

The Grapevine Spring 2011

2010 - It began with a freeze and ended with a freeze

Our Spring 2010 edition mentioned that in January and February 2010 we experienced 37 days of sub zero temperatures with the lowest being -14C and the highest 11.4. Quite enough for one year but December last ignored our plea and gave us 15 days of sub zero temperatures.

For the whole of the 8 days from 1st to 8th December the mean temperature was -8C, with the lowest -19.8C and the highest -2.7C. Seventh December was the most arctic day with a "high" of -16.4C and a low of -19.6C. The average temperature for the whole of December was -3.5C. On a cheerier note we had only 22mm of rain throughout December and an average wind speed of 1.1mph.

Incidentally, with reference to wind turbines, the average wind speed in January and February last year was only 1.75mph. Don't think we will be seeing wind turbines at Blairdrummond! On another cheerier note our scenery during the big freeze looked stunning as the photos show.



Ben Ledi and the Carse of Stirling
submitted by John Sands



Rossum Lane submitted by
Lorna Fotheringham

WIND FARMS - Love them or loathe them?

There is a project to erect 4 wind turbines on the Braes of Boquhapple, north of Thornhill. Each Turbine would be about 55 m high with 3 blades each measuring 33m. One of these turbines is on offer to the Thornhill community, who would own it and the revenue derived from it, if they can finance the building and maintenance of the turbine. The building cost is about £800,000; but there are loans available for up to 90% of the cost and the annual revenue generated by a turbine is, thanks to Government subsidies, of the order of £200,000. This revenue is guaranteed for 25 years which is the anticipated life of a turbine. So if all goes according to plan after 5 years approximately the loan could be paid off and thereafter, subject to maintenance and running costs, the community would have an income of £200,000 per annum for 20 years for community projects. Obviously if the loan was for a longer period than 5 years an income flow could begin in the first year.

The Project was approved at a public meeting of the Thornhill Community at the end of October but implementation requires, among other things, planning approval and successful wind monitoring for 12 months before installation can begin. Installation itself could take up to 12 months.

Few people find wind farms visually or naturally attractive. Many are sceptical about how efficient they are. Certainly when barometric pressure is high invariably winds are light or nonexistent and the blades cannot turn, just as they cannot turn if the wind is too strong. Unless we can store electricity cost effectively wind turbines can never be a total solution to our need for heat and light. Virtually every expert says that nuclear or coal fired solutions will be required to fill the gap, as even the more constant and assured tidal and wave turbines cannot produce sufficient power to do so.

On the positive side for owners of wind turbines, and these could be communities, the monetary returns guaranteed for 25 years are significant and could be enormously beneficial if there is a strong community consensus on how the money should be spent.

Blairdrummond will watch the Braes of Boquhapple space with interest.



Christmas Fayre

We had another successful Christmas Fayre in the Blairdrummond Hall on 26th November and thankfully the snow didn't start to fall until late in the evening. There were a wide variety of stalls again this year including the Primary School's soap stall, Avon, Briarlands Farm, Mary's Kitchen, Mac Books, Kidney Kids Scotland, Judes Jewels, Partlite Candles, Phoenix Cards and Dress Diva.

It was nice to see many stallholders who came along last year, come back again to support us. Once again the evening was very well attended and the ladies of the Hall Committee served teas/coffees and mulled wine, along with mice pies.

This year's chosen charity was the Princess Royal Trust for Young Carers, and thanks to everyone's generosity in buying raffle tickets, the sum of £250 was handed over on the night to this worthwhile charity. The stallholders kindly donated all the raffle prizes.

Thanks again for supporting our annual Christmas Fayre and we hope to see you again on Friday 25th November 2100, from 7.00pm till 9.00pm.

Kirk News from Kincardine in Menteith

The search continues for a new Minister for the triple linkage of Kincardine, Doune and Gargunnock. In the interim we are most fortunate to have an excellent team filling the vacancy, not least our own Alasdair Durie who will take the services on 20th February and 6th March, and our old friend Douglas Murray who will take the services on 13th and 27th March and 3rd April.

The next Family Services are on 27th February and 27th March. Services are held every Sunday at 9.30am. The church is proving popular for weddings in conjunction with the Hall, with excellent parking and no travel between church and reception.

Thank You to Louise Maxwell for 25 Years of Volunteering.

Tuesday evening, dark and dreary, sitting by the fire – of course not. Why? Because its Youth Club night!

For many years Blairdrummond Youth Club (BYC) has had teams of volunteer leaders and helpers, dedicated to helping in the development living in and around the Blairdrummond area. Familiar Youth Club activities, such as Table Tennis, Pool and Unihoc were enjoyed by the members. One year, after a short lapse in the operation of the Youth Club Louise Maxwell asked me if I would restart it, if she helped. I had always assisted my husband, Mike, with the Club but his job had moved to Manchester and he was not able to commit to being around every Tuesday night.

That was the beginning of a new era for BYC and Louise and I were elected as the new leaders.

There were only a few weeks remaining before the summer break and following a discussion with the members it was decided that some different activities would be introduced into the programme for the coming winter season. These included candle making, fabric painting and healthy-eating menu planning. All this resulted in invitations being sent to parents and guests to attend a 'Grand Meal'. Tablecloths were hand painted, floating candles and hand written menus decorated the tables and the members proudly served their guests with a delicious healthy meal. This proved a very successful start and following the next summer break we continued with even more new projects. Obviously Louise was always fully involved with the running of the Youth Club, proving she had the many qualities necessary to be an effective and successful Youth Leader. Communication with young people can prove difficult at times but Louise's great sense of humour and fun ensured that all members felt included in the activities at all times and she was quick to encourage and praise those members who were unsure about participation.

Of course Louise's famed talent for cooking and baking meant that there was no one better for supervising the pancake making on each Shrove Tuesday Youth Club night.

There was great excitement in the air one Tuesday night when a Television Camera Crew and Programme Researcher turned up, to film BYC members preparing clothes, to take part in a 'Recycled Fashion Show' and art exhibition called 'Bin-it-on'. The show was featured on Carol Smillie's lunch time news fashion slot and approximately 12 members of BYC took part. Fame at Last!!

Another notable event saw 5 members taking part in an Environmental Competition run by Youth Scotland and sponsored by BP call 'Gruff Kids'. The project chosen by the members was to renovate the Blairdrummond graveyard, including researching the history and making bat and bird boxes. This project was supported by the whole community and the school and the Team were successful in reaching the Finals and were presented to Princess Margaret who was Patron of Youth Scotland.

Outdoor activities were also organised including skiing, walking, camping and canoeing. These events were supported by Stirling Council Community Education department and by Youth Scotland. Concerts and pantomimes also produced amazing talents.



Louise's presentation on retiring as Youth Club leader.

Annual visits to the Glasgow Pavilion for the panto were extremely popular and we always managed to fill a bus for the trip, with a very popular stop on the outskirts of Glasgow on the way home, for chips. Great Fun!

Louise Maxwell enabled the young people in Blairdrummond to meet with their friends, to enjoy activities and experiences so important in their development. For this great commitment over the many years of her involvement she is certainly deserving of all our most sincere thanks.

'We think she deserves a medal'

Betty & Mike Abbott

From 1984 the Youth Club was run by Betty Abbott and Louise, until Betty moved out of the area in 1998. Thereafter Louise continued running the Youth Club, with some parental help, for the next 8 years.

In November 2006 Louise felt it was time she stepped down as Youth Leader but she was still keen to help in the running of the Club, so she agreed to become Chairperson. She continued to hold this post until 2010's AGM.

There will be few children who have attended Blairdrummond Youth Club in the last 25 years who will not have fond memories of their time at the Youth Club, which was made possible by the dedication and kindness of Louise. We're sure we speak for the many local parents and young people who over the years have been very grateful for the commitment shown by Louise, when we all say a huge **"thank you very much Louise"**.

Blairdrummond Youth Club.

Blairdrummond Youth Club

The Youth Club meets most Tuesday evenings (7pm-9pm) from October till the Easter holidays in Blairdrummond Community Hall. Age range is from Primary 7 to 6th Year at high school. There are a variety of games played at the youth club as well as being a place to meet and play music. There is a tuck shop and we also go on some outings. If you need any more information please contact Catherine by email at Catherine@grasslandsplus.com

Blairdrummond Curling Club - 150 years old and still going strong!

Founded in 1860 our curling club has been celebrating its 150th anniversary this season. In November a celebratory Bonspiel was held at The Peak in Stirling, in which 20 invited teams along with 4 from the club participated and enjoyed a meal together.

On 12th March the club is planning to hold a celebratory dinner in the Hall. The photos show the club's Chairman, Marjory McCulloch, at the Bonspiel and the club's Secretary, Ian Brisbane, with the club's constitution and 150 year old Minute Book.



Big Beasts and other Stirlingshire Stories

Friday 15th October saw a good attendance of people at the hall, all of whom had come along to listen to a Talk from Dr Elspeth King, Director of Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

Elspeth, internationally known for her curator work, gave a broad and fascinating talk on many of the interesting paintings and artefacts the Smith have in their collection, which have a link to either agriculture or the Stirling area, including some 'big beasts' paintings!

The ease with which she took the audience through the various aspects and their history meant the evening flew by, with humour and surprises galore.

*Catherine Killen, Dr Elspeth King & Tom Gilliland
Blairdrummond Community Hall Chairman*



Safari Park News

Blairdrummond Safari and Adventure Park has made it into the movies! "NEDS" was released in January. It is set in Glasgow in the 1970s and tells the story of the gang culture at that time. Famous actor and director, Peter Mullan stars in the film. Much of the filming took place in the Park over a week in August 2009. Filming had to be done early in the morning, before the Park opened to the public. NEDS has already picked up some awards including the best film at the San Sebastian Film Festival.

Because of the snow and ice in December many winter projects had to be put on hold but all are working hard to ensure the Park is up and running for its opening on 19th March.

The animals are all safe and well. Like us humans they have been mostly snuggled up inside their heated houses during the snow and ice. They are now beginning to venture outside.

Ailsa, the baby rhino, has now got her own fan club. Due to the popularity of the webcam on the Park's website www.blairdrummond.com she now has a following from fans around the world, who got together to collect over £1000. Two of the Dot and Ailsa Watchers Group ("DAWGS") came to the Park to hand over the cheque, which will go to rhino conservation. In return all the DAWGs were awarded Platinum Adoption.

High Speed Broadband for Rural Forth Valley

Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Local Action Group is delighted at the news that its bid to bring WiMAX broadband to the Forth Valley as part of the Scottish Government's Rural Broadband Challenge Fund was one of only five bids in Scotland to be approved by the Scottish Parliament in December 2010.

The project will put in place the necessary infrastructure to allow high speed broadband of between 2Mbps to 20 Mbps to be offered wirelessly as a commercial service which, as a minimum, will cover the communities of Tillicoultry, Alva East, Alloa West, Bandeath, Throsk, South Alloa, Cambusbarron and parts of **rural south west Stirling**. As a pilot, the exact reach of the signal won't be known until the equipment is in place.

One of the areas to be targeted is Touch Business centre at Cambusbarron. This means that the signal may well radiate from Stirling in an arc which could cover areas of Blairdrummond. For more information visit their website www.fvl.org.uk

Blairdrummond Hall

The Hall built in recent years, is an excellent focus for community activities in Blairdrummond. The voluntary committee, which support the running of this facility welcome new ideas for events.

The building is located near to the school and church has superb facilities and ample parking space. It can be hired for a very reasonable sum, for family events, meetings etc.

Should you wish any further details, please get in touch with the Booking Secretary, Audrey on 01786 842421.



Briarlands Farm

We have been busy over the winter designing a new tearoom and toilets for the farm. We hope to have the building completed and open for February 2012. Briarlands will be opening on 1st April this year as there are only 8 days in April when the children are actually going to be in school! Fingers crossed for a dry spring and summer, some good hay making weather would be nice for a change.

Dates for your Diary

Tae Kwondo - Mon 7pm to 8pm, contact Jaclyn Craig 07935 101791

Yoga - Wed 5.30 - 6.45pm contact Maya Savati, www.mindyouryoga.com or 07799 736611

Zumba - Thurs 8.15pm - 9.15pm contact Janice Klemer 01786 860244

Church Sunday Services - 20th February, 6th, 13th and 27th March and 3rd April.
The next Family Services are on 27th February and 27th March

Youth Club runs every Tuesday night from 7pm-9pm from October till Easter in the hall and is open to all young people aged 11- 18. Contact Catherine 01786 860246 for more information.

Curling Club - 12th March Anniversary Dinner

Safari Park - Opens on 19th March 2011

Briarlands Farm - Opens on 1st April 2011

School Info



Think Dance

On Tuesday 8th of February, pupils from the school performed in "Think Dance" at Stirling's Macrobert theatre. After many weeks of intense choreography they had their audience feet tapping to the familiar tunes of the War Years, as through music and dance they took the audience of the Macrobert theatre way back to the Blitz of 1939, through the difficult years of war before celebrating peace in 1945.

Cross Country Championships

P6/7 pupils participated in the Stirling Schools Cross Country event on Wednesday 2nd of February at Stirling Rugby Club grounds, it was an awful day in regards to the weather but all participating pupils completed the 1 mile cross country race and Tara Brisbane from P6 completed the course within the top 20 times within her group and has been invited to the Forth Valley Cross Country Championships to compete in the next stage. We wish her well.

Big Bird Watch

The whole school participated in the Big Bird Watch on Thursday 3rd of February from 9.30am – lunchtime. During this time they watched and counted all the birds which were seen within the school grounds and reported their findings back to the RSPB. These results will be added to those throughout Britain to see if bird numbers are increasing / decreasing, if there are any new birds in the area and how they have coped through the winter.

Ceilidh Report by Rachel Darby P6

On Friday the 28th of January the school had a Ceilidh at the Blairdrummond Community Hall to raise money for Malawi. The senior class sang songs, as did the junior class and the P7 class addressed the haggis which was piped in by Robert Reid.

Families all brought a plate to share, which was presented as an overflowing table of yummy food which was greatly enjoyed by everyone when the buffet was opened. Once everyone had their fill of lovely food, the games began after which the Trossachs Ceilidh Band led us through the night with hours of dancing.

Mr Holl auctioned off the paintings on the walls of Rabbin Burns which pupils had drawn that week during art class. This was great fun and raised a lot of money.

In total the night raised £469.97.

100 Club Results

October

1st Jenny Holl
2nd Marianne Robb
3rd Dave Robertson

November

1st Grace Stirling
2nd Max Williamson
3rd Lorna Duff

Useful Contacts

Stirling Royal Infirmary	01786 434000	Womens Aid	01786470897
Doune Health Centre	01786841213	Stirling Council	08452777000
Samaritans	08457909090	NHS 24	08454242424