelvie Comm Centre	7.30pm
Tues18	Start of new school year	Balmedie, Boda & Ellon	
Mon 24	Belhelvie Community Trust	Whitehorse Inn	7.30pm
Tues 25	Friendship Group	Bingo? Eigie House	2.00pm
Sept			
Tues 1	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall	10.00-12.00
Wed 2	Rhyme Time	Balmedie Library	2.00-2.30
Wed 9	SWI	Handbag making demo Eigie House	7.30pm
Mon 21	Belhelvie Community Council	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Wed 23	SWI	Whist Eigie House	7.30pm
	Weekly		
Mon	Golden Zumba	Forsyth Hall	9.45 -10.00
Thurs	Knit & Natter	Balmedie Library	10.30-12.30
Thurs	Balmedie Kids Craft Club	Term-time only Balmedie School	6.30- 7.30

Remember...

**The last date for submission of text or adverts
for the Autumn Edition is Friday 31st July 2015**

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