

BELHELVE BANTER

Balmedie : Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog

EDITION 41

DECEMBER 2019

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The work involved in producing The Belhelvie Banter is all done voluntarily. At the time of going to press, the information within this edition is understood to be correct, but no responsibility can be accepted by the Banter Team for any errors. We do our best!

EDITORIAL

With the nights drawing in, and Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes behind us, we find ourselves once more into all things Winter, and contemplating the joys of the season. Of course we do. Granted, the weather's not great, the electricity bills are rising, the cold wind is biting - but oh what bonuses are coming our way! Christmas trees, parties, family get-togethers, pantomimes, carols, watchnight services, nativities - such excitement in store. Of course there is. Well I'm hanging on to that thought anyway. Of course I am.

I'll be brief, really because we're beginning to get short of space on Banter these days. We are delighted at the amount of articles we are receiving - thank you to all our contributors, and apologies to those whose articles we just couldn't fit in.

It is with sadness that we are publishing a final article from our regular contributor, Bob Davis (pages 8-9). Now, we know *he* would have delighted in the wildness of Winter fired by the prospect of planning and setting off on his next wonderful adventure.

The Banter Team would like to wish all our readers, advertisers, distributors and contributors an exciting winter full of celebration, safe journeys, good health, happy families and warm homes - a Merry Christmas and happy 2020 to you all!

Jess Petrie, Editor



BELHELVIE BANTER AGM

Wednesday 20th November 2019
7.00pm at The Sand Bothy

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2020 BANTER DEADLINES	SPRING (Ed 42)	SUMMER (Ed 43)	AUTUMN (Ed 44)	WINTER (Ed 45)
Articles & ads	Fri 24 th Jan	Fri 24 th April	Fri 24 th July	Fri 23 rd Oct
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CREATING NEW WOODLANDS



The company 'Forest Carbon Ltd', based in Durham, supports the creation of new woodlands in the UK on behalf of individuals and companies wanting to capture the unavoidable carbon dioxide emissions that arise from their activities, and make a wider contribution to local environments and communities at the same time. Here, James Hepburne Scott, a director of Forest Carbon highlights the wonderful work that has been going on at Balmedie Farm, Belhelvie.

In the Spring of this year Malcolm and Maureen Ross (seen above) planted a new woodland on Balmedie Farm on the east side of the burn just north of the village. It extends to almost 8 hectares and has a fine mix of species. A quarter is spruce, sitka and Norway, which will eventually be harvested for timber. The UK imports over 80% of its timber needs, so this will be an important contribution. The rest is beech, sycamore, oak, birch, rowan and more. In addition to timber it will be great for wildlife and shelter. The project was designed and managed by Simon Jacyna of SAC.

The Forestry Commission grant was not sufficient to enable Malcolm and Maureen to go ahead, so additional funding was obtained by the sale of carbon offset credits to the Fuel Store, a fuel card company, arranged by carbon specialists Forest Carbon Ltd.

Over the next 70 years the woodland will capture over 2,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. That is approximately what is emitted by an average-sized car driving 12 million miles!

Malcolm Ross of Balmedie Farm adds -

When we took on running the farm in 1982 it was very windswept so trees seemed to be an answer, giving shelter to our suckler cow enterprise. We started with two hand-sown hedges, alder and hawthorn along a ditch and part of the Eigie Burn. The next project was a grant-aided wood on 4 acres of a sandy gorse covered brae. Planting this coincided with a spring drought so we did think that we had a disaster on our hands, but 34 years on it is quite a decent wood.

The grant system was becoming generous, so in 1983 two small fields amounting to 10 acres, which were a nuisance with the modern machinery, were planted in a mix of conifers and broadleaves. Hedges were next, 1500 metres over 5 fields, mostly not grant aided as the rules could be quite restrictive. Our last project this year has been 18 acres of mixed conifers and native broadleaves surrounded by a most impressive deer fence, and that's it - any more trees will have to be for someone else to do!

Find out more about Forest Carbon projects on the website:

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COMMUNITY FIRE MESSAGE TO BELHELVIE PARISH



My name is Graeme Laird and I am a Station Commander within the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. I am writing to encourage everyone to sign up for our flagship home fire safety programme where Fire-fighters will visit your property and offer professional advice for your safety. I think this is a particularly relevant time to promote this service due to a

recent house fire in the village of Balmedie and the fact that we are rapidly moving towards the winter period.

It is relevant to warn that accidental house fires can be caused by increased use of heating and electrical appliances at this time of year, as well as higher alcohol consumption during the holiday season.

SFRS will soon be launching our winter's awareness campaign to urge families to stay safe over this festive period. This winter we will be working closely with local communities and partner agencies to keep Scotland safe from fire and non-fire emergencies, but as always, we need your help to reduce the amount of preventable fires we might see in the coming months.

We would like to offer you, your families, friends and neighbours a free Home Fire Safety Visit. These are a key part of our fire prevention work and help safeguard and reassure anyone who receives one.

Free home fire safety visits take around 20 minutes to complete and are conducted by friendly local SFRS crews at a time convenient for the householder.

You can arrange a visit by calling the Freephone number **0800 0731 999**, by texting **'FIRE' to 80800** or by filling in an online form at www.firescotland.gov.uk



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Graeme Laird
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Station Commander



It is with great sadness that we pass on the news that our popular columnist, Bob Davis, has died. A keen conservationist, Bob was renowned for his extraordinary knowledge of the natural world, which he generously shared, influencing many young minds and urging us all to take care of the world we live in. He was an adventurer and intrepid explorer, taking off into the wilderness to be at one with nature. We were privileged to have Bob with us on Banter, sharing his wonderful wit and wisdom. Our thoughts are with Bob's family at this sad time. He will be missed by many.

So here we offer you Bob's final Banter column, which we think is very appropriate at this time. This was originally published in the 'Foveran News' (thank you to Janet Jones for sharing this).

We leave you to read about Bob Davis, in his own words.

BOB DAVIS on BOB DAVIS

I hope that I do not traumatisate you when I reveal that I was born in England, oh shock horror! But, ah yes there is always a 'but'. My paternal great grandmother was a Burns, and me with the name of Robert! A Bob's a Bob for a' that!

I was a War Baby, born in 1941 in Aylesbury, and lived in the town of Chesham, in the middle of the Chiltern Hills. I left Secondary Modern School at age 15, the only boy in my class of 30 who did not stay on to take O levels. To celebrate my departure, I received a piece of paper stating: 'Bob has left school'! So much for my early education!

My working life began a few weeks later when I started a six-year apprenticeship as a Compositor in a printing factory. It was awful. After four and a half years I walked out. The next day I was working on a farm, as a tractor driver, I just had to be outside.

This was wonderful, and helped to increase my love and knowledge of the natural world. My Dad had a great love of nature and, with my Mum and sister we often went for very long walks in the beautiful Chiltern hills. I learned a great deal during those formative years, far more relevant and interesting than school, I thought!

One good thing that stemmed from my years in a factory, was my friendship with another young lad. We got together and cycled from Glasgow to Arrochar on Loch Long and then back down to the Lake District. My love of Scotland was immediate and the following year I was in Fort William and climbed the Ben for the first time. Further visits, further into Scotland, and even my honeymoon was spent on Skye.

Holidays were one thing, but then I got a job on Loch Lomond side as a ploughman (yes the Burns connection again!). I had the unerring ability to obtain work in places

from which I was later made redundant. From Loch Lomond it was further north and west to Loch Linnhe and Ardgour where I spent ten fantastic years as a forester/stalker - I was actually paid to go to the hills. My two wonderful children were born and they had a great childhood - without television! But for the third time redundancy was on the cards. I studied at home and gained six O levels and that opened up my way to Forvie National Nature Reserve in 1978, working for the wonderful Nature Conservancy Council. My knowledge of the natural world increased by leaps and bounds, as did my designer stubble, and I grew to look like my hero naturalist: Charles Darwin. Having moved from the west and forestry, I was a wee bit dismayed at the lack of trees here. During a conversation about this with a 'local', I was told that 'trees would not grow here'. When asked the reason, the reply left me stunned: 'Oh because there aren't any'! Such logic left me with a desire to change the situation, and when a group from Ellon Academy asked me to design and assist them with a conservation project, together we established the Forvie Tree Nursery where we grew locally native tree species from locally collected seed. More than 30 years later those beginnings had grown (like the trees) into a small business and had produced well over half a million trees, all planted throughout the northeast.

My time at Forvie brought me into contact with young people and I helped numerous schools to establish wildlife areas, thus bringing the children and the natural world together for mutual benefit. From primary school pupils to lecturing in both Robert Gordon's University and Aberdeen University, I tried to pass on my knowledge and appreciation of our amazing natural world and precious environment. Then in 1995 I found myself in northern Italy speaking to children about their wonderful environment and the need to conserve it. The friends I made there during my many repeat visits gave me the chance to achieve a life-long ambition and in 2000 they helped me to climb my first 4000m peak in the Alps - Pizzo Bernina.

This opened up a whole new chapter in my life. Further climbs in the Alps were followed by my first visit to the Himalaya in northern India. Then it was the Andes, the Southern Alps in New Zealand, more Himalaya in Nepal and the Mountains of the Moon in Africa, and of course ridges and peaks in Scotland, my first love. Seeing Chile Pine in Chile and the amazing Banksias in Tasmania, where Sir Joseph Banks had first seen them, was special. Equally special is seeing my favourite animal: a beautiful brown hare, bounding through a field here in front of my house. Mountains and wild places have always exerted a magnetic influence over me.

My feet have taken me around the world and my tent has housed me near Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America and way up into the Arctic Circle in Sweden. But Scotland is always here when I return and the highland glens and lochs are special, and always well patronised. Now my boots and my tent are pleading with me to take them 'walkies' once again and the East Coast Trail in Newfoundland beckons later this year.

(written by Bob Davis, August 2017)



The **revamped glasshouse** with its fresh easy layout is a pleasure to visit. New ranges of products and extended range of indoor plants, pots and containers.



The **garden bird** section has been changed to allow even more choice, while the Parkhill team continue to keep **bird food** very competitively priced by packing on site into 1, 3 and 6kg sizes, with even greater savings on 20kg bags.

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Real Christmas trees - grown in Scotland. A choice of Nordman, Noble and Fraser Firs, also Blue Spruce. In a range of sizes depending on type, from 2.5ft to 12ft high. 9ft plus must be ordered by early November.

Pot grown Christmas trees - a choice of 4 types.



Holly wreaths - in addition to our usual wide choice there will be a return of the old-style mossed rings with tied bunched holly. Excellent choice of ready decorated wreaths, and a good selection of plain which can be decorated to your own taste by our skilful team.

Seasons Coffee Shop - why not have a nice coffee or tea with a freshly baked scone or even lunch while you are getting your Christmas tree.

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See our Facebook page for events
www.facebook.com/TheSteadInn/

BLACKDOG NEWS



There's been a lot going on here this year. The Blackdog Residents' Association (BRA) has set up gardening days within the Community. Volunteers from the village have planted over 700 flowers all over Blackdog, brightening up areas considerably. In addition, volunteers have been out and around the area tidying up areas that needed grass cut, bushes trimmed and weeds removed. A lot of effort has been made by the Community to keep areas in good order so we really thank those involved.

In addition, after applying for the Formartine Partnership Fund, Blackdog received £500 for their successful application. It was decided that this money would also be used to brighten up the village with a selection of shrubs and planters. A special mention to Colin Crombie of Hareburn Terrace who volunteered to plant and maintain a section of ground opposite number 1 - 8 Hareburn Terrace and over the last 2 years has put an incredible amount of work into this area. He has used his own time and equipment to ensure the grass is cut, flowers planted and weeds removed regularly. The result being an incredibly attractive and inviting roadside. We would like to thank Colin massively for his contributions, hard work and dedication.

Another highlight this year was the BBQ, Bouncy Castle and Beer Community day. This was a huge success. The sun was splitting the sky, the children were enjoying the bouncy castles and the sports events were enjoyed by all. Even the adults got involved in the tug of war! Thank you to all that came along and made it a great day. We are looking forward to having more Community events like these.



Following the vote to improve access to the beach, the BRA has been working hard with the relevant people to get this project off the ground. As you can imagine there are a lot of parties involved so gaining agreement from all parties is taking time. We are hopeful to see more movement on this soon - watch this space! The BRA has also met with Kirkwood Homes to understand and lobby them on the development obligations including land and funding for a community hall and grounds. Matters are now moving and building work for new Kirkwood Homes is expected to start in 2020 for new properties.

The Committee have also been working with Richard Lucas to ensure that the oil is removed from the sands to the north of the fishing station by the beach. Planning permission has been on-going and only one objection from the Council received. Once this is cleared work will begin here. The burn is still continually being dug out to reduce the water to gain better access to the beach.

They have also met with various Councillors and Council Officials to try and improve the bus access and route for the Village. Agreement has been reached on building a pathway to the current bus stop without having to use the new road coming into Blackdog. We are expecting this to start soon. Blackdog are always looking for volunteers - if anyone is interested please email blackdogresidents@hotmail.com



BELHELVIE SWI

By the time you read this Banter, the SWI will only have one whist night and one rural meeting before the end of 2019. January 8th is our first meeting of 2020 when we propose to have a fun night of games and quizzes. On February 12th Fiona Winstanley is to give a talk on the Beach Wheelchairs - we are looking forward to that. The Whists commence on January 22nd and the 4th Wednesday of the month until May. Please come along and support us at Egie House lounge at 7.30pm. If you need any further information you can contact me on 01358 743173.

Elaine Strachan

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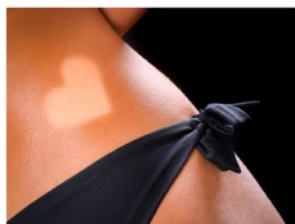
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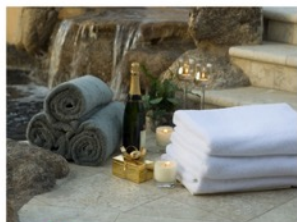
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POTTERTON NEWS

The **Potterton Community Group** (PCG) meets on a bi-monthly basis on the second Monday of every second month from 7.15pm - 8.30pm in the Stead Inn Restaurant. The main aim of the group is to look at projects to improve the local environment within Potterton and organise seasonal events and monthly café - open to everyone to

support bringing the community together. Meetings are open to all residents to attend. Next meeting will be held on **Monday 9th December**.

Our monthly **Pop Up Café** continues on the last Saturday of every month from **10.00am - 12.00noon in the Stead Inn Restaurant**. The café is run by local volunteers serving and providing home bakes as well as fresh hot pancakes made on the premises. £3 for adults, £1.50 for children for unlimited drinks, pancakes and home bakes.



Potterton Village were lucky enough last year, to receive two Christmas trees from Aberdeenshire Council's Landscape Services. One sited on Panmure Gardens, and one at the back of the Potterton Community Centre. Due to the weather at last year's event, we have decided to hold this year's event at the Community Centre on Laingseat Road. This will include singing carols around the Christmas tree, lights 'switch on' followed by mulled wine/juice or tea/coffee and mince pies inside the Community Centre. Come along and join us on **Sunday 8th December from 4.30pm at the Potterton Community Centre, Laingseat Road** - bringing the community together at Christmas.

Other Potterton Groups & Activities

Event	Day	Time	Venue
Indoor Bowling	Every Thursday	2.30 - 4.30pm	Potterton Community Centre £2 per Session
Knit & Natter	Every Monday	2.00 - 4.00pm	Potterton Community Centre £1 Per Session
Adults Art & Craft Group	Fortnightly Tues from 29.10.19.	7.30 - 9.00pm	Stead Inn Function Room £3-£4 per Session - focusing on 'Upholstery' until Christmas.
Walking Group	Monthly Tuesday	From Noon	Walks arranged Monthly - details on Community Notice Board on Panmure Gardens.

Caroline Anderson, Potterton Community Group

**Potterton Village Christmas
Tree Lights Switch On**
Sunday 8th December at 4.30pm
Community Centre Christmas Tree – Laingseat Road

Join us to decorate the Tree, sing Christmas
Carols & enjoy mince pies & mulled wine/juice



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Christmas

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Potterton Greenfingers Gardening Group is a collection of local residents who have come together with a shared interest in gardening and community. They will take forward what was started by the Potterton Gardening Group volunteers led by local resident Fiona Scott. Their

efforts are greatly appreciated and provide a structure to develop further for the benefit of the residents of Potterton.

The objective of the group is to enhance and promote positivity, interest and inspiration within and around the village.

An aim of the group is to make improvements to public areas of the village, to provide sustainable planting with both colour and interest that can be appreciated by local residents.

The group intends to work with the local authority to make better use of local greenspaces using innovative ideas, creating paths to walk and areas to sit to be enjoyed by both young and old in the village.

At the moment the group are planning for the winter and for improving public areas with the planting of bulbs to be enjoyed in the spring. More Volunteers are very welcome; at this particular time there are many bulbs to be planted in the village and this is a huge job. We hope that there will be both young and older residents willing to give some of their time to help out at various times of the year. We hope to create a seasonal calendar to ensure that the work is manageable and a good use of everyone's time and above all enjoyable.

Whilst volunteers will be welcome as part of the team we are aware that there are some residents unable to be active members but may instead be able to donate perennial plants, topsoil and sleepers which they no longer want. If you are able to support in any way, please contact Hilary Foxen on foxens@btinternet.com or mobile 07918 665114.

By the time you read this Banter, we will have had a meeting to share ideas and plan further. This will be a very helpful step forward for the group. Future information regarding the group will be placed in the noticeboards throughout Potterton and on the Potterton Community Facebook page.

Hilary Foxen
Potterton Greenfingers Group

THE SAND BOTHY

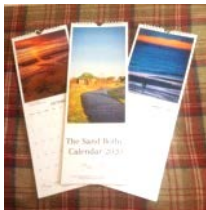


It has been a busy time over Summer and Autumn at the Sand Bothy. There have been so many different events going on and the Bothy has had a huge amount of visitors. At the end of October, the kiosk at the Bothy closed for the season and will re-open in the Spring. This will allow for repairs and improvements to be done. However, the Sand Bothy still has some public events planned, including a visit from **Santa on 14th and 15th December**. It's also available for bookings, so please get in touch with any enquiries you may have.

One highlight has been the regular visits we have had from Balmedie School. Every class has had an opportunity to come for a day or a half-day visit to see what the Bothy has to offer, and to explore the beach. Recently, P5 at Balmedie School has had a series of day-visits to work at the Bothy with Scottish musicians and songwriters Jenny Sturgeon and Adam Ross. With their support, the pupils came up with ideas for songs, using all their senses while experiencing the Bothy, beach and country park environment.



Activities included listening for birdcalls on the beach, making instruments by recycling shells, sand and other things found on the beach. They were taken through the steps of creating ideas, writing poems then verses and choruses. Everyone had a say in choosing music chords for the songs too. The songs were finally completed and the beautiful tunes and lyrics reverberated around the Sand Bothy as the pupils rehearsed before performing at a whole-school assembly. Rosie and Jess from the Sand Bothy were invited to attend this and were bowled over by the beautiful songs and wonderful performance of the pupils. Teacher at Balmedie School, Mrs Judy Duncan, has been the vital link to our Bothy-School partnership and we are grateful for all her organisation and enthusiasm.



Calendars are now available to buy. They feature superb photographs by 'Lee Fowlie Images' and are designed by Sarah Peacock. All money raised goes towards BCT projects. The calendars cost £6 each or 2 for £10 and are on sale at Dickie's Pharmacy, Beachside Coffee Shop and Balmedie Fish and Chip Shop.

CRAFT CLUB

at Balmedie Congregational Church

It's nearly that time of year again with Christmas just around the corner. We have had another good term at craft club making Halloween canvases, flower wreaths and Autumn leaf hedgehogs. We are now making our Christmas-themed crafts, cards and much more. We are looking forward to finishing the term with our Christmas Party.



Craft Club runs every Wednesday term time - 6.30 to 7.30pm. It's £1.50 per week and we have spaces available. Come along and join in the fun.

Before the summer break the Craft Club planted sunflowers in the Sensory Garden by the Church. They certainly were a success, as you can see!

Catherine & Diane 01358 743114



STAY WARM THIS WINTER LOGS FOR SALE - ONLY £3 /BAG

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to Better Balmedie base at the Wee Kirk





BALMEDIE BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

We have now completed our first full season at The Bunker, and what a great year it has been! We have had visits from many disabled children along with their families and carers. We have also provided chairs for adults who would not have been able to reach the beach without our all-terrain chairs. We have met lots of wonderful people, made new friends and have some regular customers. We are getting to know some of the local organisations that care for people with disabilities. We have increased our team of volunteers who give up their time to help. We have received donations

towards our funds from companies and individuals, and were delighted with local support at our Quiz Night, which raised £850! We now look forward to developing our service in 2020 and getting to know lots more people who can use our chairs to 'Reach the Beach'!

Would you like to share our enjoyment in helping others in this way? We would be very grateful for all offers of help next season to enable everyone to share the experience of our wonderful beach here at Balmedie. If you would like to play a part, however small, please get in touch.

Check us out at

www.balmediebeachwheelchairs.co.uk - we also have a Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs Facebook Page - or phone me on 07864 350989 for details.



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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY TRUST (BCT)

Serving our five villages and rural areas in the Parish

Join our Team and Help Get Things Done!

Belhelvie Community Trust is a small charity (no. SCO45563) which exists to set up and run community projects and help other community groups. We are responsible for The Sand Bothy, Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs and Balmedie Community Sensory Garden. We can also offer advice and help to other groups throughout the Parish of Belhelvie. We were not set up to provide funds to community groups, but this year, thanks to our sales at The Sand Bothy kiosk, we have been able to make small donations to Belhelvie Community First Responders and Balmedie Friendship Club and are buying some equipment for maintaining public space in Whitecairns.

We have a great group of volunteers, but we need more, as there is a great range of skills required in running the Trust. We need new Trust members to show their support and we need volunteers to take on practical tasks, including serving in the Bothy kiosk, helping to look after the Country Park, gathering information about the beach and park, looking after the Sensory Garden, helping at Beach Wheelchairs, looking after our accounts and organising fun events and fundraising.

Volunteering is fun, and making things happen is satisfying. If you can spare even a small amount of your time, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you!

For more info, see our new website: <https://belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk> or email us at info@belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from us all at Belhelvie Community Trust!

Rosie Nicol

BCT Meetings 2019-20

Date	25/11/19	27/1/20	23/3/20	25/5/20	27/7/20	28/9/20
Time	7.30pm	7pm (AGM)	7.30pm	7.30pm	7.30pm	7.30pm
Place	Library	Library	S. Bothy	S. Bothy	S. Bothy	S. Bothy



BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GROUP

This year our Christmas lights will be up on the lamp posts in the village, and our Christmas tree, across from the Co-op, will be switched on at our Switch On event at 6pm on Sunday 1st December. This will be followed by carols around the Christmas tree - an event for the whole community. Children can decorate a bauble and it can be hung on the Christmas tree. Please come along and join us on the 1st of December!

Diane Cassie 07850 235215



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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCC)

Looking for new members

We're looking for new Community Councillors to join the BCC. We represent the communities of Balmedie, Belhelvie, Potterton, Blackdog and Whitecairns. We work closely with community groups in our area, the Police, our Aberdeenshire Councillors and Aberdeenshire Council's Formartine Area Office. There are many opportunities to get involved and work on issues that matter to our communities such as road speed signs, the Balmedie Sensory Garden, reinstating and clearing paths in the villages, helping with funding applications for local projects, improving local transport and local planning.

Local planning and the Community Council

We review local planning applications and send feedback to Aberdeenshire Council. We have a dedicated Planning Reporter, Community Councillor Graham Middleton. We are happy to help if you have a question about planning applications or local developments. We regularly have developers presenting at our monthly meetings. These meetings are public and when the agenda is published you can see who will be presenting.

What happens at our meetings?

We review local planning applications, check our accounts, hear from local Police, receive reports from members who have liaised with other groups and Aberdeenshire Council. Our agenda is on our website and on Community noticeboards and is available a week before the meeting.

Everyone is welcome at our meetings. We aim to have meetings that are friendly and professional. They are held every third Monday, 7pm at Balmedie Leisure Centre. See our website: <https://belhelviecc.org.uk/meetings.html> for details.

An archive of meeting minutes is available on our website, and the latest minutes are posted on our noticeboards each month. You can search our minutes on our website to find out about issues.

Upcoming projects

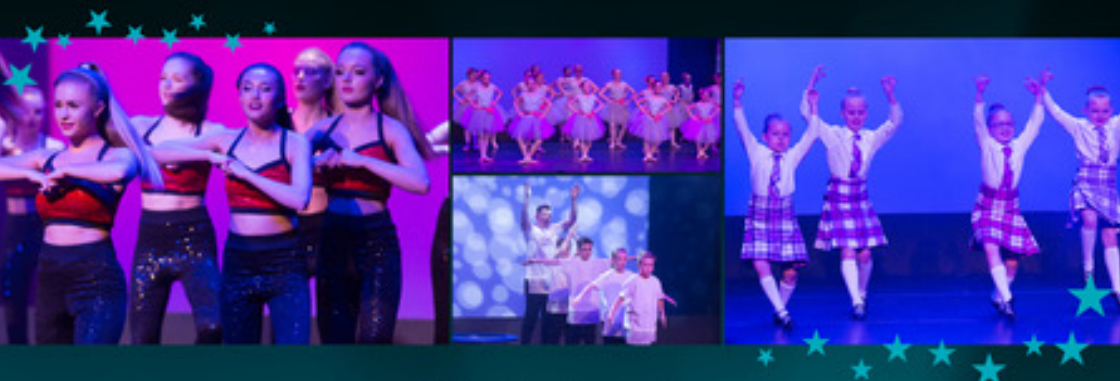
We are planning to work with the BCT on a community consultation next year. If you would like to help us to identify new community projects, contact Belhelvie Community Trust info@belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk or Rosie Nicol, 28 Whitehorse Terrace, Balmedie, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, AB23 8XF.

Get in touch

Meet us at our monthly meetings, email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com or call: 07767 237644

Find us online at Facebook: www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil or our website: www.belhelviecc.org.uk

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‘Come Sing with Us!’

Come Sing with Us starts on **Tuesday 14th January 2020** at **7pm** and runs for 4 consecutive Tuesdays.



These are a set of A Cappella Taster Nights (for men), to learn a song with the Granite City Chorus. Come along to **Woodside Parish Church Hall, 46 Church St, Aberdeen AB24 4DQ**. No experience is required and there's no commitment to do anything more than learn a song and sing with the chorus.

The Granite City Chorus is a male chorus based in Aberdeen now in our 29th year. It is made up of men of all ages who have one thing in common - they all love to sing! We sing a cappella four-part harmony (without instruments) more commonly known as 'barbershop' and have fun! Our Music Director and experienced singers will teach you everything you need to sing and perform as a chorus singer. It is hard to describe the feel-good factor that comes from singing in a polished, yet relaxed environment and it is now widely acknowledged that singing is good for you both physically and mentally.



We perform at various venues throughout the year, usually charity or civic events although we do some private engagements. We cover a range of songs from across the popular music spectrum both traditional and contemporary from around the world. The standard of coaching and rehearsal is top class whilst we never lose sight of the social side and the pure uplifting fun of it. We rehearse at Woodside Parish Church hall every Tuesday at 7pm, feel free to walk in any Tuesday and see for yourself, you will be made very welcome. You can be assured of a warm and friendly reception from the guys.

So, **Come Sing with Us!** Register online at www.granitecitychorus.co.uk or tel: 01224 643663, or email: contact@granitecitychorus.co.uk

John Conroy
07989 877745

FAMILY FIRST

Christmas with all the Trimmings



By the time this edition arrives on your doorsteps we will be immersed in Christmas. Wherever you look there will be scenes of children eagerly anticipating Santa; beautifully decorated houses and Christmas trees with neat piles of carefully wrapped, untouched presents; parents staring adoringly at their angelic looking children whilst in the background gentle Christmas carols will be playing, completing the Christmas card scene.

In our house however, there will be a very different scene. The children will have built themselves up into frenzy over their Christmas list; the house will be full of last minute piles of unwrapped presents (the wrapping paper most likely wrapped around the youngest whilst the elder one looks on proudly); the tree will have been rescued numerous times from toppling over, whilst the TV will have been unplugged after endless renditions of 'Last Christmas' and fights over what should be watched next.

The Christmas story and traditions are taught in schools up and down the country which means all children have some idea of the Christmas traditions in Scotland, if not the Christmas story. In our small corner of the world most people are familiar with traditions such as writing Christmas cards, putting up a tree, decorating the front door with a Christmas wreath, playing Christmas songs and buying in turkey with all the trimmings as well as mince pies and Christmas pudding.

However, only around 160 countries in the world celebrate Christmas. A few countries refer to the holiday as Family Day, including Angola and Uruguay. But one thing they all have in common is getting the family together and celebrating with a traditional dish.

One of the highlights for me at Christmas time is visiting the Christmas market where you get to have a peek into some of the traditions and foods from other countries. France is known for its Bûche de Noël, a chocolate yule log; Italy its Panettone, a cake with sugared fruits, chocolate, raisins and nuts; Germany is known for its famous Stollen cake and Australia is famous for its 'barbie' in the sunshine.

Recently I came across a Christmas tradition that occurs each year in Japan that I had never heard of before. Back in the 1970s Japan had very little in the way of Christmas traditions, so Kentucky Fried Chicken started an advertising plug called 'Kentucky for Christmas' encouraging people to buy a KFC chicken bucket for Christmas. Now about 3.6 million Japanese families eat KFC as their Christmas dinner - the chicken bucket even comes with a Christmas cake! This tradition has become so popular that families have to pre-book their food sometimes two months in advance to ensure they get it.

For most people, no matter what culture they come from, the tradition of food and drink during a festival is a highlight. One of the wonderful benefits of living in a country where there is such a variety of cultures is the opportunity to learn how others celebrate Christmas (or their own Winter festivals) and try out their traditional foods and drinks. So whether you are celebrating Christmas with a Japanese KFC or a traditional British Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year 2020.

Emma King

WHAT AN ACHIEVEMENT!

Mary and Hebbie Watson are finally hanging up their aprons after 20 years of fund-raising for Macmillan Cancer Support. Every September for the last 20 years, they have had a Macmillan Coffee Morning (all day!) at their home, 'Homestead', Middlemuir Croft, Whitecairns to raise funds. This year alone, they raised an amazing £2,501.



Mary says they have thoroughly enjoyed every event and would like to say thank you to all who have supported them to achieve their goal of helping others. A special mention goes to her band of helpers who have worked so hard throughout each event to keep cups filled and everything running to plan. Finally, we can reveal that Mary and Hebbie's final total over 20 years' Coffee Mornings is £28,500. Wow!

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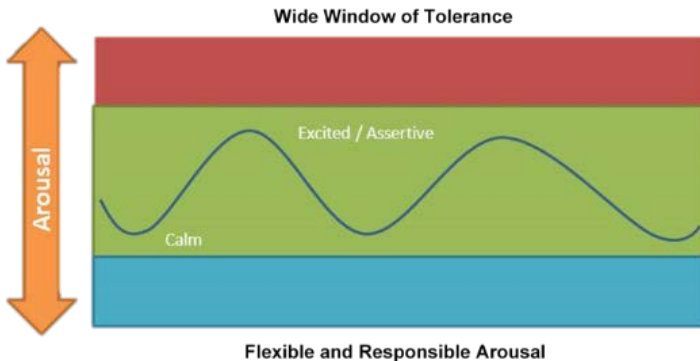
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MODERN DAY STRESS Part 3

What we want from our nervous systems is the energy to deal with our stresses and then the ability to heal and repair, ready for the next one! We want to differentiate between a work deadline and real danger and use our energy accordingly.

Our bodies and our health are our number 1 asset - are we taking care of them?



We want a healthy window of tolerance

with an even up and down line as in the picture, signifying that we can access the 'get up and go' to deal with stressors and can 'come down' again.

If our line sticks in the 'hyper' red zone we may feel angry, intolerant, anxious, overwhelmed, have racing thoughts etc.

If our line zigzags down and stays in the 'hypo' blue zone, we may feel low, antisocial, depressed, withdrawn, isolated, unmotivated, moody, flat, disinterested etc.

Our new routine:

- 1 STOP for a moment (assuming you are safe).
- 2 FEEL what is happening in your body. Feel your tummy, your neck muscles etc. Feel your body parts as they press into the ground or chair.
- 3 NOTE where the tensions are in your body. Observe your breathing, don't change it, simply be aware.
- 4 CONNECT WITH YOUR BODY. Stroke your arm, squeeze your hands. Pat your legs. You are connecting with yourself and being **in** your body.
- 5 BREATHE out gently. DON'T take deep breaths in, as that will tend to fire up your system. Longer out-breaths calm the system.
- 6 LOOK AT your surroundings - look around, really look, see, smell and feel.
- 7 CHECK your body sensations. Allow yourself to cry or shout (if appropriate at the time, if not, then make time later). Holding emotions in will result in tension.
- 8 GIVE YOURSELF A HUG. Right hand on left shoulder and left hand on right upper arm. This reminds you, that you are contained in your body. It is a self-soothing technique that is used in treating PTSD and reduces overwhelm.
- 9 PUT ONE HAND ON YOUR HEART AND THE OTHER ON YOUR SOLAR PLEXUS AND REALLY FEEL. Be in touch with the real you. Having self awareness of what we do and how we do it is the first step to change and improving our health and energy.

**FEELING IS HEALING: THE BODY IS BUILT TO HEAL ITSELF
but WE ARE PROGRAMMED TO IGNORE OUR BODY'S MESSAGES!**

Our body feels the stress first. Then, our brain kicks in and protects us from those feelings with thinking. We need to reverse this. **We need to go to the body to let the stress out, as happens in nature.**

We all have different capacities as is seen when two people experience the same trauma - one bounces back, the other relives it for days or years. We can be caught up in a stress that happened yesterday, last week or 20 years or more ago. **If we keep adding stresses without releasing them, the system goes into overload and we see the symptoms of burnout such as chronic pain, chronic fatigue, a weakened immune system, digestive symptoms, sleep problems, depression, anxiety and more.**

Maggie Brooks-Carter
DO. RN, SMTD

I would love to hear from you if you are finding that practising this routine has helped you or if you would like more information or resources. Contact: info@brookscarterclinic.co.uk

1st BELHELVE RANGERS

This term the Rangers have chosen to work on their Live Smart Level 6 Skills Builder. The activities for this badge include planning and making a two-course hot meal without the use of an oven, learning about the dangers of credit card interest, learning about keeping personal information safe on the internet, having a go at up-cycling and finding out about career options.

Interspersing the badge work, we've already been up-cycling by making camp sitters out of old paint tubs; they just need the final finish of glitter varnish before they are ready for the field. We'll also be having a go at origami, learning about braking distances, and we'll try to squeeze in a Christmas craft as well.

We are still looking for new members and would welcome any young women (14 to 18 years old) who want to give it a go even for a week or two - no commitment. Rangers is flexible and girl led; I help with ideas and help to make activities happen (particularly around exam time), but it is the members that drive the type of unit we have. We can also support girls wanting to work on their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Rangers meet fortnightly in Balmedie on a Tuesday. If you are interested, either give me a call 01224 703335 or email s.osbeck@rgu.ac.uk or register online: <https://go.girlguiding.org.uk/join-us/join-as-member>

As always, we also welcome any new helpers or potential leaders:
<https://go.girlguiding.org.uk/join-us/join-as-volunteer>

Susan Osbeck

1st BELHELVIE GUIDES



1st Belhelvie Guides at the Tartan Gig 2019

On 31 August the guides travelled down to Glasgow to join with thousands of other guides from across the country at the Tartan Gig. The girls were so excited as many were going to their very first ever concert. On arrival at the arena we enjoyed our packed Dunch (lunch and dinner combined) and put on the awesome flashing headbands. The arena was full of guides, rangers and some brownies and loads of flashing headbands, which looked so good as we waited for the concert to start. We all had tie-dye t-shirts that Sophie had made for us with our names on the back, to make sure that Christine didn't lose any of us!

The gig was so exciting, with the Vamps opening the show. Maisie Peters, Jade Bird and Becky Hill all followed before the amazing Lewis Capaldi and last, but certainly not least, was James Arthur. The girls all had an amazing night although we were pretty shattered by the time the bus finally got us back to Balmedie. We can't wait until the next Tartan Gig in 2021.



PARENT & TODDLER GROUP

It's been delightful to see so many new babies and toddlers join our group that runs on Fridays 10am in the Wee Kirk Hall. With so many new little ones joining us, we have started to develop a sensory area with lots of natural resources and items that give children valuable touch, texture and sound experiences and lets them explore real life items. Our group runs Friday mornings 10am in the Wee Kirk Hall. £2 includes snacks, £1 cuppa and cakes.

Diane Cassie 07850 235215

BALMEDIE BROWNIES (2nd Belhelvie)

Looking ahead to a very exciting and fun-filled few weeks with the build up to the festive season and onwards to our 40th anniversary year in 2020! Saying that, we've had lots of fun over the past few weeks, exploring some unit meeting activities and skills builders including ones around self-confidence ('Super Girl' and 'Big up a Brownie', a fantastic activity which got us thinking about each other in supportive ways) and another thinking about personal space ('My Invisible Bubble'). We played an interesting, challenging game similar to Snakes & Ladders but instead it was about saving and spending money ('Profits and Pitfalls').

We also had an evening decorating cupcakes for a Girlguiding County Competition - we're hoping our unit gets a prize! For our last meeting of term we got a visit to Aberdeen Science Centre, getting a look and shot at the exhibits and then watching/helping with experiments. The best bit was finding out about how our bodies make the perfect poo! Eeuurrghhhh!!!



So now we've got panto to look forward to, carol singing, a Girlguiding viewing of Frozen 2, Christingle, our Christmas party, plus an awards night as many Brownies have been completing Interest badges to complement the Unit Meeting Activities and Skills Builders so will have gained Theme Awards.

Watch this space for details of a fundraising nearly-new sale we're planning to have in February; funds from this will help subsidise our 40th anniversary Brownie holiday to the Girlguiding activity centre at Netherurd in May. We're also hoping to do some other fundraising activities to help with costs so we're grateful for any support from our local community.

Brownies is for girls aged between 7-10 years old so if you're interested in Brownies/Girlguiding, please register (to find out about being an adult volunteer or for your daughter to join) via the Girlguiding Scotland website www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk and click on 'Get Involved'. Contact Brown Owl (Marianne McIntosh) if you have any questions: 01358 724231.

Tracy Leach (Sapphire Owl)
2nd Belhelvie Brownies

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Christmas Refreshments

Christmas Raffle



RAINBOWS AT BALMEDIE

We are the 2nd Belhelvie Rainbows and we meet at 6pm every Tuesday during term time at Balmedie Primary School. There are also Rainbows at Potterton Community Centre. Being a Rainbow is all about having the space and to try new things. Through taking part in a range of different activities with girls their own age, Rainbows develop self-confidence and make lots of new friends.

Balmedie Rainbows are run by leaders Claire Daniel and Audrey Porteous, ably helped by Nikta Daniel, Aimee Strachan and Mirryn and Rhea Porteous. We have 16 Rainbows at a time in our group.

This term we are preparing our nativity play, which will be held on the 10th December at the Primary School for our families. We like to have fun playing games and exploring the Magic Woods. The Guiding Association has recently introduced badge work for Rainbows, so each term we will choose a badge to complete.

If you wish to register your daughter for Rainbows, please visit the website:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter>

Audrey Porteous





SCOUTING IN BELHELVIE

Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts have all been busy with a host of exciting activities and many were able to attend a wonderful Group camp at Daviot in September. Well done to all

the leaders for giving the kids an amazing experience and Laura for organising it all. Many thanks too from all the parents.

Camps, activities, weekly meetings and fun we all have would never happen without the dedication of all our 20 Leaders at Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. Our present leaders are doing a wonderful job but we are finding it difficult to sustain continued improvement without additional help. Ideally we are looking to recruit additional Leaders to augment our team. Various commitments mean not all leaders and helpers can attend every week. Strengthening the team in this way would allow us to progress with an exciting programme and give the boys and girls consistent training. Getting involved in Scouting is an enjoyable experience with progressive training available. We welcome Herman Eloff to our ranks as Assistant Leader at Beavers.

We were both delighted and saddened to receive a large cheque from Belhelvie Young Farmers. I know it has been difficult in recent years for them to attract new members to the point where the remaining committee had to ultimately wind up the group. The funds we have been given will go towards appropriate projects for all our sections. Our thanks to them for thinking of us at this time.

Finding a piece of land within the Parish to develop for Scouting and wider community use is high on our to-do list. Anyone in a position to offer us land and wishes to discuss further should get in touch.

Balmedie Scout Group is for girls and boys ages 6 through to 25 - Beavers (age 6-8), Cubs (age 8-10.5), Scouts (age 10.5-14) and Explorer Scouts (age 14-18).

If you would like to find out more about our sections or volunteering with Scouting in the Parish, please email me at balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk or have a chat with one of our Leaders. For all Scouting enquiries please call 07743 844040 or email as above.

Ian Thomson
Group Scout Leader

We, at Banter, are very grateful to our local family of Scouting and Girlguiding groups who regularly deliver copies of Banter around the Parish, doing a wonderful service to the community. A big thank you to everyone involved!

Editor

Heroes and Villains Camp was In-tents!

Leader Ian Nebbiolo (AKA 'Ginger Beard') reports on surviving camp.



This Autumn our Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers set off for Daviot for a camp inspired by the heroes and villains of all of our childhoods. Once we came up with the theme, we were Hooked! What started as a Beaver and Cub camp quickly grew arms and legs (a real Hulk of a camp), with over 100 kids, over a dozen leaders, and parent helpers, pitching in to give the kids a weekend to remember.

From Robin Hood archery, to building a bridge to cross a burning lake of lava, space hopper jousting and a daring assault course rescue, there was so much to do! We even had a group of Scouts sleeping in their own pioneered camp between the trees, like four grinning Merry Men. There was a huge number of other activities, great food, working for badges - and of course a roaring camp fire.


A big Scout Bravo to all of the kids, leaders, and parent helpers who gave up their time to make it an epic camp! We think camp was brilliant, but don't take our word for it. Here are some comments from three 'Heroic Cubs':



Emilia says "We played a game at camp where we had to bounce on space hoppers and throw wet sponges at each other. It was my favourite game!"

"I loved Cub camp, it was amazing" adds Charlotte.

And Poppy enthuses, "I loved camp because it was amazing and the best camp I've been to. I also loved the activities, they were awesome!"




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BELHELVIE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Here in your local Church of Scotland we're looking forward to celebrating Christmas in a host of different ways - gathering together with folk from all across the parish to have fun, take stock and celebrate the birth of the one who is the reason for the season. We'd love to see you along at some of our events - you're guaranteed a warm welcome. Please see our website belhelviechurch.com for more details.

Saturday 23 rd November	Christmas Fair - 10-12, The Forsyth Hall
Sunday 1 st December	Advent 1 - 11am and Christingle Service 6.30pm
Monday 2 nd December	SOULSPACE - Church open for peace, quiet and reflection, 7-9pm
Tuesday 3 rd December	Coffee Haven - 10-12, The Forsyth Hall - runs the first Tuesday of every month.
Sunday 1 st December	Balmedie Community Christmas Tree light up - 7pm
Friday 6 th December	Christmas Charity Quiz Night - 7pm, The Forsyth Hall In aid of Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs and Belhelvie Church Development Fund. Entry £5/£3 concessions.
Sunday 8 th December	Advent 2 - 11am, Bon Accord Silver Band leading carols. Potterton Community Christmas Tree light up - 4.30pm Belhelvie Community Christmas Tree light up - 6pm
Monday 9 th December	SOULSPACE - Church open for peace, quiet and reflection, 7-9pm
Sunday 15 th December	Advent 3 - 11am
Monday 16 th December	SOULSPACE - Church open for peace, quiet and reflection, 7-9pm
Sunday 22 nd December	Advent 4 - 11am - Nativity Service (in church)
Tuesday 24 th December	Balmedie Leisure Centre Service - 4pm Watchnight Service - 11pm, Belhelvie Church
Wednesday 25 th December	Christmas Morning Service - 11am

The Forsyth Hall is open for bookings so if you'd like to run one-off or regular events and are looking for good space at reasonable rates, please get in touch via our web page - belhelviechurch.com.

Rev Paul McKeown
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BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

11am every Sunday at the Wee Kirk in Rowan Drive,
Balmedie - for info contact the minister
Rev Andy Cowie on 07715 279478

In September, we had a very successful Macmillan Coffee Morning, which raised £177.75. Thank you to everyone who supported our event.

We would be delighted if you could join us at the following events:

- **Bingo Afternoon** - Sat 23rd November at 2pm
- **Annual Remembrance Ceremony** - Sun 10th November at 11am
- **Balmedie Community Christmas Tree Lights Switch On and Carol Singing** with mince pies and hot drinks - Sun 1st December at 6pm
- **Christmas Fair** - Sat 7th December 11am to 1pm (Santa will be there!)
- **Christmas Family Movie Night ('Elf')** - Sat 14th December (tickets from Diane 07850 235215)
- **Christingle Service** - Sun 22nd December (ideal for children)
- **Watchnight Service** - Tues 24th December 11pm (followed by mince pies)
Everyone is very welcome to join us!

POTTERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

1st Sunday of each month at 6.15pm at Potterton Community Centre
For info contact the minister Rev Andy Cowie on 07715 279478

Prepare for the Real Christmas. Come along to our Christmas Eve Service on 24th December at 7.30pm and enjoy a mince pie afterwards.

As I write, 39 Chinese people have died in a container in an attempt to get to the UK. In the UK, we complain about everything, schooling, the NHS, the roads, the lack of policing, the benefits system etc. We take everything for granted. Our poorest are richer than 95% of the world's population. While in Tanzania, locals bragged that they only had to walk 11 kilometres for a school. In Tunisia they walked more than 5 kilometres to get water. We are so lucky to have a NHS service. For minor ailments, we may have to wait to see a doctor, but when we need treatment or surgery for life-threatening illnesses, the NHS is amazing. Our Police Service is unique in the world; it is not an arm of Government, answerable only to the Law. Our benefits scheme may not be perfect, but billions in the world have no benefits scheme at all. They starve. Thirty-nine people died trying to access what we have. That says a lot. This country is not perfect, it can all be improved, but let us appreciate what we have. As we eat our Christmas lunch, give a thought to those with empty plates.

Rev. Andy Cowie
07715 279478

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BELHELVIE CHRISTMAS TREE OF REMEMBRANCE

This year is the fourth 'Belhelvie Christmas Tree of Remembrance' event in memory of those who have passed away, are living abroad, or those who cannot be around for the festive period. This project was designed to enable a fixed feature for the community

to enjoy alongside a small event to bring everyone together.

Decorate the tree with baubles available from Cadger's Garage. Write a message for loved ones, decorate and attach to the tree. To buy your bauble, please put your **donation (suggested £5) into a sealed envelope and drop off to the Cadgers Garage** weekdays between 8am and 5pm. We are suggesting that the community start to decorate the tree over the first week of December. Donations from this will be put towards the on-going tree/event costs and future village projects. This year donations will go towards us planting a new tree because as noted last year our tree is looking rather poorly (although it did seem to be trying hard to flourish!). It is planned that in Spring next year we will move this tree and plant a new big bushy green traditional Christmas tree.

Christmas Carol Singing will be held on **Sunday 8th December at 6pm** by the tree, led by Belhelvie Church Choir with warm mulled wine (non-alcoholic) and mince pies. In the event of really bad weather, this year the event will not go ahead. **We wish to say a big thank you to everyone who continues to support this project!**



If you would like to get involved please get in touch with either: Raymond - raymond.m412@gmail.com mobile 07526 601925, or Annie - annie.grant@hotmail.co.uk mobile 07848 805992.

BALMEDIE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Any Belhelvie Parish residents over the age of 50 would be very welcome to join us. We meet every second Tuesday in the Eigie House lounge 2-4pm and enjoy talks, musical entertainment and chat. Here is some of our Winter 2020 programme. More is to be arranged so see our Facebook page for further details.

14 Jan	Roy Rhodes Entertains
28 Jan	Jean Moncrieff talk: Living in Venice
11 Feb	To be arranged
25 Feb	Sandy Towler Entertains

Correction: The article in Edition 40 of Banter stated that Margaret Murison was the founding member of the Friendship Club. It was in fact started by Paul Miller.

For more details visit our Facebook page or contact:

Margaret Murison 01358 742285 or **Vic Deans** 01358 743634



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BETTER BALMEDIE

With Summer over, our village planters overflowing with multi-coloured blooms are just a memory - but what a wonderful memory!

The task before us now is to complete the Community Garden and our own work area at the Wee Kirk. We hope to do this over the winter months, with the workload then reducing to

the maintenance of all our projects around the village next year. Trees that have fallen over, blocking paths, have been removed and made into logs to sell. Weeds have been removed and bushes cut back to clear paths and walkways, making it easier for buggies to pass.

We would like to thank Lance Armstrong and his Community Payback team for taking on some of the skilled and time-consuming work at the Better Balmedie base - erecting the perimeter fence and potting shed and levelling the ground. Thank you too to the many groups and individuals who have helped us out in so many ways.

We will soon be planting out bulbs in the planters for Spring displays. Recently, the number of folk coming along to Better Balmedie on Saturday and Wednesday mornings has reduced. If anyone would like to come along and join us, they would be most welcome. No particular skills are required, we all just muck in. If you do have a particular skill you would like to share, we would of course be delighted. A desire to work to improve our village environment is all that is needed. Do think about joining us on a Wednesday or Saturday at 10.00am at our base beside the Wee Kirk. We'd love to see some new faces. If you need more information, you can phone me on 01358 793851.



Many thanks to everyone for all the support and encouragement shown to our Better Balmedie group.

Allan Jeffrey

PARISH THREADS

When Santa's Reindeer Run out of Puff



In 1901 James McBey made his first etching. It was of Aberdeen lads fishing at the harbour. He used a waxed coated plate to draw on and a mirror to turn the view around, then shyly hid the drawing in his pocket. He used acid and a mangle to print the image at home. A couple of years later while he was working as a bank clerk in Aberdeen, he painted a beautiful oil portrait of his grandmother. He was still only 18. She is wearing a Shetland shawl over her shoulders as he recalled she routinely did, and a white cotton mutch frames her wrinkled face. I once described her in a 'Parish Threads' making mustard sauce for the winter meal of salted fish by rolling a cannon ball around in enamel bowl to crush mustard seed into a paste with milk. She looked after James in his Aberdeen lodging in the days when a man was not expected to look after himself. He went on to be a famous artist and traveller, selling an etching for a record price in 1928. His estate endowed money to Aberdeen Art Gallery for the McBey Room. Even now, the revamped Gallery which re-opened on November 2nd has had recent funding from the McBey Trust.

I showed the Balmedie Friendship Group the portrait of McBey's grandmother recently. She had lived most of her life at the Foveran Smithy not far from Belhelvie. We were talking about the experience of being a grandmother today and how much it has changed over the last generation. Some of us have to use Skype and travel through a lot of airports see them. I told the friends group, that when I was sorting out some family treasures to hand on, I had been keen to save an old-fashioned suitcase. It was the brown cardboard kind that everyone used in the fifties. The ones that fitted in the overhead rack on a train. It felt too nice to give away, so I cleaned it, looked at the 1961 newspaper lining, read the advertisements for indigestion pills and shoe polish and then had an idea. If it was set upon four legs it could be transformed into a little side table with hidden storage. I found some turned wooden legs that had been left in the shed by the previous owners of Ardo. They looked as if they had once supported the low benches in the conservatory from circa 1914.

Four of them when stripped and repainted, fitted onto the suitcase in such an elegant way, I realised I had made the perfect 'Magic Suitcase'. I shall use it when I am being Grandma Faraway. To finish up we had a grandmother quiz, and in the month when it has become illegal in Scotland to smack your child, the group had stories about being regularly punished in their schooldays with tawse and ruler. Two or three of the members remember when Christmas was not a school holiday. Hogmanay was the focus of the midwinter celebrations up to the 1920s and I see from the Craigie (Whit Cairns) school records that in the Christmas week of 1901 the children attended all week... *'Wednesday was so dark that no sewing was attempted.'* Reported the headmaster. *Christmas hymns were practised and recited instead'*. I don't think a Jolly Santa and his Reindeer would have flown over the parish in those days.

I took a stroll along the path through the Sensory Garden in Balmedie this month. The hand built raised planters are doing so well and are gradually being filled with fragrant and decorative plants. The trees planted by school children 30 years ago have grown high above providing a pleasant leafy walk.

It's the time of year for the Guisers to come out again. Who remembers guising in the old days before all the bought costumes? McBey's grandmother in her white mutch would have seen them at Foveran, young men going door to door at Hogmanay with seasonal jokes and tricks hoping to cadge a penny or two off the neighbours.

I shall wear my homemade jacket of coloured tattered rags again this Christmas in a Galoshins play. It's a short tragic comedy. Wearing paper crowns, one actor kills another in a mock sword fight and the loser is made better by a quack doctor using hoxy-croxy, the old remedy of saffron water. The actors then traditionally line up in front of the homeowners and chant rhymes hoping for silver coins. There was most likely singing and drinking involved. It's thought that it was mainly performed in the Borders but appeared as far north as Ballater in the 1890s. Probably as a result of visitors who came to be cured by the spring water at Pannanich.

I have been out and about investigating Scottish culture on your behalf. The Highland Folk Museum, at Newtonmore, was a lovely day out. I was able to see so many remnants of Scottish cultural heritage. The old schoolroom that wouldn't have surprised some of the Balmedie Friendship Group, with the strict teacher, inkwells and the desks in rows. One thing that stuck with me was that they said, one year of BBC Alba costs as much as one episode of Top Gear.

Mary Cane

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A WORD FROM THE DOC...

Looking after the Planet (and Ourselves)

We have all seen, and indeed may have been caught up in, the protests that are on-going about climate change and the potential catastrophe that awaits us. Certainly, the weather we now experience seems to indicate that the climate is changing, with regular downpours of tropical intensity being almost the norm nowadays!

Some experts tell us that we should not be flying anywhere, should only use public transport or cycle and be vegan to save the world. All that is fine, and if you wish to, and can do these things, all well and good. However, most of us are not able to exercise that much choice, and smaller changes are probably more doable and indeed realistic. Public transport is sadly not adequate locally for it to be a viable choice for many, and it is still far cheaper to fly than take the train for longer journeys, unless you are able to book far in advance. Many would not be able to face a vegan diet but cutting down on meat and dairy is probably not such a bad thing to do, given the health as well as environmental benefits. I am aware of the apparent confusion about meat eating, with press reports making it seem that the 'expert' advice was contradictory (it wasn't, it was just individual benefit was not as great as the population benefit, the same applies for many drugs), but the reality is that the best advice is "moderation in all things, including excess"!

Another area that we can work at is to reduce the waste that we generate in our consumption society. Given that Christmas is looming again, there is an opportunity to try and waste less. Try and think about the presents we give, do we really need another 5 pairs of flash socks, or 10 handkerchiefs with funny sayings, with all the associated wrapping paper and Sellotape involved? The same applies to the vast amounts of food we order then never eat, or just eat because it is there. Think before ordering too many mince pies, trifles etc for Christmas!

I am not trying to be a killjoy, but we do need to be a little bit more sensible in how we consume, as our current lifestyle is not sustainable. It is evident that we need to try and change before we have changes imposed by nature.

This brings me onto one of my seasonal hobbyhorses, the needless double or over-ordering of prescriptions before the festive season. I am staggered that we all seem to believe that supplies will run out in, for this year, the 4 days extra of closure over Christmas and New Year! If you get your 'normal' 2-month supply from mid-November onwards, there is NO NEED to order again before mid-January, you will NOT run out! Also ordering 'just in case' stocks of inhalers (even though the 4 at home have lain untouched for months), paracetamol, GTN spray, laxatives or any other medicine you care to name, is hugely wasteful. This is not only in terms of the cost of the medication, but also the time spent by staff, GPs, and community pharmacy doing all this unnecessary work.

Furthermore, with all this pre-Christmas ordering you'd expect that we'd do far less prescriptions in January, oh if that were so! The 'usual' orders appear as ever!

I dread to think just how much money, drugs and time is wasted with this festive mania, which happens year after year. Certainly, it must be a huge sum nationally, and there is absolutely no need for this to happen, as pharmacies are open for far longer than before, and the longest 'shutdown' is only 4 days, so please DO NOT order medication unless you need it. Scotstown patients will be politely informed that any request for double or extra 'just in case' medications, is likely to be declined!

Speaking of hobbyhorses, I do hope that you all consider ordering and eating a little bit less too. That means less to shift when you start the inevitable guilt-ridden exercise bid in January. Stay active, eat a bit less and you'll manage to avoid that trap, as well as feeling better and perhaps be a bit better off financially as well.

2019 has passed in a flash, must be Brexit, or maybe I'm just getting a bit longer in the tooth! 2020 is rapidly approaching, and we certainly cannot say that we live in boring times! So, whatever the future holds for us all, try and stay active, eat a little bit less and have a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

Dr Alasdair Forbes

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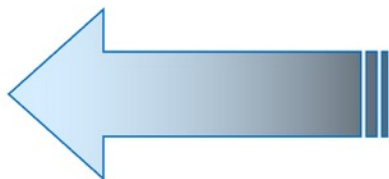
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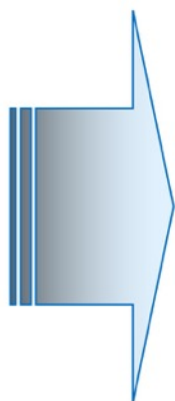
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As part of the Across the Grain Festival, we hosted a **Doric Bookbug Session** at Balmedie library on 9th October. We are sharing Doric stories and rhymes to introduce children to the Doric language and build their confidence. There were also further Doric Bookbug sessions at Ellon library on 23rd October and 28th October. We are hosting **Bookbug Rhyme Time** sessions for pre-school children, every second Wednesday from 6th November from 2.00-2.30pm. Every second Tuesday from 29th October, we will also be hosting a **Rhyme Time** for 0-2 years, from 10.00-10.30.

Our **Knit & Natter Group** is a very friendly gathering of local ladies. Apart from knitting lovely items for themselves, they also knit and crochet items for various charities. They meet here every Thursday morning from 10.30-12.30.

We also had a local photo competition which took place in the library in October. There were photos taken of local landmarks in Balmedie and you had to name the subject of the photo and where it was taken. Winners received a landscape photo taken by local photographer John Hopkins.

For anyone interested in finding out more about their family tree, we had a **Registrars session** on 26th October. This was hosted by the Local Registrar who showed us how to search for family history information online.

We have been working with Balmedie Primary pupils to deliver **Lego We-Do Sessions** to P4/3 pupils as part of their school Lego project. Children added movement, sound and lighting to their Lego models. We held sessions from 30th September to 9th October. Our **Lego Club**, for children aged 8 and over, will run this term on Mondays from 6.00-7.00pm. We are looking for new members so please contact library staff if you are interested in your child attending the Lego Club.

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Firstly, as is often the case, the facilities of the Leisure Centre are freely offered to community groups for fund raising, just like the one organised by our very own local Fitness Guy, Steve, who was looking to help the Danz Creations



Team visit Euro Disney Paris next year to perform in a competition. A fantastic opportunity for Team DC and a dream come true for many. Over £730 was raised!

Also in September we had Inflatable World with Bouncy Castles galore. Wrestle Zone returned with another night of mayhem, with the Beachside Bar open. A great night was had by all. We also organised a Macmillan Coffee Afternoon Tea and had a wonderful afternoon, with over 40 people attending. The Leisure Centre and Coffee Shop staff, along with the committee helped with the drinks and cakes. Everyone enjoyed the home bakes, sandwiches, and savouries. We raised a staggering £710 for the charity, with one lucky lady winning tickets for the Michael Buble concert. I just couldn't believe the generosity shown from our community.

We like to think that Balmedie Leisure Centre offers a welcoming environment, where you can try new activities, make friends and meet new people. We welcome and support anyone wishing to maintain their physical, social and mental well-being. With this in mind, we have introduced a whole range of new activities designed to be more inclusive for all ages and abilities. If you have a budding Ada Hegerberg, Stirling or Kane then there's a new pre-school football class run by Steven Sim, or if you're a little bit older why not try some of our new classes, like Angie's Body Blast or Zumba with Sally - or join Emma's Pound Posse to experience an amazing fun workout. If those are not your cup of tea why not try Pilates or Mana Life Pilates for a great whole-body exercise, suitable for all abilities and fitness levels. Or if like me you have a wardrobe of clothes you can't get into, join Weight Watchers - it's a very supportive class, encouraging me to lose over 2 stone in 11 weeks!

We also have dodge ball sessions suitable from primary 3 upwards on the last Friday of every month 4pm-5pm. Join our gymnastics coach Kerry's Dodge Ball, it's extremely popular and great fun.

The landscaping around the Leisure Centre is almost completed; erection of the security fencing and gates should begin mid-November. Lastly, and a first for the Leisure Centre - we arranged our first Vow Renewal buffet, receiving some great feedback from the happy couple and their guests.

Please check our website, notice boards and Facebook page for further events in the lead up to Christmas.

Bill Murray
Voluntary Committee Chairman



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WINTER DATES for your DIARY

Weekly

Mon	Knit & Natter	Potterton CEC	14.00-16.00
Wed	Ladies Group	Balmedie Cong. Church	11.00-12.00
Thur	Knit & Natter	Balmedie Library	10.30-12.30
Thur	Health Walks	Start Balmedie Library	10.00
Thur	Indoor Bowling	Potterton CEC	14.30-16.30
Fri	Under 5's Group Messy Play	Balmedie Congreg. Church	10.00-11.30
Sat	Better Balmedie	Balmedie Congreg. Church	10.00

Fortnightly

Tues	Friendship Group (see article)	Eigie House	14.00
Tues	Adult Arts and Crafts	Stead Inn, Potterton	19.30-21.00
Wed	SWI (see article)	Eigie House	19.30
Wed	1 st & 3 rd Wed of each month - Bingo	Eigie House	19.30

Every 3 Weeks

Tues	Potterton Walking Group (see article)	Potterton Recycling Centre	12.00
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Monthly

1 st Tues	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	10.00-12.00
3 rd Mon	Belhelvie Community Council	See article	19.30
4 th Wed	Whist	Eigie House, Balmedie	19.30
Last Sat	Pop Up Café Potterton Group	Stead Inn, Potterton	10.00-12.00

Bi- Monthly

2 nd Monday	Potterton Community Group	Stead Inn, Potterton	19.15-20.30
4 th Monday	Belhelvie Community Trust	Balmedie Library	19.30

Term Time Groups for Children and Young Adults

Mon	Lego Club	Balmedie Leisure Centre	15.30-17.00
Mon	Lego Club (Over 8s)	Balmedie Library	18.00-19.00
Mon	Cubs	Potterton CEC	18.30-20.00
Tues (fortnightly)	Rhyme time (0-2yrs) (see article)	Balmedie Library	10.00-10.30
Tues	Rainbows	Balmedie School	18.00-19.00
Tues	Cubs	Potterton CEC	18.30-20.00
Tues	Guides	Balmedie School	19.00-20.30
Tues	Explorer Scouts	Potterton CEC	19.30-21.30
Wed (fortnightly)	Bookbug Rhyme time (see article)	Balmedie Library	14.00-14.30
Wed	Beavers	Balmedie School	18.00-19.15
Wed	Rainbows	Potterton CEC	18.00-19.00
Wed	Balmedie Kids' Craft Club	Balmedie Congreg. Church	18.30-19.30
Thur	Brownies	Potterton CEC	18.00-20.00
Thur	Brownies	Balmedie School	18.15-19.45
Fri	Boys' Brigade with Girls	Balmedie Congreg. Church	15.30-16.30
Fri	Scouts	Potterton CEC	19.00-21.30

School Holiday Dates

Dec Fri 20 th	Last day of Winter term	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Jan Mon 6 th	First day of Spring term	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Feb Mon 17 th	Mid term holiday	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Feb Tues 18 th & Wed 19 th	In-service day	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Apr Fri 3 rd	Last day of Spring term	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon

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Copy deadline for Spring Edition - Friday 24th January 2020

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PETER PAN



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