

Issue 27

## The Grapevine

February 2018

*Blair Drummond Grapevine gratefully acknowledges United Auctions generosity in printing this and previous editions of this newsletter.*

### My trip Down Under



*Jane at Ayers Rock*

In October 2015, I set off on an exciting (and perhaps slightly mad trip) adventure to Australia!

My first port of call was the Snowy Mountains, where I'd secured a job assisting with horse treks in the National Park – why anyone would be willing to follow my directions while attempting to ride a mostly wild, part Brumby horse, I'm not sure but anyway I think everyone lived to tell the tale. After a couple of months there, my feet started to itch, so I set sail for Melbourne, where the temperature must've hit 40 degrees C and onto Tasmania which was awesome. I located the Wilson family (former Blair Drummond residents) for Christmas – a BBQ on the beach and New Year. From there, I found myself a job working with polo ponies, in what can only be described as the middle of nowhere. This was hard work but

incredible fun and along with a wage, we received copious amounts of alcohol meaning it was a touch wild at times!

After 4 months, the polo season unfortunately came to an end, so I hopped on a train to Sydney. Upon arriving there, it was as though I'd been living under a rock for a considerable amount of time, with no clue how to handle the large volume of tourists, latest news or the endless array of hostel rooms!

Alice Springs was my next planned stop, where I hoped to see Ularu (Ayers Rock). Wrong. 500kms by bus and a camel ride later, I finally saw the majestic Rock which is just spectacular. From there I flew to Cairns and the rainforest. The beaches, sights and of course the brilliant Great Barrier Reef then guided me down the East Coast. Wow, the reef is worth seeing, even if being on a boat didn't quite agree with me...!

I arrived back in Sydney mid-June 2016 with barely a penny to my name, so it was yet more horse work for 3 months. A friend joined me in September 2016 and we spent the last 5 weeks of my Visa gallivanting around, taking endless pictures of everything and anything, before crossing the Tasman Sea to New Zealand.

It was even better than Australia. We had a ball doing polo again (my poor liver!) prior to travelling the length and breadth of the North and South Islands, with the highlights being the Bay of Islands and Wanaka. Because I didn't bag myself an All Blacks rugby player, I arrived home at the end of March 2017, much to everyone's surprise! It's good to be back, but a few trips have caught my eye recently, across the Atlantic, so watch this space!

**Jane Brisbane.**

## QUIZ

The Hall committee have organised a quiz in the hall on **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February from 7.30pm**. Over 18s. Cheese & biscuits will be provided. BYOB. Tickets £5. Contact Louise 841352, Catherine 860246, Janette 470637 or any committee member.



## Josh

We all tend to be busy with our day to day life and don't always think of, or realise, the amazing things that are happening around us. Some of you may already know this true story but many, including me, never realised the extent of this tale!

Josh Littlejohn, aged 31, is a local lad, working hard here in Scotland, for people less fortunate than ourselves. Heather, Josh's mum, kindly provided us with an insight into his work. A short précis follows –

He is Blair Drummond raised and schooled, an Edinburgh University graduate in Politics & Economics. Had an unsuccessful final interview in London for the Civil Service, read a book by Muhammad Yunus on his work creating social businesses in Bangladesh, whereby any profit made was reinvested to help others, mainly women, to start their own businesses. Josh was fascinated and decided he wanted to meet this man to learn more. For quite some time he politely hounded Yunus, being undaunted by distance and rejection! Eventually Josh and his friend Alice met the author and talked. This was the 'light bulb' moment! Josh

knew he wanted to create social businesses here in Scotland.

Josh invited Yunus to Scotland and, following that, began his idea of the 'Social Bite'. This cafe, opened in Edinburgh 5 years ago, aims to sell soup (in the beginning often made by mum!) and sandwiches to the public. The public could, if they wish, having paid for their lunch, also put money in for



an evening meal for a homeless person. Having employed one homeless person in the cafe, then another, the ethos developed of one in five of the staff being/having been homeless.

In five short years Josh now has 2 cafes in Edinburgh, 2 in Glasgow and 1 in Aberdeen. For these efforts he was awarded the MBE in 2017. And there's a tale within the tale – when Josh went to buy a kilt, he was asked what was the occasion, having explained he was delighted to find that the

fitter himself had been homeless, got a job at the Social Bite, which got him back into work and aided him to get the job as fitter!

Josh introduced another venture – Scottish Business Awards, whereby annually successful entrepreneurs judge which businesses merit an award. The money made from this dinner and award ceremony goes back into Social Bite. Again tenacity paid off when Josh succeeded in having Bob Geldof as guest speaker the first year. The second year – Bill Clinton, third year Richard Branson, fourth year George Clooney and fifth year Leonardo DiCaprio! The endorsement by these high profile people ensured the event's success and profitability.

Then yet another idea came to the surface – a 'Sleep Out' in the capital, in the cold! Having talked it over with mum, Josh explained he wanted to make a real difference, even to make homelessness a thing of the past in Scotland, and that could only be achieved by big events. Heather admits he was 'like a dog with a bone', he just kept plugging away at it! A concert with high profile people (such as Liam Gallagher) providing entertainment, would bring the crowds, and they would be raising money through sponsorship. Josh worked hard at selling the idea, visiting schools, churches, football clubs etc. as well as the national media. And we all know from the media coverage what a huge success it was, albeit a very chilly one! And another bonus from the event was 160 people pledged to employ a homeless person.

And so onto his most recent work, to have a 'village' built on land leased from Edinburgh Council. Josh aims to have 500 small houses, 'Nesthouses', built (in both Edinburgh and Glasgow), with support from other charities working in the field. And this work is moving along well, despite various hurdles to be overcome.

Meantime, from money raised, the Night Shelter in Edinburgh has been expanded and so no one is now turned away.

Josh admitted to his mother (not one for tattoos) that he had recently had a tattoo put onto his left upper arm, reading 'There is no them and us, there's only us'. It's how he sees life.

Long may his work continue!

## **Glass & clothing recycling**

If using the recycling bins at the hall and you find they are full, please take your glass/clothes away with you to recycle elsewhere. ***Thank you.***



## Royal Highland Educational Trust (RHET)

RHET Forth Valley is pleased to announce that the **RHET Run** is back, on **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2018**.



*2017 RHET Run*

This is a **5k Family Run**, from Briarlands Farm, round the Safari Park and back. The route is flat, traffic free and with the chance of seeing some of the Safari Park residents! All money raised will go to RHET, whose aim is to 'take the classroom to the countryside' and educate children as to where their food comes from; with free farm visits and classroom talks.

The '**RHET Factor**' Choir is also continuing, following a really fun month of pre-Christmas carol singing in Dobbies and the Blair Drummond Smiddy. **Weekly practices are Tuesdays, from 16<sup>th</sup> January, 7.10 – 8.45pm at Briarlands, £4.00 per session, all welcome.**

**Katie Brisbane, Project Co-ordinator, RHET Forth Valley.**

### **BLAIR DRUMMOND ESTATE**

Hardwood Logs	£190/ load
Hardwood Logs	£95/ half load
Hardwood Limbs	£100/load
Softwood Logs	£140/ load
Softwood Logs	£70 half load
Softwood Limbs	£80/load
Small bags	£6 for hardwood
Small bags	£5 for softwood

Contact: **Bob**

**Tel: 01786 841580    Mob: 07732 563106**

## Weather Statistics

Believe it or not, 2017 was a dry year (one of the lowest recorded), although it also had one of the lowest number of dry days recorded!

### Rainfall

**Highest annual total** 1484.4mm in 2015      **Lowest annual** 736.5mm in 2003

**Highest monthly** 318.7mm in Jan 1993      **Lowest monthly** 6.8mm in Sept 2014

**Highest daily total** 54.6mm on 16/12/89

**Average rainfall (rolling 30year average)** 1102.1mm

### Monthly Average

**Jan** 136.9mm      **Feb** 93.6mm      **Mar** 90.6mm

**Apr** 58.1mm      **May** 64.9mm      **June** 67.6mm

**July** 73.7mm      **Aug** 83.5mm      **Sept** 86.7mm

**Oct** 121.5mm      **Nov** 112.2mm      **Dec** 126.6mm

### Average number of dry days

**Jan** 8      **Feb** 11      **Mar** 12      **Apr** 14

**May** 15      **June** 15      **July** 14 (6)      **Aug** 13 (6)

**Sept** 13 (6)      **Oct** 10      **Nov** 9      **Dec** 10

( )= 2017

The recent very cold conditions are probably due to the 7 year cycle, linked to the 'El Nino'. I think we all remember the last one in 2010, when many of us were skating on the Lake of Menteith?

**Alan Brisbane**

### **HANDYMAIN**

- General household repairs
- Garden maintenance
- Decorating
- Flat pack furniture building

***No job too small***

Contact: **Clinton Main**

**Tel: 01786 842927**

**Mob: 07909967819**

**Email: [Clinton.main@btinternet.com](mailto:Clinton.main@btinternet.com)**

## Graduation

Congratulations to Gabriela Ingle, New Barn, East Coldoch, Blair Drummond, who has been awarded a PhD at University of Edinburgh, for her thesis on 'The Significance of Dining in Late Roman and Early Christian Funerary Rites and Tomb Decoration'.

Gabi studied at the Jagellonian University in Krakow, graduating with a Masters in Archaeology, before receiving her Diploma in the Conservation of Architectural Features and Sacred Artefacts, from John Paul II University. She spent several years as an archaeologist before embarking on her doctorate.

Her advice to all would-be postgrads? Finish your studies before starting a family – it's a lot quicker that way!



**LEARN TO DANCE**

*Swing  
& Salsa*

**March 2018**

**Blair Drummond Community Hall, FK9 4UX**

**Friday** *Evenings*

alldance@costep.co  
07513 046 016

**COSTEP.CO**

## **Kincardine in Menteith Primary School Council & 100 Club**

The Parent Council have contributed towards the Dalguise trip for the P7 children, and have purchased all weather bags for the outdoor area.

The Parent Council had a Chocolate Tombola stall at the Blair Drummond Community Hall Christmas Fayre and raised £124. Huge thanks to all businesses and families who donated chocolate and supported us on the night.

The 100 Club winner for December was Graeme MacGregor and for January was Karen Baillie.

**Louisa Jenkins, Chairperson & Lorna Duff, Committee member**

## **Kincardine in Menteith Primary School**

*Written by The Communications Crew*

**Halloween Party:** In October we had a Halloween Party organised for us by the Parent Council. We decorated spooky cookies, dunked for apples, played Doughnut on the String and Halloween Bingo. We also took part in some Halloween crafts with Mrs MacNish. We made pumpkins and handprint witches. We also had a spooktacular lunch with lots of decorations and haunting music.

**Developing Young Workforce Week:** In November we had a focus week, which was all about work and enhancing our employability skills. During this week we went on a website called 'My World of Work' and took part in a quiz called 'Animal Me', which then told us what job we might be suited for when we are older. It gave us an insight into possible careers that we could have in the future. We had visits from the Engine Shed, Fire Brigade, Police, Robertson's Construction and Rollerbeats. On the last day of the week we hosted a Jobs Fair where lots of different people came to tell us about their jobs. We had a minister, high school teachers, musician, wind farm developer, GP/First Responder, careers advisor, Safari Park and Active Stirling staff. We really enjoyed our week and learning about all the different jobs!

**New School Values:** In November we launched our new school values, these were decided through consultation with parents, pupils and staff.



Our new values are **Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, Courage and Excellence**. We should also strive **to be the best we can be** at all times. **Rural Readers and Book Breakfast:** We also launched our **Rural Reading and Club**.

The aim of Rural Readers is to encourage people to read outside, during playtime and lunchtime, for enjoyment. We have two Rural Reading Reps – Tilly and Camryn, who are responsible for organising the Club and Rupert the Reading Rabbit mascot. At the start of December we invited parents to help us launch the First Minister's Reading Challenge. Parents came in and had breakfast and were able to read with us and take part in lots of reading activities.

**Christmas Card Winner:** Local MP Stephen Kerr hosted a Christmas Card Competition for Primary Schools in Stirling area. We all entered and in late November we heard that Sholto has won the entire competition with his 'Three Kings' art work. Stephen Kerr visited the school to present Sholto with his prize and everyone who entered received a certificate. Sholto's card was sent out to 1,500 people by Stephen Kerr, including the Prime Minister.

**Nativity:** Our nativity this year was called 'Lights, Camera, Action', based on Strictly Come Dancing. It included a lot of catchy songs and some brilliant dance routines. There was a chance for everyone to take to the stage. We worked hard and performed it to a huge audience on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

**Christmas Celebrations:** In December we had a big focus on writing stories. P1-2 wrote about the Magic Carpet. Where we flew to the North Pole and met Santa and a Snowman. Unfortunately Santa had a problem and we helped to fix it. P4-7 wrote their own version of the Christmas Carol. They had to set the story in modern day and follow the structure of the original story but have lots of added parts, such as technology. We really enjoyed these and worked very hard.

**Back to School:** The 8<sup>th</sup> January saw us return to school. Happy New Year! This term we have been very busy working hard learning lots of new things and enjoying the winter weather. We have built snowmen and even tried to build an igloo. In P1 and 2 we are learning how to make the world a better place. We designed a picture of a super hero to save the seas. In P4-7 we are learning about the Highland Clearances and reading 'The Desperate Journey' by Kathleen Fidler. We have been learning how people were evicted from their homes to make way for sheep!

## **DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING COURSE**

We have organised a training course for Defibrillator use & CPR in the hall on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 7pm** . The course is limited to 15 people and will be allocated on a first come basis. The course will be provided by Trossachs Search & Rescue. If you want to book a place or for further information please contact Louise on 01786 841352.

### **Blair Drummond Hall Diary Dates**

#### **Weekly Classes**

**Tuesday:** Youth Club 7pm – 9pm (October to Easter)  
**Wednesday:** Ballroom Dancing – 7pm – 9.30pm  
**Friday:** Swing & Salsa dance lessons

#### **Events**

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February:** Quiz 7.30pm Tickets £5  
**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February:** Blair Drummond Blethers. 12-2pm.  
**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March:** Defibrillator training course 7pm  
**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March:** Swing & Salsa dance class  
**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March:** Blair Drummond Blethers. 12-2pm.  
**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April:** Blair Drummond Blethers. 12-2pm .  
**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May:** Blair Drummond Blethers. 12-2pm.  
**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June:** Annual Family BBQ in Blair Drummond Safari Park from 6.30pm. Tickets £5 (under 5s free).

Anyone wishing to hire the Hall please contact the Booking Secretary. As always, the Hall is regularly used for meetings, kids parties, ceilidhs, and wedding receptions, to name but a few. For more information visit our website: [www.blairdrummondhall.co.uk](http://www.blairdrummondhall.co.uk) or contact Louise (Booking Secretary) on 01786 841352 or [info@blairdrummondhall.co.uk](mailto:info@blairdrummondhall.co.uk)

### **A day in the life of a Forth Valley farm vet**

*Our last edition of the Grapevine was so busy we had to omit this article. Our apologies and we hope you enjoy this insight into a vet's day.*

The winter housing period has arrived with a damp bang, despite our best efforts to salvage a summer from the last few months. This dramatically increases the workload for farmers and vets alike, as housed cattle need feeding and bedding and since the cattle are all now to hand, the routine

health work gets underway: pregnancy scanning, blood sampling for disease screening, TB tests, worming, bolusing and any other tasks.

Here is a day in the life of Eleanor, one of the farm team.

'First port of call is to the practice at Falleninch Farm, to stock up with the equipment and medicines I will need for the day. I take the list of calls to get through and the farmers' phone numbers to give them an arrival time and then it's off to one of our dairy clients for their fortnightly routine visit. I use our ultrasound scanner to see whether the cow is in calf, or to look for any problem if she hasn't been mated yet. Any unwell cows can be looked over too. 100% of this morning's cows were pregnant – great result.

Next up is a second dairy farm which we visit monthly, again to confirm pregnancy and check any problems. Again 100% in calf, including a set of twins. There's a sick cow spiking a high fever and not eating this morning. The diagnosis is pneumonia, so she gets anti-inflammatory to bring down her temperature and make her feel better, plus some antibiotic to help her fight off the infection.

Late morning now and I'm off to my third call, to scan some beef cows to see if they are pregnant. Again, all are in calf and they will give birth in the spring. We can pick up a pregnancy from 4 weeks after conception with our scanner. Cows are pregnant for 40 weeks, just like women. Dairy cows tend to get checked 5-8 weeks after mating, with routine visits all year round because they are handled for milking every day. Beef cows are usually mated whilst they are out at grass in the summer so are not scanned until they come into the sheds in the autumn.

After a few minutes in a lay-by to grab some lunch and make a couple of phone calls to report some lab results, it's on to my next job, an unwell calf. It has a high fever, is panting and coughing and was recently housed and weaned. This is a classic case of pneumonia which will hopefully respond to anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. The calves were vaccinated against pneumonia but unfortunately it hasn't fully prevented the problem. The farmer will keep a close eye on the rest of the group to check it doesn't spread, but the vaccine will definitely have helped. The damp, mild weather is perfect for the viruses and bacteria which cause pneumonia to survive and spread so we're seeing a lot of this problem now that the cattle are being housed – it's just like the runny noses toddlers get at nursery, or Fresher's flu that students get!

Next call is to scan a whole herd of cows – 45 ladies all waiting patiently to learn their fate. The first few were with a bull which went lame during the summer and unfortunately several are not pregnant. This is a major

blow to the farm finances as an empty cow won't produce a calf to sell but still needs to be fed and bedded all winter if she is kept. Some of these will unfortunately have to be sold, as will the bull since he has not recovered from his injury and cannot be relied upon to get cows in calf.

Off to another sick calf – same story (without the vaccination this time), high fever, panting, not eating. This poor calf lost its mother a week before, causing stress which allowed the infection to take hold. Same treatment and some TLC prescribed.

We've reached the end of the normal day and everyone else has headed off for the evening but I'm on call, so my first job is to head out to see a beef cow that can't get up. This is a common problem more typically seen in dairy cattle, low calcium. This causes muscle weakness so in the early stages the cow cannot stand. If left untreated it can lead to death, either from the heart being too weak to keep pumping or if the stomach stops contracting the cow can bloat up which compresses the lungs. This cow gets a bottle of calcium solution into her vein and one under the skin. She starts to show signs of response so I head away, with the expectation that she'll be up in a couple of hours.

Last call for the day, a calving. We see many calving problems, from tangled twins to twisted wombs, all requiring our expertise to figure out the problem and our skills to birth the calf. This patient is a heifer, meaning this is her first calf. She has been calving for a little longer than expected and is carrying a high value pedigree calf so the farmer is anxious for a good outcome. My examination reveals a set of back feet coming through a fairly small pelvis. In a cow there is usually plenty of space so we often pull a breech calf out, but this lady is still growing and there isn't much room so we decide on a caesarean. This is done under local anaesthetic in cattle, with the heifer standing. I've done so many now I can almost do them with my eyes closed – helpful now that it is dark in the evenings and some farms are not very well lit but this farm has a very handy set up for the surgery. An hour later and we've got a living calf up on his feet ready for his first feed off his mum who was very well behaved for her operation.

So that's all the calls done for the day! I just need to wash everything I got mucky today and restock for emergencies that might come in overnight before I go home for my tea. I have a husband at home ready to fire up the microwave and I've had a text to say the down cow is up and eating. Fingers crossed the other unwell patients respond as favourably as her and fingers crossed for a quiet night!

**Eleanor Legg MRCVS BVM&S**

## Vets on the move



Struthers & Scott have moved!

The new clinic is by the Doune Ponds, a popular dog walking area. There is car parking at the building.

The reception area gives us a larger waiting area, with a partition to separate dog and cat waiting areas. We have a greater number of consulting rooms, a larger laboratory and dispensing area. The prep room gives us more space, with a bigger operating theatre, designated dental and X-ray rooms accessed from it. Kennel numbers are increased, and we have a separate cat ward.

**Find us at our new address, Innes Park, Doune Riggs, Station Wynd, Doune, Perthshire FK16 6EH. 01786 841304**

## Meldrum Farm Milkers are Scotland's best

Meldrum Farm, Blair Drummond, has won the much sought-after title of Scotland Dairy Farm of the Year!

Winning dairy farmer David Hamilton, of Wm Hamilton & Son, milks 826 Holsteins, with a production average of 11955kg and a first calving age of 23.5 months.

David said ' We are delighted to have won. We have an excellent team and it's great for them to be rewarded in this way. We had incredibly strong opposition and so a win amongst such good company really helps us to continue striving to improve what we do and keep our focus on the future'.





## **The Rev's Rant for Spring 2018**

***Confused? – You will be! (Inspired; you can be)***

I am told by a local farmer who measures rainfall in our area, that 2017 was one of the driest years on record, yet my memory suggests that there were an awful lot of wet days, precious little summer sunshine and the lateness of hay cutting and the harvest would seem to support that, but figures on rainfall are hard to argue with. I am also informed by leading meteorologists (weather experts!) that 2017 was one of the warmest years for our planet, when glaciers melted at a phenomenal rate and hurricanes were plentiful - yet here on the Carse and surrounding area, the grass wouldn't grow last Spring and in December the ice was dangerous for all who tried to walk about and many a car found itself scraped, or scrapped as a result.

Meanwhile, many of us were scathing when Donald Trump was voted in as U.S. President just over a year ago .... North Korea has been a lot less belligerent, and more willing to talk in this past month.

My knowledge about "fake-news" is scant but I do wonder occasionally at my, and perhaps your, ability to read the signs of the times accurately, at a whole lot of levels. We often make judgements based more on already-held, built-in opinions than the external facts.

In other words we see the world not as it is, but as we are! Scary! This clouds not only our view of what has happened in our world and our experiences but our vision of what might happen, or could happen in the future. So what would it be like if we pushed our carefully built prejudices and certainties to one aside, and began to imagine new scenarios?

Think of the man (or was it a woman?) who first imagined the combine harvester, or the internet, or those stents that are used so often in surgical operations to save lives.

Now, what could ***you*** imagine when you un-fetter your mind from presupposition and accepted but questionable 'information'? Life becomes more intriguing than confusing at this point. Have fun imagining!

**Your friendly parish minister, Andy Campbell**

## **Christmas Fayre**

A big Thank You to everyone who supported the Blair Drummond Community Hall annual Christmas Fayre. £200 was raised from the raffle and completed our fundraising for the new PA & Loop system which has now been installed.

## Blair Drummond Smiddy

Spring is finally getting here after a long and dark winter! The festive season was a successful one for us here at The Smiddy and, unbelievably, Christmas (baubles and other fabulous festive decorations!) has already been ordered for next year!! Life in retail is lived a year in advance!

Prior to the festive season commencing, we hosted a very successful Fashion Show for Woodlane of Doune. The kitchen and café did a fantastic job catering for so many people all at one time and we have had



a lot of good feedback from this event.

Christmas started at The Smiddy with a Festive Evening on 24<sup>th</sup> November. Warmed ginger wine and mince pies were served as our guests arrived. There were tastings of food and drink and the atmosphere was enhanced by the wonderful singing from the RHET choir. We even had our

local author in signing copies of her books! All in all, a great evening. Fiona Wallace from Bramble and Thyme also ran wreath making workshops at The Smiddy and some beautiful wreaths were created.

Since Christmas, the shop has been a hive of activity with orders coming in and new and exciting stock being put on the shelves for our customers. Out with the old and in with the new!

In the butchery department, Euan has achieved his Level 2 Modern Apprenticeship in Butchery. A great achievement! Colin has become a father for the first time, a beautiful baby boy! Stewart is going to Belfast this March to compete in The World Butchers' Challenge and Robbie is trying to keep them all grounded! More awards have been won too. Gold awards for the delicious Scotch Pies and Sausage Rolls and a silver award for the innovative Stovie Pie. On the other side of the butcher's counter is our deli counter run by Sally-Ann and Gail. The ladies had a wonderful Christmas season and their cheese and salamis flew out the door. Their cheese hampers were a new feature this Christmas and proved very popular. The hampers are now available all year round.

The café and kitchen are still giving all our customers delicious meals and panoramic views, while Carrie bakes mouth-watering scones and cakes daily. Our Spring menu will soon be launched to see us through the year, until Autumn is once again upon us. Afternoon teas are also on the menu. We look forward to seeing you all!

**Linda**

## **Blair Drummond Curling Club**

Happy New Year to one and all! The curling season is well underway with Club and inter-Club fixtures.

Our Try Curling events in September and November at the Peak had an excellent turn-out. 'Thank you' to Derek Young, our expert coach, who encouraged the new first-timers and the experienced.

Many of you may have known Graeme Giles, former Medical Director of Strathcarron Hospice, who sadly passed away in 2015 after a short illness. He was a very active member of Blair Drummond Curling Club and was Vice-Chairman. His wife Clare presented a trophy to the Club in his memory. The Graeme Giles Bonspiel will be an annual event to which other Clubs, in which Graeme was also involved, will be invited – Stirling, Borestone and Airthrey as well as Stirling Curling Group.

Coaching was another of Graeme's interests, assisting in sessions for Stirling Young Curlers, who were also represented at the Bonspiel and were aptly the first winners of the Graeme Giles Trophy.

The gauntlet has been shown for the other Clubs to challenge the Stirling Young Curlers on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, when we have the next Bonspiel.

Please contact myself, Anne Christie on 07977441108, or Secretary Steve Walker on 07971616135, if you would like further information on having a go at curling, or joining Blair Drummond Curling Club.

**Anne Christie, Chair, Blair Drummond Curling Club**

## **Camphill Blair Drummond Advent Sale**

Camphill Blair Drummond's annual Advent Sale took place at Blair Drummond House on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017. Our residents, day students and staff had been busy throughout the year producing handmade items in our workshops to sell on the day. These included Christmas wreaths, glass decorations, wooden reindeer and highland cow cushions.

We had over 500 visitors on the day, **helping to raise an amazing £12,000** which will go towards funding our proposed Sports and Recreation Centre project, which is in its very early stages.

The day also included live festive music from The Blackford Fiddlers, raffle and tombola stalls and a chance to take a break from all that shopping with tea, coffee and festive treats in our Café.

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our event and to all the volunteers who helped on the day, making it our most successful Advent Sale to date.

## Blair Drummond Blethers

Blair Drummond Blethers is entering its 5<sup>th</sup> year and will be having a birthday celebration in May.

We welcome anyone from the area, over the age of 50 years, to come along and join us at the BD hall, from 12 – 2 pm, on the last Monday of the month. We have some interesting speakers and events coming up this year, as well as plenty of time for meeting and chatting with friends and neighbours. You'll get a warm welcome and delicious homemade soups and sandwiches for lunch!

The January meeting was our Burns lunch, when we enjoyed haggis, neeps & tatties, trifle and cheese & biscuits, along with some good music.

**February 26<sup>th</sup>** we will be having a photo quiz of 'Guess the person at a special occasion'.

**March 26<sup>th</sup>** will be a chance to have a game of Beetle, with prizes to be won!

**April 30<sup>th</sup>** our speaker is Murray Cook, Stirling Council Archivist, who will give undoubtedly a very interesting talk on local history. Do come along for this event.

**May 28<sup>th</sup>** is to be our 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party.

**Alison Coates**

## Briarlands Farm

Briarlands Farm will **re-open on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February**, so get the kids out for Half Term!

We're busy constructing a new platform that will provide more fun, plus great views over the Park. We have our great jumping pillows, football golf, soft archery, go-karts, plus much more, to give you 'Family Fun in the Fresh Air'.

Inside there is the soft play frame to keep the wee ones entertained; ceramic painting and sand art, for those who wish to create a masterpiece to take home.

So head to Briarlands, for a fun packed day – we'd love to see you!

Visit [www.briarlandsfarm.co.uk](http://www.briarlandsfarm.co.uk) or LIKE us on Facebook, to keep up to date with events.







# Get back on court with NEW Walking netball!

Come along and get involved! Walking netball is a slower version of the regular game – ideal for all ages and abilities.

Improve your fitness, meet new people and have lots of fun. All sessions are led by an Active Stirling Walking netball coach.

## FREE TRIAL!

Try the first two weeks of Walking netball for **FREE!** Wednesday 10 January and Wednesday 17 January. Just come along and play – hope to see you there! **No need to book** in advance – just turn up, pay at reception and play!

## PROGRAMME DATES

- Wednesday 24 January to Wednesday 21 March (8 weeks) (excl Wednesday 14 February)
  - Wednesday 18 April to Wednesday 20 June (10 weeks)
- Play for only £2.00 per person each week.**



01786 273555

[activestirling.org.uk](http://activestirling.org.uk)  
Active Stirling working in partnership with Stirling Council





## Do you need an affordable home?

Rural Stirling Housing Association aims to support local communities by providing quality homes at affordable rents for families, couples and single people in housing need.

We currently have over 560 rented houses and flats. Around 40 of these become available for rent each year. We are in the process of building a further **23 flats in Callander and 12 flats & houses in Killearn**. We currently have properties in the following communities:

Aberfoyle	Doune	Kinlochard	Stronachlachar
Balfron	Drymen	Kippen	Tyndrum
Buchlyvie	Gargunnoch	Lochearnhead	
Callander	Gartmore	Strathblane	
Deanston	Killin	Strathyre	

We may be able to build in other communities in the future – please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us plan for the future.

If you are interested in renting one of our properties when they become available please contact us:

**Rural Stirling Housing Association**  
**Stirling Road, Doune FK16 6AA**  
**Telephone: 01786 841101**  
**Email: [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk)**  
**[www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)**

## **Childhood Memories**

Thick lentil broth, flavoured by a ham bone, simmering away on the Rayburn, as I came down the stairs from my attic bedroom.

It was a Saturday so I had the luxury of staying in my bed a bit later. Remembering I was to help with the large ironing, I wondered if a school day was the better option! Later on in life, I admit that I genuinely enjoy ironing, listening to some soothing classical music or watching an episode of 'Come Dine With Me'.

Mum had probably been up around 6.30am, getting everything ready for a busy day on the farm. Milking the cow, clearing out the fire, re-setting the fire in the Rayburn, which was the main method of cooking and heating water.

A mountain of potatoes, carrots, onions and leeks were quickly prepared, simmering away contentedly while mum got on with the meat course, sometimes mince, or stew, or could be stovies.

Puddings were mouth-watering. Apple or Rhubarb crumble, Eve's pudding, Bread & Butter pudding. Dad's face would light up when mum produced her amazing rice pudding. Fighting broke out between my brother, dad and I for the blackened skin on the top! Creamy rice with a hint of cinnamon was so comforting. So much good wholesome cooking. Hungry mouths to feed, as hard labour made everyone ready to eat at midday. There could be up to ten bodies; friends of my brother and any other neighbours who had finished their own harvest and came to help us.

We called the midday meal 'dinner' and later on at 5 pm, we had 'tea', often scrambled eggs, bacon and eggs, macaroni, or a fish pie.

If we were still out in the harvest field at 5 pm, Mum would drive out with scrambled egg sandwiches, which were amazingly good. Every time we saw the Ford Cortina approaching, my brother Peter and I would be in hysterics as we watched mum driving towards us. She indicated she was turning right. It was so funny, it set us off. There was no need for an indicator. Was it to let the rabbits and seagulls know which way she was turning?

Happy days, treasured memories.

**Jean Penman (Arnott)**

## 3F Season 4

Our friendly, informal ladies group continues to meet monthly, in the comfortable Kilmadock Church in Doune, on the last Tuesday of the month and this season we've extended our programme to May, to include an outing. A warm invitation is extended to ladies living in the area who would like to enjoy friends, faith and fun!

The meetings for 2018 are-

**Tuesday 27 February:** Mr Stephen MacDonald will give an illustrated talk on St Kilda. This is an Open Night, so guests and gents are welcome. We meet at 7.30pm and the talk is followed by tea/coffee and biscuits.

**Tuesday 27 March:** Mr Willie Campbell will give a demonstration on how to fill a colourful hanging basket. 7.30pm with tea/coffee and biscuits.

**Tuesday 24 April:** Rev Mike Goodison, who did part of his training in this area, will give an illustrated talk on his work as an Army Chaplain at home and abroad. This is also an Open Night so guests and gents welcome at 7.30pm, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits.

**Tuesday 29 May:** Outing. Meet at Flanders Moss Car Park at 6pm for a guided walk, followed by a buffet supper in the Woodhouse Cafe, at Kippen Station. Cost for supper to be confirmed.

## Faith in Farming – Advance Notice

2018 sees our fourth event in the Faith in Farming series. Hosted by the local Church of Scotland congregations this event focuses on the experiences and needs of the farming community, and aims to offer all who live and work in the industry, our interest and support. These are challenging times for farming and its allied sectors, so it's good for all of us to gain understanding of the issues around the production of our food, the management of the countryside and the livelihoods of our neighbours. Whether you've been along to previous events, or haven't yet managed to get there, put **Sunday 22 April** in your diary. We gather at Briarlands Farm Cafe at 6pm, there will be hospitality, guest speakers from around the country, the local RHET Choir and much more, led by Revs Andy Campbell and Lynne Mack. A warm invitation to all, further details from Rev Andy & Fiona Campbell. Tel 01786 860678 or [acampbell@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:acampbell@churchofscotland.org.uk)

## Spring Bible Studies

The Kirk door at Kincardine in Menteith is open every Sunday morning from 9.30 to 10.30 and we're always pleased to welcome folk from around our community. However, we know lots of people have commitments on a Sunday, or it's their only time to relax with the family. If Sunday Church is not your thing but you would enjoy a relaxed evening, discussing the good book over coffee, then a warm welcome awaits you at the Spring Bible Studies.

Don't worry about being put on the spot by a minister – we don't let them come! The group is hosted by Fiona Campbell, in the Manse in Gargunnock (or if there's too many for the Manse, we'll move over to the Ross Anderson Room across the road!), at 7.30pm on the following dates, you don't have to be able to attend all 4 evenings to come along.

Thursday 8 February: Receive strength for the day from God: Isaiah 4: 25 - 31

Thursday 15 February: Express gratitude throughout the day: Philippians 4: 4 – 9

Thursday 8 March: Rest with & rely on God: Mark 6: 30 – 46

Thursday 15 March: Remain in conversation with God: Psalm 16

We'll be using discussion questions, published by Scripture Union.

Please give Fiona Campbell a ring or email if you are interested. Tel 01786 860678 or [artistatwork@btinternet.com](mailto:artistatwork@btinternet.com)

## History & Heritage

In Blair Drummond we are surrounded by evidence of the lives of our ancestors. It's not always immediately easy to see but remains of buildings – powerful or religious, the small things of everyday life or indeed the bones of ancient creatures from when the Carse was filled with the sea, are the hidden gems of our history and heritage. If you would like to know more about the area, there will be a fascinating free talk in April by Dr Murray Cook, Stirling Council Archaeologist. Murray said 'I'm passionate about public engagement with archaeology and regularly run free excavations, walks, lectures and other active engagement with the public'.

On **Saturday 21 April** from 10am in Gargunnock Kirk, we start with coffee and home-baking and hear a talk by Dr Cook on 1000 years of history around Gargunnock. This will be followed by a guided walk from the Kirkyard to Keir Hill, for those who wish to do so.

**Fiona Campbell**

## **Doune Health Centre**

### **Medical Staff**

Dr Peter Hanlon (Trainee) will continue part time until August 2018.

Dr Rachael Lennox (Trained doctor) starts in March 2018. Dr Lennox will be working with us for one year, part time (2 days a week).

### **Adult Vaccines**

The UK is still experiencing supply constraints on various vaccines.

This affects the pneumococcal vaccine so unfortunately we have none in stock and cannot offer this vaccine at present. We will report back when supplies improve.

### **HEP A/B**

There is an ongoing global shortage for both these vaccines which is impacting on the UK supply. If you require either vaccine for travel purposes, please contact the Gecko travel clinic as they may have supplies available.

Gecko: 01786 845542. Mobile: 07769 172357

### **Telephone Consultations**

Please note that from 1st November 2017, there is a change to the time you can telephone to speak to a Doctor on a Friday afternoon. All other days and times are unchanged.

Monday - Thursday 10.30 - 11am & 3.30- 4 pm

Friday. - 10.30 - 11am & 3.00 - 3.30 pm

**Linda Keay, Practice Nurse.**

## **Police Scotland**

### **Road Safety**

Several calls were attended to in the area recently, including cars leaving the road due to weather conditions, a horse loose on the road, sheep on the road and a deer hit by a car on the A84 at Blair Drummond. None of these incidents were serious.

### **Theft**

Between 22/12/17 and 04/01/18 at a works site within the United Auctions, Stirling a theft of plant equipment occurred. Items stolen included a small road roller and a whacker plate. Enquiry is ongoing into this theft. Any information should be passed to the Community Officers.

PC Deans and PC McKerracher will be in Thornhill on Main Street in the mobile Police Office between 12.30pm -1.30pm on Tuesday 13th February.



Your Community Team for Trossachs Community Area are: PC 237 Colin McKerracher and PC 48 Lorna Deans based at Callander Police Office  
The Community Policing Sergeant is: PS 819 Alistair Matheson, who covers Dunblane, Forth and Endrick and Trossachs and Teith Community Wards and is based at Dunblane Police Office.

They can be contacted via the email address [TrossachsTeithCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:TrossachsTeithCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk) or by phoning 101. We regularly publish information on the 'Forth Valley Police' Facebook page and tweet using @StirlingPol

If you know someone who would be interested in advertising in the Blair Drummond Grapevine, our rates are listed below -

¼ page £10

½ page £15

Full page £20

Do you have any photos, ads, articles or letters you would like to contribute, if so please email them to:

[christinemcbauer@gmail.com](mailto:christinemcbauer@gmail.com)

or

[grasslands@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:grasslands@hotmail.co.uk)

Items for Edition 28 should be submitted by **30th April 2018**, sent by email, in **Word or Open Office**, and as a **separate attachment**.

If you wish your copy to be sent via email please get in touch, with your email address and we will add you to our ever-developing mailing list.

**Thank you.**

*The Blair Drummond Grapevine is a community newsletter produced and distributed by volunteers, free of charge, to approximately 400 households within the Blair Drummond area and beyond. Letters and articles published in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views, beliefs or opinions of the Grapevine Editorial Team, who also reserve the right to shorten, edit or refuse the insertion of any contribution.*

*Contributions will only be published if accompanied by a valid contact name and address: these will be withheld at the author's request. Articles and adverts are accepted and printed in good faith. All contributions should permit publication in both print and digital format.*

*The Blair Drummond Grapevine is published by the Blair Drummond Community Hall Committee.*

Website: [www.blairdrummondhall.co.uk](http://www.blairdrummondhall.co.uk)

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