

BELHELVIE BANTER

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EDITION 25

DECEMBER 2015

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EDITORIAL

It was with great sadness that on the night of 20th August, Balmedie residents witnessed the former Tarts and Crafts building reduced to a ruin by mindless vandalism. Police investigations into the fire, which was started deliberately, are still ongoing so if anyone has any information they would like to share, do contact them.



Staffed by volunteers, 'Tarts and Crafts' was a lovely little venue for crafts and coffee for eleven years before closing its doors in July. Since then, the building, also known as Eigie Cottage, has lain empty. In the meantime, the community has been negotiating with Aberdeenshire Council in an attempt to make the

building into a base for all ages in the community to enjoy. Just 24 hours before the fire, plans were being finalised for setting up facilities that would benefit the teenage members of the community in particular.

Belhelvie Community Council is still prepared to take on this project and be involved in future discussions. However, Aberdeenshire Council is presently undecided about the future of the building. It is such a pity that the efforts of generous, hard-working individuals are thwarted by those who have no respect and no appreciation of what it is to be a responsible citizen – or how lucky they are to live in a community like ours.

On a much more pleasant note, it is great to see the efforts of the Balmedie drystone dykers and the way this craft is being passed on, thanks to the expertise and encouragement of Master Waller George Gunn, who has just successfully trained a second group of volunteers. This group of five spent four days learning the craft and building a large planter which is to be a feature of a planned woodland community sensory garden by the Magnificent Sevens Wood. What a fantastic way to contribute to our community!



And now thoughts turn to the approaching winter and the festive season. In positive spirit, the Banter Team would like to wish mild weather and much partying to one and all. Enjoy!

Jess Petrie, Editor

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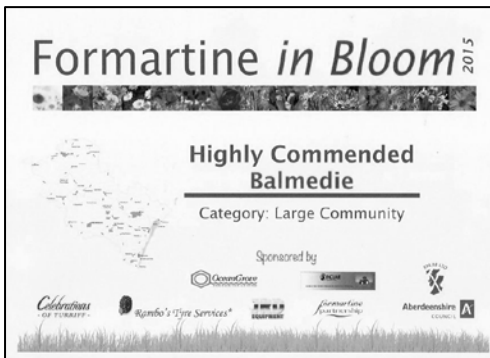
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BETTER BALMEDIE

How strange to be writing this near the end of October when the sun is shining and the sky is blue and tomorrow the temperature could possibly reach 20 degrees. Strange because in the next week or two we will have to start removing the summer bedding plants and preparing the planters for the winter bedding.

It's been a busy few months since the last Banter. At last our new planter, the Pea Green Boat, complete with Owl and Pussycat, has been installed outside the library and has attracted many favourable comments. We have also finished glazing our greenhouse that was generously donated to us by Athol Lippe.

The judging for the Formartine in Bloom competition took place in August and Balmedie was awarded a Highly Commended certificate, so thanks to all the ladies who worked hard to have everything looking great.



Highly Commended certificate - Judges are Ken Regan and Jack Grant with Allan Jeffrey and Morag Ross from Better Balmedie

We have been doing well with our sale of logs although we still have some left at £ 3 per bag. Another good fundraiser for the group has been the collecting cans in the shops round the village. Thanks to all the folks who have given us their small change, the more funds we can raise, the more we can do for the village. Thanks also to the retailers for their help, and to those who donated unwanted garden implements etc. If we can't use it we can always sell it to raise funds. There's always someone at the polytunnel on Wednesday and Saturday mornings and you are welcome to pop in anytime.

For more information visit betterbalmedie.org
or contact Allan Jeffrey on 01358 743851

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SCOUT CAMP VISIT – FORDELL FIRS

In July, nine Cubs and three Scouts from Balmedie Scout Group participated in a weekend camp at Fordell Firs National Scout Activity Centre near Dunfermline. Despite the rainy weather, Cubs and Scouts were in high spirits as they boarded the packed train at Aberdeen Station. After several hours of card games, music and answering other passengers' questions about our trip, they arrived at sunny Inverkeithing Station. They were greeted by a Fordell Firs staff member and were transported by mini bus to the campsite.



Cubs and Scouts stayed indoors in the comfortable but basic Richmond Chalet. They helped prepare and clear away meals and were awarded inspection points for keeping rooms tidy.

Over the course of the weekend, Cubs and Scouts took part in a wide range of activities. Crate climbing was a hit and those who successfully managed to stack all the crates had to sing a song whilst wobbling precariously before the crates fell from beneath them. The 3G swing was a highlight for many - once hoisted by team mates to the height of a telegraph pole, a ball on the harness was pulled and participants were released into a swinging free falling. It was certainly exhilarating (with lots of screaming from the leaders taking part!). Caving was perhaps the most nerve wracking as Cubs and Scouts had to navigate through tight channels in complete darkness. Despite initial fears, many of the children reported that they were really glad they gave it a go. Other activities included climbing, bmx-ing, orienteering and a very muddy challenge course. Scouts also did a zip line which involved climbing up staples to a towering, wobbly podium with great views over the Forth of Forth. Everyone enjoyed the evening activities, which were grass sledging, and a campfire, complete with toasted marshmallows. After packing and tidying up the chalet, Cubs and Scouts headed back to Aberdeen by train. Despite being exhausted, the children chatted about their adventure all the way home and can't wait for more.

Lesley Hewitt Cub Scout Leader

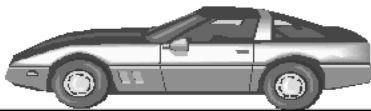
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NATURAL BELHELVIE

There are not many shopping days left, so make sure that you get that letter up the lum to Yours Truly with a request for books on flora and fauna, I will do my best to accommodate you all. Despite the season, identification guides are still a necessity unless you are already an expert wildlife spotter.

Wildflowers will not be showing now but birds and mammals are all on the go, and await your eagle eyes to spot them. If we do get a dusting of snow then identifying tracks can be good fun and interesting. Hedgehogs and bats are the only mammals that hibernate up here and that might surprise some folk. Squirrels do not, no they might hide caches of food to see them through hard times but they don't sleep through the winter. Badgers likewise remain active, but if the weather is bad with heavy rain, then Mr and Mrs Brock may stay in their set for days.

Foxes are particularly active, as by the time we get into the New Year, they will be getting the urge to do the old 'birds and bees' bit. Fox tracks can be separated from those of a dog as a fox regularly walks in a straight line with one foot placed directly in front of the other, while dogs tend to wander all over the place and are much wider spaced. Cloven-hoofed and small, roe deer tracks are easy to spot and it might surprise many of you good folk to realise how common they are. They may often sneak into gardens late in the evening or early morning to nibble on rose bushes!

If you get tired of looking down then look up as our skies are often filled with geese. The majority wintering around here are pink-feet geese and will have flown here from as far away as Greenland. They are always centred on freshwater lochs where they roost at night, where they are safe from being snaffled by Basil Brush. The Corby, Bishop and Lilly Lochs hold some geese but the major site is near Collieston at Slains Loch that can house as many as 20,000 plus! Along with the geese we get the lovely whooper swan, slightly smaller than our own mute swan with an upright neck and a head that sports a bright yellow beak. These magnificent birds fly here from Iceland for their winter holidays.

I mentioned previously that two species of thrush: fieldfare and redwing, will come here from Scandinavia, and they might be seen in small flocks visiting local gardens. They are lovely but if you want something truly spectacular then watch out for waxwings, a stunningly beautiful wee bird that also comes across the North Sea. They have 'wax-like' splashes of colour on the ends of their wing's hence the name. They are berry eaters and love cotoneaster, so if you have that in your garden, you may well get a few waxwings.

Have a great festive season and keep watch on our wonderful wildlife right through 2016. Enjoy natural Belhelvie.

Bob Davis

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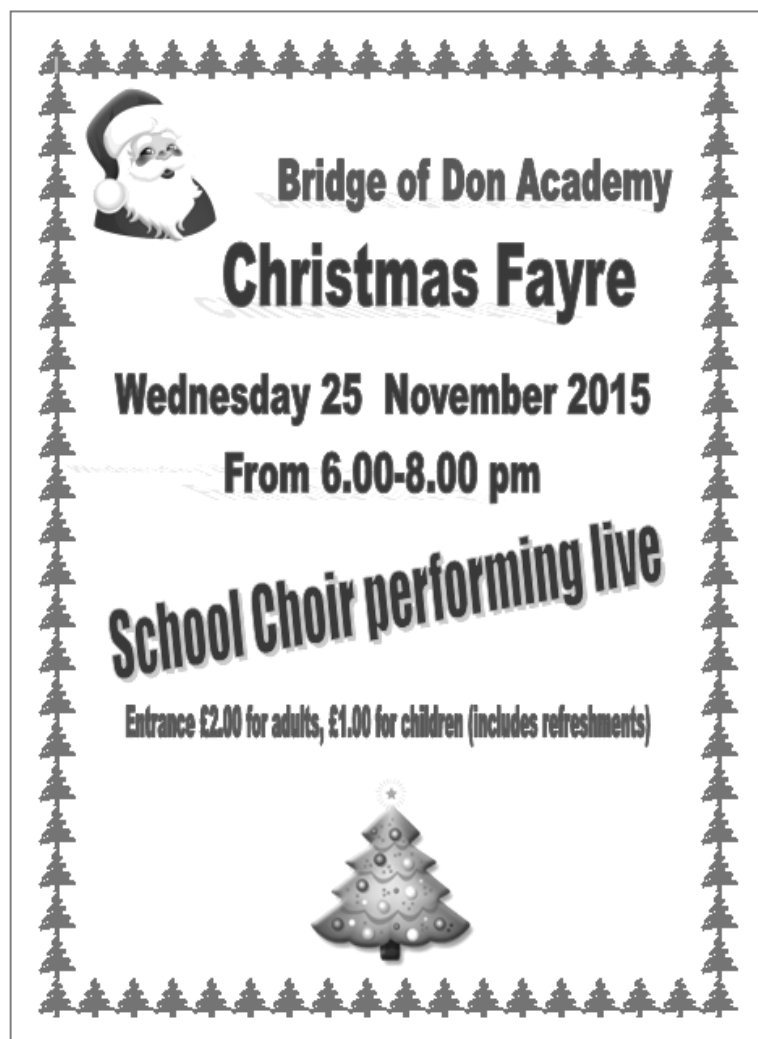
<http://bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk>

Here you will find a wealth of articles and news about the school; this article will give you just a taste of them.

Our Curriculum for Excellence is designed to give young people a range of experiences which don't just equip them to pass exams but help them develop the skills and qualities they will need, not just for learning and work but for life; however, make no mistake, we still emphasise that qualifications open doors and it's the skills and qualities they possess that let them take advantage of the opportunities that come their way. Therefore this year every young person in S4 – 6 has a mentor who will support and challenge young people embarking on national qualifications, ensuring they reach their full potential. We all do much better and push ourselves more when we know that we have to be accountable for our actions and progress.

In addition, we have invested heavily in new technology this year to make sure that our teachers and young people can take advantage of developments like Google Classroom, which allows teachers to post classwork, homework and resources on line which young people can access in and out of school. We have purchased 85 Chromebooks; these are laptops which immediately access the internet through our Wi-Fi and allow young people to research and access the material their teachers have posted.

We continue to make improvements to the fabric of the building. This summer the windows in all East facing classrooms were replaced along with windowsills and new blinds were installed. This has made the classrooms much more pleasant to work in for pupils and staff as the temperature is more easily modified; also, the glare of the sun can be blocked out – when it shines! New water fountains were installed in the canteen and main corridor to make access to water easier.



We continue to provide many extracurricular opportunities for young people so they can grow their confidence and skills. All are run by teachers *and young people* who give up their own time to provide the leadership and organisation required to make activities successful. Young people benefit from being part of the clubs on offer but in addition they can develop their own leadership skills by planning, organising and leading the activities. Visit the school website for further details. We all know that a challenge achieved can do much for one's confidence and this year the young people of Bridge of Don Academy once again rose to the challenge of the 20 km Sponsored Walk from Donmouth to Balmedie and back! Over £10,000 was raised to support learning in and out of school. A huge thank you goes to all the organisers, walkers and sponsors!

The school show goes from strength to strength and rehearsals have already begun for next summer's production of *Into the Woods*. We hope to have tickets on sale at parent's evenings and through the school library. Put the date in your diary 29 and 30 June and 1 July 2016. If you can't wait to see the talent of our young people, come along to the Christmas Fayre on 25 November 2015. There will be stalls selling gifts, cards, decorations and accessories to brighten up your Christmas. You can also relax and enjoy a live performance by the school choir, many of whom are in the school show. Also, enjoy a tasty treat and cuppa, all which is part of the ticket price of £2 for adults and £1 for children.

TEN MINUTES FOR THE PATIENT

Time is racing past and we are almost through 2015 already, with Christmas fast approaching. The clocks have gone back and the dark nights have closed in, at least there was a hint of an Indian summer! Everyone will now be looking to get organised for the festive season and be striving to get organised as time flies by so quickly. Not to be all Dr Who about it, but time does seem to zip by more quickly the older you are, so before I know it I'll be doing an article for the 2016 Winter Banter!!

So why mention time and its inexorable passage? Well it seems that many people are surprised to discover that most GP appointments are only ten minutes long and look shocked that their carefully thought out six point list with ten follow up questions cannot be covered in that time! Whilst it would be ideal to have the time to address this, sadly it is not really possible given the increasing numbers of patients we need to see. A further issue is the declining number of doctors going into GP, so we are in a perfect storm of rising demand and less medical time available to meet this.

Believe it or not the advent of routine ten-minute appointments is not that old, less than 30 years or so. Before this the norm used to be seven and a half minutes, and indeed many GPs did five-minute appointments! It took considerable research and hard work by academic GPs to persuade the profession to move to the ten minute standard. Of course back then many people died of heart attacks in their forties and fifties and most cancers were not remotely treatable, so much for the "good old days"!

Nowadays we see people surviving for longer with serious illnesses and modern living standards and treatments mean that people are living far longer than before. The problem is, as more patients live longer, they tend to get more than one medical condition and so can end up on a large number of drugs. Sorting out a few conditions as well as checking the various drugs in ten minutes is well nigh impossible to do properly. This is why nurses are increasingly involved to run clinics for patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and asthma, as there is just not enough time in the day to do everything that we need to do and see people with acute problems as well.

This other problem has also seen the rise of a new profession, the Nurse Practitioner (NP). These are very experienced nurses who have extra training in diagnosing illness and can prescribe medicines. In many practices patients will see a NP for more "straightforward" problem such as a chest or urinary infection, so that the GP is left to deal with the more "difficult" cases. This has been a great help for patients in that there are more appointments and so far the experience has been mostly good. As mentioned before the falling numbers of doctors will mean that NPs will become more common and I expect most practices will have them in the next few years.

One wrinkle is that if the GP you are due to see has no "easy" cases in their list for that day it may mean they will struggle to run to time! Remember as well as seeing

the patient we have to type up notes, fill in any forms for tests and dictate referral letters if required before calling the next patient, Dr Who's Tardis would be a great asset to any practice!



So time is a very precious commodity and we try our best to use it well for our patients but it is always a real challenge. You can help by not hoarding up several problems for us, a simple one may just need a phone call, but if we are to do the job well we need time. If you do have a few things to discuss, best ask for a double appointment, especially if one of the problems will require an examination and maybe additional tests such as bloods to be done. We are looking at other ways to get advice and help to our patients and practices now have Patient Participation Groups or PPGs, which help in this regard. At Scotstown our PPG has been very helpful and is getting to grips with these issues and I know other practices that serve the area will have a PPG as well. One area that may be available in the future is a web based advice system, which could help increase the scope of help and advice for patients, but IT limitations in the NHS mean that this is not going to happen soon.

I do hope that this has helped you all have a greater understanding of the complexity and challenges facing modern Primary Care, and that you'll try and be patient with your GP as we all strive to do our best to help on time and in good time. I hope too that, if you are in the at risk groups or over 65, you have booked or had your flu jab and that everyone is looking forward to a good Christmas - best wishes too for a happy, healthy, 2016.

Dr Alasdair Forbes



MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Mary and Hebbie Watson would like to thank everyone who donated towards and attended their recent Coffee Morning. The fabulous sum of £2196 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Care. It was a most enjoyable but extremely busy day. Hope to see you all same time, same place next year.

Thanks again.



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Maggie explained, “Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles and beer bottles to the store. They were then sent back to the company to be washed and sterilised, then refilled so they could be used again and again. So I guess we did recycling even though no-one mentioned being green”.

“We walked upstairs because we didn’t have escalators. We walked to the shops, the school and to work and didn’t climb into a 300 horsepower machine every time we left the house”, Maggie was now in full flow, “Back then we washed babies’ nappies because we didn’t have disposable ones. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up electricity. Wind and solar power dried our washing back in the old days. Children usually recycled hand-me-down clothes from their older brothers and sisters, not always brand new. But as you say, we didn’t know about being green”.

Barely stopping for breath, Maggie continued, “There were no plastic cups or bottles... when we wanted a drink of water, we drank from a reusable glass, or we used a water fountain or the tap. We refilled writing pens with ink, instead of buying

a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the entire razor, but I suppose we didn't know about being green".

Rob looked decidedly uncomfortable as other shoppers took an interest in Maggie's observations: "Back then, folk took the bus or the train. Children walked or rode bikes. instead of turning their parents into a 24-hour taxi service using the luxury people-carrier that cost more than a house cost before everyone turned green. We had one plug socket in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. We didn't need computerised gadgets to receive satellite signals from 23000 miles away in order to find the nearest clothes shop."



Maggie fixed her grandson with a wily look as she finished, "But isn't it sad that the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were, just because we didn't know about being green. Thank you for drawing this to my attention young man."

A red-faced Rob carried Granny's bags out of the shop to loud applause.

So keep up the good work, whatever generation you are. We all know how to think "green".

BINGO AT EIGIE HOUSE

Bingo will be held at Egie House on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm, until 16th December and restart on 20th January 2016.

All welcome for an evening's entertainment with tea and biscuits included.

For more information contact me at 01358 743349.



Winifred Stewart

MAKING IT REAL GROUP

The next meeting of the Belhelvie Parish 'Making It Real' Group takes place on Wednesday 25 November from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm will now be held at The White Horse Inn, Balmedie, not in the Forsyth Hall as previously indicated.

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10% of the population suffer from migraine (and even more from headaches) so the benefits of Osteopathy and Massage Therapy in their treatment is worth knowing.. At our clinic people come in to see us with many varied problems, including migraine. Luckily, we have many techniques in our 'toolkits' that can help.

Migraine is characterised by an intense one-sided headache with increased sensitivity to light; nausea, vomiting and numbness. It can be very disabling, lasting from hours to days. There is no known specific cause or 'cure'. Sometimes, sufferers are aware of an 'aura' - a smell or sensation - which precedes the attack. Often, a trigger sets it off e.g. stress, wine, chocolate, a smell, changed sleep pattern or hormonal upset.

Osteopathy is a safe and natural hands-on therapy that can assist recovery from many conditions. Treatment is focussed on mobilising the spine and other joints that are creating or making a problem worse. This includes massage of the surrounding soft tissues. The aim is to reduce stress on affected areas. Those of us who are susceptible to migraine will probably feel that our neck is tighter on, and being pulled to one side, plus it feels tender to touch particularly at the base of the skull.



This tension/cramping/spasming means the blood vessels draining waste from the area or bringing in nutrition, can be squeezed. Nerves (the electricals) firing the muscles are affected too. Think about a sponge. The blood vessels and nerves pass through the holes in the sponge. Squeeze the sponge – and imagine the effects on the tubes. It's a plumbing problem! All this can cause discomfort, pins and needles, a headache or the debilitating pain of migraine.

- **Remedial Massage helps in reducing the frequency and severity of migraine attacks by easing painful spasms and encouraging relaxation.**
- **Osteopathy has a very effective role restoring natural movement to the bones of the neck and skull. This helps nerve function and eases pressure on blood vessels thus reducing or eliminating migraine attacks**
- **Face massage eases tension in the facial muscles**
- **Abdominal massage relaxes and helps digestion especially if the trigger for migraine is constipation.**
- **Reflexology helps to bring the body into balance to heal itself. Many systems are involved in migraine.**

With treatment, the frequency and intensity of the migraine attacks diminish. Changes in diet, exercise, stress management and relaxation habits plus other lifestyle changes will support the treatment. Osteopathy gets results very quickly in that attacks are less severe and less often. If the cause is mainly structural, then migraine can be a thing of the past.

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

WESTERHATTON LANDFILL SITE

We have made enquires to Aberdeenshire Council's planning service regarding the restoration of Westerhatton Landfill site, which was formerly used for sand and gravel extraction and as a landfill site. Aberdeenshire Council planning officer Darren Ross has confirmed that no approval is yet in place for the restoration; however the applicant is keen for the approval to come through soon, subject to an agreement with Environmental Health and SEPA. Around 43,000 tonnes of top soil will be required to restore the site and develop it for recreational use. The restoration will be completed in phases over a 4 year period; no further landfill operations will take place and the existing and non-essential infrastructure will be removed. We have requested, at the initial stage, for the removal of the metal stanchions.

COMPLAINT TO THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

A letter of complaint has been sent by Belhelvie Community Council to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman regarding what it considers to be the unsatisfactory service provided by Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Service over a period of more than three years. This relates to activities at Bruntland, Whitecairns, where residents have had to endure noise, blasting, stone-crushing, dust and huge numbers of lorry movements on a daily basis. The planning service has been unhelpful and evasive in their responses to the frequent concerns raised with them and have been reluctant to take sufficient action to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of residents and others. This has been much to the detriment of local residents to the extent we have written to the Ombudsman and we will keep you updated on the response.

BETTER BALMEDIE POLYTUNNEL

Allan Jeffrey attended the Community Council meeting on behalf of Better Balmedie on 19th October to request that the Community Council would submit the application for the renewal of planning consent for the polytunnel behind the leisure centre. BCC agreed to this request as it will reduce the application fee by 50%.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Belhelvie Community Council's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 15th February 2016 at Balmedie Primary School. We would welcome anyone who is interested in becoming involved in their local community to consider becoming a community councillor. The commitment is not too onerous and meetings are held on the third Monday of each month. If you are interested, please come along to this or any other of our meetings or just give me a call on 01358 742118 or email eagc@hotmail.co.uk

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

David Watson, BCC Chair



POLICE NEWS

Sergeant Alex Carle is based within the Formartine area and is your single point of contact for the Belhelvie community. Having recently commenced duty within the area, he looks forward to working with you in the months ahead to ensure we continue to live and work within a safe community.

With road safety being one of our local priorities, it's important to reemphasise safety around the school grounds. Inappropriate parking is a regular complaint around our schools. We will be running local initiatives looking to identify those who park in a dangerous or obstructive manner or those driving inappropriately around schools.

There have been a number of calls regarding vehicles being ridden in an anti-social and careless manner within Balmedie. Please keep calling with these reports and, where possible, obtain registration numbers. We will monitor these types of call and ensure positive action is taken against those responsible.

At some point between the 24th and 28th September 2015, the Balmedie Beach Hut was broken into with the doors for the premises having been forced open. approximately £30 worth of items were stolen and estimated £600 worth of damage resulted.

Within the villages, we continue to see low levels of youth disorder and anti-social behaviour. However, we are not complacent and we need you to tell us where these incidents are occurring and who is responsible.

Over the coming months, I would like to hear from anyone within the community who wishes to discuss any incidents of concern to them. We can be contacted on 999 for emergencies, 101 for non-emergencies and EllonDistrictCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

PARISH THREADS

Granular Debate

One hand raised I am holding on to my hat in a westerly wind. The wind that Mum and Dad joked kept our farm buildings up. It's a black and white photo from 1960 but I still remember the hat was blue and the bolero I am wearing was angora. I can almost feel the softness on my arms. My brothers and I are lined up in front of a travelling drilling rig. The farm needed a better water supply so the drill had been working to create a borehole deep into the hill. Some weeks before that a water-diviner had walked and walked the field, marking with little sticks the lines where she had felt the energy from the water pass up the forked stick and mysteriously through her body. Dad rarely took photos but he would have wanted to record the moment when he had, at last, achieved a good reliable source of water.



I have been catching up on a 'Swallows and Amazons' book that I missed fifty years ago - (too much posing for photos). It describes the adventures of the 'Coot Club' on the Norfolk Broads. I was entertained by the familiar low-tech activities. Fictionally, it was possible to achieve so much with those simple elements of bicycles, jam sandwiches, good chums and an old fashioned camera. Occasionally there was a need for additional extras that would be found in their pockets: a pencil, scraps of paper, string, a torch or a penknife. In this story there was much cycling around dusty roads to take messages there and back again, getting thirsty and 'puffed out' in the process. When the young adventurers found they needed to take a photograph at night, one of the children, there was always a boffin one wasn't there, built a homemade flash device out of a biscuit tin, magnesium powder (thankfully not in pocket) and a sparking emery wheel. It was all so vintage, so very down to earth.

Every now and then when digging in my Belhelvie garden, I come across a lump of pure clay to play with. It's not a rich Kincardine red, it's more Whitecairns beige with ochre streaks. I like to knead this smooth earthiness in my hand and mould it into thumb pots or balls. I let them dry out in the summer sun and then leave them to collapse and dissolve in the winter. Mixed with linseed oil I could make a good weather proof glazing putty with it or tread it with sand and straw to make 'cob', and plaster a wall with it.

The varied geology around us in Aberdeenshire has been able to provide many of the raw materials we used to depend on. As well as stone and slate for houses, there was fire clay, peat, brick-clay, limestone, and sand. All quarried and transported to where they were needed. A rare mineral, Diatomite was found at Muir of Dinnet. In the 1860s Alfred Nobel was driven to find a way to make nitro-glycerine safer after his brother was killed during experiments.

Alfred discovered that with the addition of Diatomite, (the chalky remains of tiny sea creatures), the explosive was stabilised. Nobel renamed the mixture dynamite. Diatomite was quarried and transported from Muir of Dinnet until 1919.

Throughout Belhelvie Parish and beyond we are all driving extra carefully to avoid trucks containing stones and gravel that has been blasted out of local quarries. The material is being transported to the new ring road construction sites when ironically the need for such a road is in a lull due to falling oil prices.

Over the summer we met a man who said: 'Ah, I remember Belhelvie... how is it doing?' He told us he was a student here in the 1960s and bicycled from Potterton into Kings College. 'It was so quiet on the road', he said, I used to read my newspaper on the handlebars.'

The roads from Potterton and Balmedie to the new road are being worked on day and night. The modern high tech machinery and G.P.S. must be helpful but it is still a huge project. Countless thousands of tons of material to support the new roads are changing the contours of the land. You have to admire the complexity of the endeavour, so much labouring, all to make our journeys easier. 'Journey' from the French 'Jour nee' a day's work or a day's travel for the journeymen who worked for a day's pay. So much dedicated equipment and material managed in dust or mud. Then just when it gets easier and the roads are metalled they all move on to a new site. It must feel like keeping wasps: All the trouble of keeping bees without the bother of collecting the honey.

Maureen Ross and I went over to Ballater, to see the splendid replica stagecoach the Royal Highlander with its team of horses. It was on a two-day charity fundraiser



journey to Aberdeen. They were celebrating the time in the early 1800's when the development of coaches and metalled roads meant that mail could be delivered in a day along the 58 miles of the

Deeside road. Metalling is from the Latin metallum meaning a mine or a quarry. The roads were made with granite chips in the middle section to support the horse's hooves. There was tightly packed smaller gravel and earth at the sides to be smooth for the wheels. At the staging points the horses were speedily changed so that they could keep up an average speed of 10 miles an hour. This way of transportation was a great success... until the Deeside railway was built.

I am off now, travelling south to resume my job as your foreign correspondent. One winter's day, when you are dodging those big trucks and the sky is as grey as a shark's armpit, think of me. I'll be in the New Zealand sunshine, working out what interesting nuggets to share with you for the Banter Spring Edition.

Mary Cane

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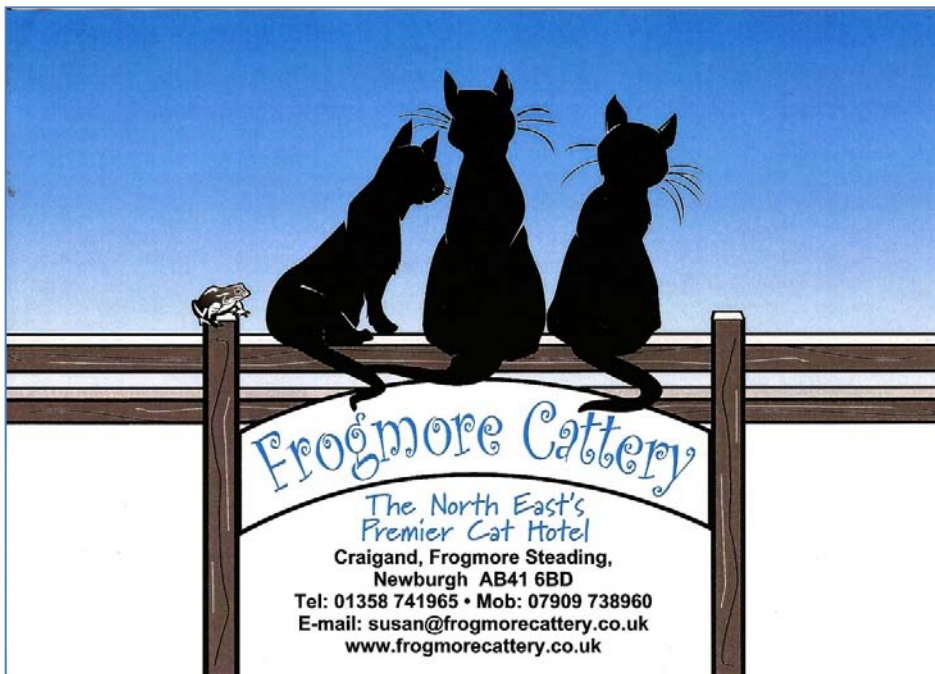
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Tuesday	CLOSED	Saturday	10.00 - 13.00
Wednesday	14.30 - 16.30		
	17.30 - 19.30		

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 14.00 to 14.30. Come along and join in the fun.

Our very popular Knit & Natter Group is going from strength to strength and producing some really lovely garments for participants and for various charities. They are a very friendly group and a warm welcome is always extended to new members. The group meets at the library every Thursday morning from 10.30-12.30.

This year's Summer Reading Challenge has been the most successful one ever with over 7200 children in Aberdeenshire involved, an increase of over 18% on last year. A big thankyou and a very well done to all who took part and made it such a success!

Congratulations to the winners of the story competition in Balmedie who were Lily McKendrick, Isla McKeown and Mairi McKeown and to our Star Reader, Cameron MacRae. All the stories submitted were of a high standard and the judges had a difficult task choosing the winners this year so well done to everyone who submitted a story.

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. We look forward to seeing you. For more information on Aberdeenshire Libraries, please visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries.

Maureen Muirden



*The Editorial team at
Belhelvie Banter
wishes all its advertisers,
contributors, distributors
and readers
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy & Healthy 2016*



BELHELVIE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Belhelvie Neighbourhood Watch is still operating within the Parish. You'll see the signs as you enter Belhelvie. Remember these if you live in Belhelvie and are renewing your home insurance. you can obtain a 10% discount if you mention Neighbourhood Watch or tick the box online.

Police Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland suggest the following to help protect your home and make it less attractive to a passing burglar:

Don't leave your keys or ID documents within easy reach of doors, letterboxes or windows. Close and lock all doors and windows. If you have multi-locking door handles, lift the handle, lock it with the key and remove it - LIFT - LOCK - REMOVE. Put the key in a safe place out of sight in case of fire. Lock garages and sheds so garden tools and ladders can't be used to break into your home. Keep side gates locked and wheelie bins stored behind them. Use timer switches linked to lights and a radio so it appears that someone is at home. Invest in a safe for valuables and sentimental items and securely fix it to a solid surface. Install a visible intruder alarm system - burglars don't want to be seen or heard. Install low-level 'dusk till dawn' lighting to increase visibility and deter burglars. Keep side and rear boundaries high to restrict access and front boundaries low to remove hiding places. Photograph and mark valuables and sentimental items with your postcode and house number/name.

If you wish to join the Belhelvie Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, you can find it online at www.Neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk - sign up then search for the Belhelvie Scheme to join. If you live in another part of the parish, why not sign up there and create your own local scheme.

You can also download your own pack to create your own scheme at www.absafe.org.uk/get-started - and get all your neighbours invited too!

Paul Collier

DIARY DATE

Annual General Meeting of The Belhelvie Banter

The 2015 Annual General Meeting will take place in the Whitehorse Inn, Balmedie at 7.00 pm on Thursday 26th November 2015. We would be pleased to see as many advertisers, contributors, volunteers and readers as possible at this meeting to ensure the Belhelvie Banter continues to flourish.

BALMEDIE LEISURE CENTRE

I am delighted that Balmedie Leisure Centre's Voluntary Committee has successfully secured Entrust (Landfill Tax) funding to replace the cavity wall insulation and change all the internal/external lighting to energy-saving LEDs. So, can I warn our patrons, especially parents with young children, that there may be some disruption at the Leisure Centre through November/December. Contractors have been made aware of our timetable and have agreed to carry out all work, outwith busy periods.

Staff and committee have been extremely busy organising some great events for our community. The family BBQ, Wrestling and the Gymnastics Clubs were a great success. They were well-attended and raised much-needed funds for the Leisure Centre. With your continued support, we have loads planned throughout November, December and January. There is something for everyone, including Sunday November 8th bus trip to Ikea/Macarthur Glen. On Friday November 6^h we have a visit from Clairvoyant Annie Moon. Then it's into December with our pensioner Christmas Bingo, and not forgetting our very special Family Christmas Eve Service, organised by Reverend Paul McKeown of Belhelvie Parish Church. And that's not all! On Saturday 15th January, we have a Michael Buble tribute night with disco. Do please come along and support these community events, we would love to see you there, it's your Community Centre, run for you, by community volunteers – please use it, continue to support it, or you could lose it!

Bill Murray, Voluntary Committee Chairman



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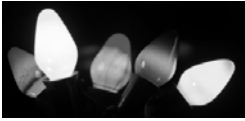
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CHRISTMAS AT BELHELVIE CHURCH



Over the years I've come to understand that lots of folk find October and November difficult months to get through. The nights draw in and the mornings grow dark, the winds pick up, the rain falls, the autumn leaves turn to sludge and block all the drains... I know it's the same in December, but at least December holds out the prospect of get-togethers, good food and Christmas celebrations (though I know that these themselves can bring their own stresses).

That gloomy winter darkness is part of the reason I can't get my Christmas lights up soon enough, much to my family's bemusement. Ever since I was a kid I've loved the way lights transform homes, shops and churches at this time of year – there's something almost magical about it.

For Christians, Christmas is the season that celebrates light – the light of God coming into the world in the form of a child. A child whose life was so significant we're still reflecting on it and celebrating it over two millennia later. This time of year will bring gloomy days and sometimes gloomy experiences too; but Christmas reminds us to keep believing because *'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.'* (John 1:5)

Every blessing to you and yours for Christmas and the New Year and we hope to see you at some of the services over the festive season – you'd be more than welcome.

Paul McKeown

Coming Up at Belhelvie Church of Scotland:

Sunday 8th November Remembrance Day Service – 10:50am Belhelvie Church

Saturday 21st November Christmas Fayre in The Forsyth Hall from 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. A great selection of seasonal items for sale, refreshments & Prize Draw.

Sunday 29th November 6:30pm Christingle Service. A lovely all-age service, part of which is held by candlelight. Don't know what a Christingle is? Come and find out! This is an especially popular service with children.

Friday 4th December Right Christmas Quiz Night – 7:30pm, The Forsyth Hall. Cost is £5 adults and £3 for children/concessions. BYOB

Sunday 6th December 11am The award-winning Bon Accord Silver Band lead our service of readings and carols.

Sunday 20th December 11am Nativity Service (held in the Forsyth Hall)

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 4pm - Community Carol Service (Balmedie Leisure Centre). An informal, fun service for folk with younger children. 11pm Watchnight Service. Half an hour of carols followed by a short, candlelit service to bring in Christmas Day.

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

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POTTERTON COMMUNITY GROUP



Potterton residents started canvassing earlier this year about upping the Community Spirit within Potterton/Belhelvie, hoping to gather interest in setting up a Youth Club and organising fun events to bring the community together. This got the support of Rev Andy Cowie and the Belhelvie Community Trust. Following a request for volunteers a group of local parents supported by Rev Cowie, got together to start organising a Family Halloween Party & Zombie Apocalypse which was a great idea headed up by local mums Samantha Cooper and Wendy Milne-Emslie. With Caroline Anderson co-ordinating and the huge effort put in by parents organising the event, the day was a complete success with local residents already excited about the next event. We would like to thank the Stead Inn who supported this event by providing the venue, decorations and food for the event at a reduced cost and the Potterton Shop for donating over 100 bags of sweets. 120 tickets went on sale and were sold out within a week.

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

The blood curdling screams started at 3.00pm when a group of older children from the village and surrounding areas led by adult Team Leaders received their mission details to enter the Potterton Woods and evade the Zombie Apocalypse. For nearly 2 hours the Woods likened themselves to scenes out of the “Walking Dead” and was a great



experience for the older kids to get into the Halloween spirit and outdoors having fun. We are not sure who had more fun – the kids or the Adults, friends and family that were playing the part of the Zombies!!!!

HALLOWEEN PARTY

At 4.00pm the Halloween party commenced with a few hours of spooky themed games organised by local parents including an outdoor Zombie Hut where the younger children got a chance to meet some of the Zombies and undertake their own mini mission to retrieve sweets from the hut. Local residents, parents and children alike got into the spooky spirit and dressed up for the party which continued on into the evening with more fun, games, fancy dress competitions and music. It is hoped that the group will organise similar events in the future for local residents and their families.



ALL AGE FACILITIES – POTTERTON/BELHELVE

PUBLIC MEETING

A public Meeting was held on 5th October led by Mr Allan Jeffrey, Chair of Belhelvie Community Trust and attended by Aberdeenshire Council representatives. Over 35 residents attended the meeting to discuss enhancing all age facilities within the area. Residents highlighted many things they would like to see held locally including bingo, friendship groups, coffee mornings, evening classes, exercise classes to name a few.

A steering group has been formed which would be part of the Belhelvie Community Trust to start developing this project and are due to meet in early November. It is hoped to organise a Pop-Up Cafe later in the year to start canvassing further ideas and interest from the wider community.

Caroline Anderson



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1st BELHELVIE RANGERS

This term we have been working on the Commonwealth Award which is a badge Guides and Rangers from all the Commonwealth countries can work on. So far we've investigated the history of Guiding, Guiding in South Africa and New Zealand, and have made lovely Lamington cakes which are known as Ystervarkies in South Africa (hedgehogs in Afrikaans). For our Halloween night, we decorated ceramic pumpkin lanterns.

The rest of the term will be spent finishing off the Commonwealth Award and of course some Christmas decorations and a party. One of our Rangers is off to Polaris – the Scottish weekend event for all Senior Section girls – so we can't wait to hear what fun activities she'll get up to.

At the moment, we don't have plans for the New Year which is the Rangers (Senior Section) Centenary. Camps, parties and international trips may be on the cards though. Why not consider joining us as a member or a volunteer to help celebrate our 100th Birthday. If you are a young woman aged 14 to 26 years old, you could join as a Ranger and if you're over 18 years, you could join as a leader or helper.

Please give me a call (01224 703335) or drop me an email (s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk) if you want to come along and give it a try or if you are interested in joining as a leader or occasional helper.

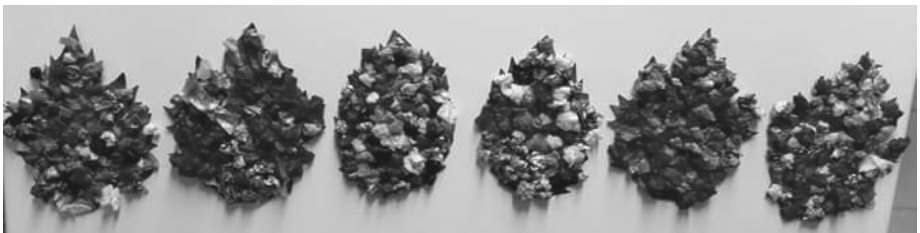
Susan Osbeck

CRAFT CLUB



Craft club has just started back again after the October holidays and it has been fantastic to see so many children return to the class, along with some new members. The Club costs £1.50 a week and runs on a Thursday from 6.30 to 7.30pm in Balmedie School. Each week we have fun making, painting and of course baking. The photographs show some of our creations. Over the next few weeks we will be making things for Bonfire Night, St Andrews Day and Christmas.

Diane & Catherine 01358 743114





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BALMEDIE BEAVER SCOUTS

Its all change at Balmedie Beavers. Scouts have introduced an exciting revised programme with a new set of badges and activities which will be a challenge for both the Beavers and Leaders. Our programme will cover the themes of outdoor, adventure, world and skills and will encourage teamwork and personal development.

In October Balmedie Group Scout Leader “Mr T” gave out the last of the Chief Scout Bronze Awards following the old programme to Zach, Kyle, Liam, Noah, Ellis and Noah.



We have already started work on the new badges and in September held a Sleepover where the Beavers went to “Detective School”. They spent the weekend searching for clues, cracking codes, following trails and a particular highlight, launching water rockets.

Elaine Neil, Beaver Leader

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY TRUST

BCT continues to be involved in various projects.

In October we held our second training course in dry-stane walling this year, so we now have 12 people trained this year in basic walling techniques. The course was based around the construction of a large stone planter at the entrance to the Magnificent Sevens Woods in Balmedie. This will become a feature of a Community Sensory Garden, which is planned for next year. This work was funded by the Forestry Commission Scotland. Some of our trainees from April have continued working throughout the year and have restored a stretch of wall within the woods. Well done everyone who has been involved!

The Community Sensory Garden will be built in the Magnificent Sevens Woods. The garden will not interfere with the path, which winds through the woods. It is hoped that it will enhance this area for all who use it. At the moment we are looking at possible sources of help in cash and kind so that we can take our plans forward. We are keen to hear from you with your thoughts and ideas for the garden, the more people get involved the more we can achieve.

As we told you in the last edition of Banter, the Trust applied for the Community Asset Transfer of the Sand Bothy in Balmedie Country Park. Our application has been approved in principle; we are now waiting for a lease so we can work out what will be involved in the take-over of the building. We have had lots of positive comments from you about this project. We will keep you updated as things progress!

The Trust has received some money from Lawrence of Kemnay to replace the bench at the entrance to Balmedie House, install flower barrels and generally tidy up that corner on the way down to the beach.

BCT was involved in organising and chairing a meeting in Potterton to look at the development of community facilities in Potterton. A steering group has been set up, and we wish them well with their efforts. The Trust will continue to give support when required.

We entered the P&J competition to win a Community Minibus, we were unsuccessful, but many thanks to everyone who saved the tokens from the paper.

Belhelvie Community Trust meetings are held at the Whitehorse on the fourth Monday of each month. You will be very welcome if you would like to get involved. We are keen to hear from residents throughout the parish of Belhelvie.

Rosie Nicol, Secretary BCT

You can also contact Belhelvie Community Trust at 01358 742557:
rosie.inform@lineone.net or via the Belhelvie Community Trust Facebook page.
Belhelvie Community Trust is a registered charity number SCO45563

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SWI (BELHELVIE RURAL)

By the time this is printed and the Banter delivered, November will be almost gone and the next thought will be Christmas. Our December meeting on Wednesday 9th gives you the opportunity to get crafty and make your own Christmas table decoration. All you require is a plate, saucer or bowl the size to suit and maybe a candle or two. The flowers and greenery are supplied but if you have any in the garden, do bring it along. The oasis is also supplied. This is usually a fun night so please come along as you would be made very welcome.

The SWI are trying to encourage younger ladies to join. We need new ideas, so please, if you fit the criteria, come along to Eigie House Balmedie where we meet in the lounge at 7.30pm. If transport is a problem, phone me and I will arrange a lift. We also have a whist evening at the same venue on the 4th Wednesday of the month (not December). This starts at at 7-30pm. We look forward to seeing members, old and new! Details of dates can be found on the back cover of Banter.

Elaine Strachan 01358 743173

PASTORAL CARE TEAM – BELHELVIE CHURCH

COFFEE HAVEN takes place at the Forsyth Hall, beside the Church, on the first Tuesday of every month, from 10am to 12noon. Come along and enjoy coffee and home-bakes in a warm, friendly environment where all ages are welcome.

ZUMBA GOLD exercise classes run at the Forsyth Hall every Monday 9.45 - 10.30am. Exercise with friends and enjoy a cuppa afterwards.

Marianne Wray



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BELHELVIE BOWLING CLUB PRIZEWINNERS



President Ian Forman welcomed members to closing of the green. After an enjoyable game of bowls and a welcome cup of tea, the prize winners were presented with their trophies. We are now looking forward to next season and hopefully some new members. Do come along – you will be made very welcome!

Mary Watson



*Dear Belhelvie Tattie Bogle,
I was wondering what it was like for you to see the first helicopters going over
Belhelvie at the beginning of Aberdeen's Oil Industry.*

Bernard F. Sinclair (Oil worker, retired)

It's funny you should mention helicopters, Bernard. There have been a lot less lately - perhaps you could tell me why. I remember the first ones very well. They were quite a shock I can tell you. I thought to begin with they were a new kind of very noisy bird. Luckily it wasn't my corn they were after and they flew on past and out to sea. I have a good memory and it was 1965, fifty years ago that those first helicopters they called the Wessex, appeared over Beauty Hill from Dyce. Just one or two to start with and what a din they made. Mind you in the nineteen eighties they started coming over so thick and fast, I couldn't hear myself think some winter mornings; however, they were a great help scaring the crows away!

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.

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 Eigie House lounge 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.

Winter programme:

1 December	Something Doric
15 December	Christmas Party
12 January	Mhairi Shand, Accordionist
26 January	Maggie and Dick Trickey, Burns Theme
9 & 23 February	To be arranged
8 March	Ray Meres Entertains
22 March	Don Forbes

Vic Deans, President 01358 743634

Margaret Murison, Secretary 01358 742285

Belhelvie Banter Editorial Team would like to express their sincere thanks to Sheena Hill who delivers 40 copies of 'The Banter' to Cairntack homes every three months. Sheena is moving house in December and we wish her well in the future.

Unfortunately for us, this means we are now short of a conscientious volunteer, so if you live in this area and would like a little gentle exercise (which is also frequently a very sociable activity!) please contact us at:

Belhelvie Banter on email: **belhelviebanter@live.co.uk**

Many hands make light work, as the saying goes! If you'd like to help with 'The Banter', in whatever capacity, please contact us - we'll find something for you to do.

BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

All our services take place 11am every Sunday at the Balmedie Leisure Centre.

Our small Church continues to be built. It is a slow process. I have a request - our builder's wife has come through a cancer episode, and although she is making good progress, I ask that you pray for a full recovery for her.

We are indebted to GREENWELL EQUIPMENT, 11 Greenbank Road, East Tullos for so generously donating a container to be used as a store, for the duration of the build. The resultant security is greatly appreciated. We are also indebted to BARRATT HOMES, Blairton House, Old Aberdeen Road, Balmedie for kindly donating to us fencing to secure our site while building work is in progress.

It feels appropriate that our Christmas Eve service will be held at 11pm on Thursday 24th December at our new building. It will be a candle-lit service, finishing just as we enter Christmas Day. Again, everyone is welcome to join us for this special event. Taking part will be Rev. Professor Lisanne Winslow from USA.

POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Services now at the Potterton Community Centre 6.15pm first Sunday of each month.

We have been privileged to be involved with the new Potterton Action Group, which saw a very successful Halloween party and Zombie Apocalypse. Credit must be given to Wendy Milne-Emslie and the group of residents for their organisation – well done to everyone involved.

I would also like to thank those who attended the Public Meeting about additional community facilities in Potterton. It was a fantastic turn out. The Steering Group now has the difficult task of guiding the project to fruition. The first target is to extend or adapt the present football pavilion into a multi purpose community facility.

We have a group of people from our Aberdeen team of Churches, who are looking at whether they should join a Mission to Malawi in the summer of 2016. This would be an opportunity to support schools, clinics and churches in that area.

Our Congregational Group of Churches is growing. We are celebrating the good news that a new church, Leadhills-Lowther Congregational Church has opened in the South of Scotland.

Potterton Congregational Church's candlelit Christmas Eve service with carols and readings will take place at Potterton Community Centre from 7 – 7.30pm.

All are welcome. Let us bring the spirit of Christmas to our village!

For information about the Balmedie or the Potterton Congregational Church, please call me.

Rev. Andy Cowie 01224 703248.

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*IFC Inside Front Cover

*IBC Inside Back Cover

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WINTER DATES for your DIARY

NOVEMBER

Sun 29	Christingle Service	Belhelvie Church	6.30pm
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DECEMBER

Fri 4	Christmas Quiz night	Forsyth Hall	7.30pm
Sun 6	Bon accord Silver Band	Belhelvie Church	11.00am
Wed 9	SWI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Fri 18	Last day of school term	BODA	
Sun 20	Nativity Service	Forsyth Hall	11.00am
Mon 21	Community Council Meeting	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Tues 22	Last day of school term	Balmedie, Ellon	
Thurs 24	Community Carol Service	Balmedie Leisure Centre	4.00pm
Thurs 24	Watch Night Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00pm
Fri 25	Christmas Day Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00am

JANUARY

Wed 6	School term resumes	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Wed 13	SWI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Mon 18	Community Council Meeting	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Sat 25	Michael Buble Tribute Night	Balmedie Leisure Centre	
Mon 25	Belhelvie Community Trust	White Horse Inn	7.30pm
Wed 27	Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm

FEBRUARY

Wed 10	SWI	Eigie House	7.30pm
Fri 12	Mid-term holiday	Balmedie, Ellon	
Mon 15	Community Council Meeting & AGM	Belhelvie Comm Centre	7.30pm
Mon 15	Mid-term holiday	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Tues 16	In Service day	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Wed 17	In Service day	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Mon 22	Belhelvie Community Trust	White Horse Inn	7.30pm
Wed 24	Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm

MARCH

Wed 9	SWI Mini Show	Eigie House	7.30pm
Mon 21	Community Council Meeting	Balmedie School	7.30pm
Wed 23	Whist	Eigie House	7.30pm
Fri 25	Good Friday Holiday	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon	
Mon 28	Belhelvie Community Trust	White Horse Inn	7.30pm

WEEKLY

Mon	Golden Zumba	Forsyth Hall	9.45am
Wed	1 st and 3 rd Wednesday of month Bingo	Eigie House	7.30pm
Thurs	Knit & Natter	Balmedie Library	10.30am
Thurs	Balmedie kids Craft Club Term Time only	Balmedie School	6.30pm