

BLACKHALL BULLETIN

March 2024

PRODUCED BY BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH FOR THE COMMUNITY

No. 174

**THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT
TOGETHER WE RAISED £10,000 !**



On behalf of HopScotch, I would like to thank everyone at Blackhall St Columba's Church who contributed to the generous donation of £10,000, we received on Sunday 14th January.

This award will support the cost of running our 2024 respite programme, which runs from 18th March until 23rd November, enabling around 400 children to have a respite break from challenging home environments. Children come to Ardvullin, our respite centre in Ardgour, in groups of 12 from organisations all over Scotland.

The respite break provides five days of happiness and a chance to be children and have fun away from the stresses at home. It also allows them to participate in many new experiences, make friends, grow, learn and develop, build confidence and social skills and improve their physical and mental health.

We will send you an impact report on how we used the donation later in the year.

Thanks and regards,
Roberta McKay

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‘Where do we find Wisdom?’

“If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.” (James 1:5-8)



In the Old Testament, wisdom was often portrayed as an individual with certain attributes and was always female. Wisdom was regarded as being God-given and God-centred discernment regarding the practical issues in life. More recently, the Cambridge Dictionary has defined wisdom as ‘the ability to use your knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgements.’

Irrespective of your faith background, it is important to think about from where we take our wisdom.

A couple of articles in the news and on the internet have caused me to think about this recently. The first article ran with the headline ‘Artist pulps 6,000 copies of *The Da Vinci Code* and turns them into 1984’. The *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, is one of the most popular books ever written, with over 200million copies sold. I have read it myself and thoroughly enjoyed it. I remember being asked by a minister friend, who was surprised when he heard that I enjoyed the book, ‘Do you really believe all that nonsense about Jesus having a baby with Mary Magdalene?’ I retorted, ‘No, but I also enjoyed the Harry Potter books and I don’t believe in wizards and muggles.’ Clearly, we all are able to enjoy a book without taking everything in it as literal fact. At the peak of its popularity, ‘The Da Vinci Code’ seemed to be everywhere but, once people had finished reading it, there was an abundance of unwanted copies in charity and used-book shops. The artist, David Shrigley, saw this as an opportunity. He collected 6,000 unwanted copies of ‘The Da Vinci Code’ and munched them down in order to create new versions of George Orwell’s ‘1984’. Incidentally, that is another book I enjoyed without taking it literally. Clearly, David Shrigley believes that George Orwell’s book is the more worthy and should be protected for future generations.

All of this led me to reflect on a further article from the internet which related to George Orwell’s view of the world as expressed in ‘1984’. ‘*Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*’ is a book by Neil Postman. The book’s origins lie in a talk Postman gave to the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1984. He was participating in a panel on George Orwell’s ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ and the contemporary world. In the introduction to his book, Postman said that the contemporary world was better reflected by Aldous Huxley’s book, ‘*Brave New World*’. In the latter book, the public was oppressed by its addiction to amusement rather than by state violence as in Orwell’s book. To sum up some of Postman’s observations, he highlighted the fact that Orwell feared that books would be banned whilst Huxley feared that no one would want to read books. He demonstrated that Orwell feared the truth would be hidden from us whilst Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. He showed that, in 1984, people were controlled by pain whilst, in *Brave New World* people were controlled by pleasure and that Orwell feared that fear would ruin us whilst Huxley feared that desire would ruin us. Having thought long and hard about these things, I can’t help but conclude that Huxley and Orwell were both correct. The world envisaged by Orwell is so similar to the situation in Russia that 1984 could have been written with it specifically in mind. The state controls everything through fear. Any deviation from the officially created news leads to arrest and imprisonment. Anyone standing up to the state is declared a dissident and, at best, arrested, at worst, murdered. On the other hand, the world envisaged by Huxley also exists here in the West. Whilst Huxley’s world exists in many places, the United States of America is the most obvious example. All we need, to realise that truth has been lost in a sea of irrelevance, is to note the marked growth of expressions like ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’ that are now in mainstream use.

Where then do we find wisdom? As you might expect with me being a minister, I would argue that we can find it, as quoted at the beginning of this article, from God. There are many sound pieces of advice and wisdom for our lives today contained in both the Old and New Testaments. One of the best pieces of wisdom I have found, and especially relevant to this article, comes from Paul’s letter to the Romans; “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

In other words, we should try not to be moulded automatically by what everyone else thinks. We should think for ourselves as individuals, individuals who are known by and loved by God. Each of us must be wary about from where we get our information and from whom we accept advice. Personally, when I am considering an issue and trying to think wisely, I try to read at least three articles on the subject, one from either side of the argument and one from somewhere in the middle. It is not always perfect, but that approach does at least expose me to most of the arguments. Then I consider the old but still valuable mnemonic, WWJD? - What Would Jesus Do? Perhaps, in some instances, this can be amended to WWJS?, What Would Jesus Say? If I have a choice to make and can envisage Jesus saying or doing something, in a given situation, then I am confident it will be a wise choice. I will have found wisdom.

God bless all
Fergus

OUTREACH EVENTS JANUARY - APRIL 2024

The Outreach Team at Blackhall St Columba's Church has put together a programme of events to which we would like to invite the wider community. We hope you will read about what's going on, pop the dates in your diaries and come along. For events in future months, please see the church website : Blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

MARCH 2024

23rd MARCH 7pm - MUSIC@ST. COLUMBA'S –

THE RESOL STRING QUARTET

Please join us in the sanctuary at 7pm for the return, by popular request, of this talented quartet. The photo shows a previous visit to St Columba's. This is a group of young musicians trained at the Scottish Conservatoire. No ticket required but donations for the musicians would be appreciated.

Hope to see you there.



CURRY CLUB IS TWO DECADES OLD THIS YEAR

Come autumn of this year the Blackhall St. Columba's Curry Club will be 20 years old and yes is still going strong. From a casual conversation one Sunday between a few guys who felt that there were many guys who were involved in the church activities but never came together for fellowship as a group. Starting with DIY curries in the church hall's projection room the Blackhall Curry Club was born. Over the years the meetings have continued but have moved away from DIY and now, either locally or up the city centre, the club meets 5 or 6 times a year to visit one of a number of Indian restaurants on its list. It is always a good evening of food, refreshments and friendly company.

It is an informal club in many ways but it is open to any male over 18 who have a connection with the church (no matter how small) or lives in the Blackhall/Drylaw community. Clearly you need to like curry and appreciate an opportunity to get to know new people.

If you would like to know more about the Curry Club please contact me via: blackhallcurry_club@yahoo.co.uk

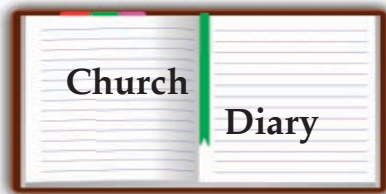
Michael Cockburn
Club co-ordinator

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MARCH

3 rd	10.30am	Morning Worship
10 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
17 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
24 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
		Palm Sunday
31 st	10.30am	Easter Sunday

APRIL

7 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
14 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
21 st	10.30am	Morning Worship
28 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

MAY

5 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
12 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
18 th	4.00pm	Monte Casino Remembrance
19 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
	3.00pm	Pentecost Service
26 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

JUNE

2 nd	10.30am	Morning Worship Holy Communion
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Services continue through the summer commencing at 10.30am. Please check Church website for locations.



Easter Morning Early Rise Service Sunday 31st March

This year we are joining with other churches in our cluster for a combined service on

Cramond Foreshore

Still starting at **8 am** the service will be followed by rolls and hot drinks in Cramond Church Halls

We do hope you will come and join us
Everyone welcome

PEACE SERVICE

The PEACE Service takes place every other Wednesday at 12 noon in the Small Hall. Everyone is welcome.

- 13th March** Practical Christianity
Child of the Manse -Norah Summers
- 27th March** Easter -The Very Rev. Martin Fair
- 10th April** Practical Christianity - New Testament Example - Helen Homewood
- 24th April** Christian Aid - Charity Speaker
- 8th May** Review of the Year - Shona Cook
- 22nd May** Communion - Fergus Cook

We are always looking for additional drivers to bring people to the PEACE service. You don't need to commit to every fortnight, we would be glad of any time you can spare. If you can help, even on an ad-hoc basis, then please contact Ruth Laidlaw on 07513 967974 or ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com

The Prayer Circle



Do you know someone in need of prayer? A friend or relative perhaps who is unwell, grieving or find themselves in a position where they don't know where to turn?

Blackhall St Columba's Prayer Circle is a small team of people who will pray frequently for anyone in need of help in complete confidence. We are also happy to accept prayer requests giving thanks for a happy event or asking for God's help with any forthcoming personal endeavour or challenge.

Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at lbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk or Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk or 0131 466 7503. Or, alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box on the table in the church vestibule.



DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO SAVE A LIFE?



Come along to Blackhall St Columba's Church on **Saturday 23rd March** when the Lead Trainer from St John Scotland, Community Defibrillator Scheme, Anne Mitchell, will deliver CPR training and give a demonstration of our new Public Access Defibrillator. Even although you may not be physically able to carry out CPR yourself, you can learn how to talk another person through delivery of CPR.

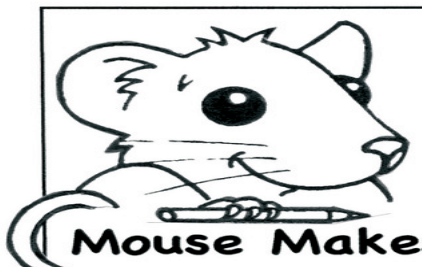
Interested?

There are two sessions 11am – 12 midday or
12 midday – 1pm

Both take place in the coffee area of the Sanctuary
Classes limited to 20 per session

If you would like to take advantage of this valuable training opportunity, please contact Joy, our church secretary by **email only**, secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk indicating **which session** you wish to attend. Please also include a **telephone number**, in case a class has to be cancelled at short notice.

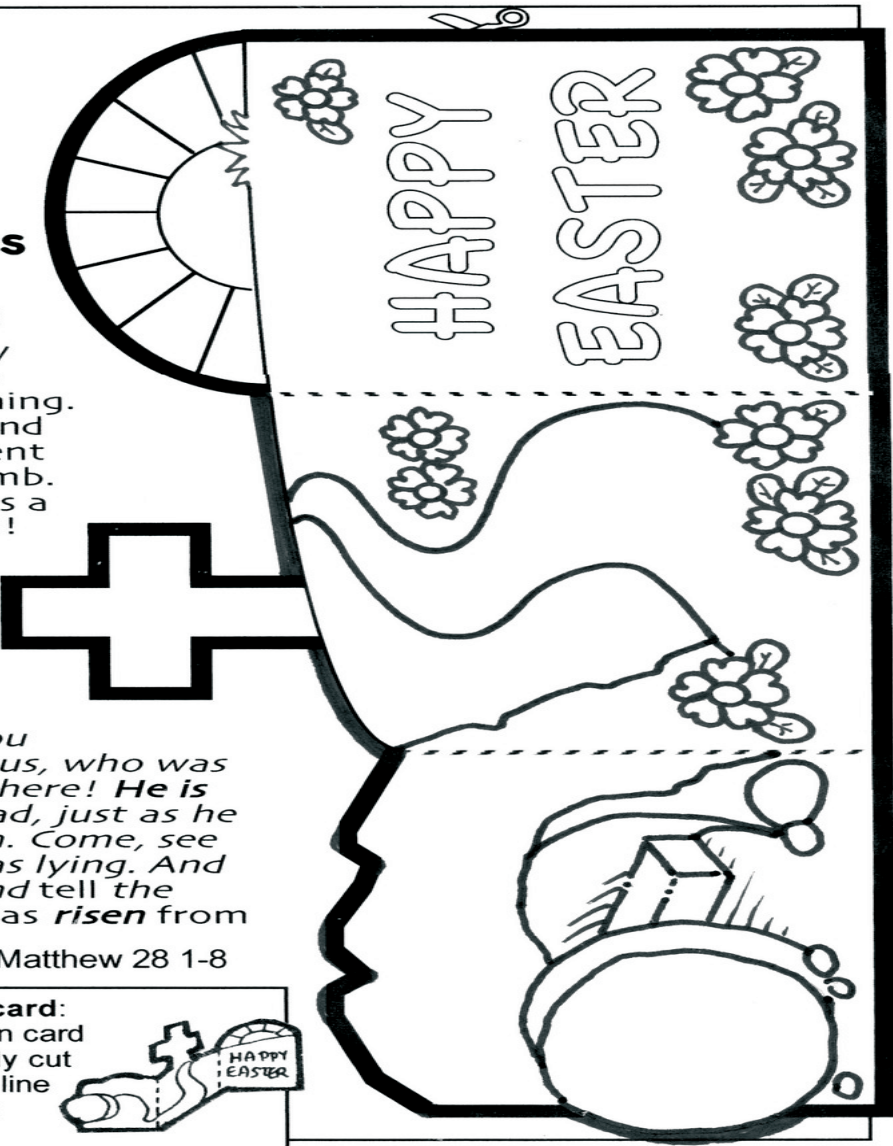
All Welcome!



Mouse Makes

JESUS IS ALIVE!
Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an **angel** of the Lord came down from **heaven**, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it....
"Don't be afraid" he said. *"I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell the disciples that he has risen from the dead."*
See: Matthew 28 1-8

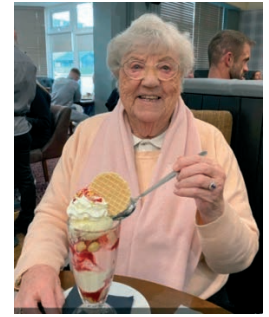
To make the Easter card:
Glue this page onto thin card then colour in. Carefully cut around the thick black line then zig-zag fold along the dotted lines.



Mar13 © rebornmobile @parishpump.co.uk

Getting to Know YouDorothy Leurs

Our third interview is with a lady who stays “in the dip” and who has had a lifetime of involvement with Scottish Country Dancing, culminating in an appearance on TV at the time of the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.



Dorothy Leurs came to live in Blackhall half a century ago, when she spotted a “for sale” sign on a flat that would allow her to live close to her work as School Secretary at Mary Erskine’s. She has seen many changes over the years but has always felt at home here and enjoys being involved in the midweek PEACE service and the CAMEO club at the church “up the road”. She recently celebrated her 95th birthday, when this first photograph was taken.

First five years

Dorothy’s family had a small-holding near Merchiston and her father turned it into a covered garage where people could keep their cars, at a time when few people had their vehicles at home. One of her early memories is of her dad’s own Daimler, which he drove for weddings. She used to help brush it out afterwards and was allowed to keep any pennies she might find.

Working life

Before moving to Mary Erskine’s for most of her career, Dorothy was the School Secretary at Broughton High School. Alongside her day job, however, Dorothy also spent many, many hours as a teacher of country dancing.

Scottish Country Dancing – the start of a lifetime passion...

Like so many, Dorothy first learned to dance with the Girl Guides in her church, when she was about 12, and every Saturday night there was a social dance in the church hall. She also cycled out to dance at the Edinburgh Youth Hostel at Juniper Green; but her favourite dances were at the Cavendish Ballroom at Tollcross, where she got in free because the bandleader and owner kept his Bentley in her dad’s garage.

... and several Royal encounters



Since joining the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society in 1952, Dorothy has participated in various Royal events as a member of the Demonstration Team. In 1953, she was selected to dance with the Edinburgh branch at Murrayfield, at a Display and Pageant to celebrate the Coronation State Visit of Her Majesty the Queen.

She went on to dance at Holyrood Palace on several occasions, not just for our own royal family but also for visiting heads of state, including King Hussein of Jordan and the King of Sweden. The photograph below shows Dorothy being presented to the late Queen.

70 years on, Dorothy was honoured to take part in a BBC interview with Dame Darcey Bussell, in a series of programmes to mark the Platinum Jubilee. She thoroughly enjoyed chatting to the well-known dancer and looked on with interest as the one-time Principal Ballerina put on her dancing shoes and joined in a reel with the Edinburgh country dancers.

Holiday Highlights

Dorothy’s most memorable holidays have, unsurprisingly, been with other dancers. Throughout her years as a teacher, she led parties of dancers and musicians on holiday courses around the world. From Canada to New Zealand, and in many European countries, she enjoyed taking classes during the day and organising dances in the evening. The travellers would be joined by local dancers, too, keen to hear a live band from Scotland.

She particularly recalls dancing in a large balcony in Lagos, where the late Robbie Shepherd had come to join them to broadcast his Saturday night programme, “Take the Floor”.

Food, Glorious Food

Always keen to try new food wherever she travelled, Dorothy’s favourite meal was in a Phillipino restaurant in Auckland. A tasty vegetarian dish, followed by a delicious pudding made from fresh pineapple, are both still remembered with relish.

From Performer to Performance

While she has enjoyed various musical and theatrical performances, Dorothy’s absolute favourite is “The Phantom of the Opera”. She first experienced it in the Edinburgh Playhouse but has since seen it in various cities. In Melbourne, Australia, she got last-minute tickets to see it again – and found herself sitting behind Hayley and John Mills!

Unforgettable Experience

In contrast with all of the amazing opportunities offered by her dancing, Dorothy’s happiest times were actually here in Edinburgh. For over 40 years, she was privileged to be invited to put together the programmes for the Summer Dancing in Princes Street Gardens. Her fondest memory is of a sunlit evening, in the stunning setting below Edinburgh Castle, as one of around 300 dancers, inspired by one of the best Scottish dance bands, with an audience from around the world.

Most valuable lesson you have learned from life, to share with our readers?

Yes – I learned it first from dancing, but it’s proved to be absolutely true in every aspect of life – Fail to Prepare; Prepare to Fail!

And finally, your wish for the community here in Blackhall?

(Without a moment’s hesitation) Bring back the Post Office! We are missing out on so much here.

As a member of the Blackhall St Columba’s Scottish Country Dance group, I found it inspirational to share in some of the many experiences of this amazing lady. It’s good to know that there is still a local interest in dancing, with more than thirty folk as members of our Thursday night class; some with years of reeling together and others who are now learning from them.

Muriel Stenhouse



Blackhall Community Trust eNewsletter

February 2024

Update: Ravelston Park Pavilion

2023 was yet another year of delays to the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of Ravelston Park Pavilion from the City of Edinburgh Council to Blackhall Community Trust. However, progress (slow!) has been made and the transfer should conclude this spring. At last!

Just before Christmas, the Trust lodged an application for Planning Permission in Principle for the proposed new Ravelston Park Pavilion. The new Pavilion will provide a purpose-built home for Blackhall Nursery and a multi-purpose community space. We are delighted to advise that the application is now live on the City of Edinburgh's Planning Portal. It would be great if you could express your support for the proposal [here!](#)



FYI: Blackhall Community Trust AGM

We're holding our AGM in Blackhall Nursery on 21 March 2024 for our Members only because of space constraints. When (and if) we get through the planning in principle application process, we will hold engagement events for the wider community.

A big thank you...

We all enjoyed the lovely Christmas tree next to Cloudberry on Queensferry Road in 'the dip' during the December darkness. Whilst Blackhall Community Trust organised this, it would not have been possible without Craigleith Blackhall Community Council (for contributing to the cost of the tree and stand), Catalyst Event Production Services (for providing and installing the lights) and Cloudberry (for supplying the power). A massive thank you to the three sponsors!





NATIVITY TRAIL - FOLLOW THE STAR – 22nd DECEMBER 2023



We held our first ever Nativity Trail called *Follow the Star* at Blackhall St Columba's on Friday 22nd December 2023. It was an unmitigated success, and we received a tremendous amount of very positive feedback.

Over three hundred members of the Blackhall community took a moment or two that day to be reminded of the Good News of Christmas amid all the hurly burly of Advent and let themselves relax and enjoy what Christmas is really about.

The Nativity Trail, *Follow the Star* was an interactive exploration of the Greatest Story Ever Told using the church itself and all its halls and buildings. Our visitors were encouraged to find out the true meaning of Christmas in a novel and exciting way as they heard the Angel Gabriel's message and went on their own journey to follow the star and discover the shepherds, King Herod and some wise women on the way until they finally reached the stable and found the most wonderful gift we have ever been given.

On top of that, we also offered a Christmas Nativity Escape Room for the older children who came along and there were lots of Christmas crafts, some seasonal, musical entertainment and, of course, plenty of Christmas treats and refreshments.

For those who couldn't make it along this time, here are a few photos of the trail.

The good news is that there will be another Nativity Trail this coming Christmas and, once again, all will be welcome to join us. So we will be delighted to welcome some visitors back for more fun and perhaps see others who couldn't make it first time.



CAMEO CLUB

2024 started with music and laughter at our first meeting followed by a visit to Northcare Suites later in the month where we were treated to coffee and eats. Our programme continues with Scottish music in February, classical Guitar playing on 8th March and choirs on 22nd March and in April. We have a Summer Outing arranged in May to Fife which is always popular, and a ukulele trio is booked in June.

All meetings are held from 10.30 - 12.00 in the large church hall at Blackhall St Columba's. You too can come along to any meeting and be part of this friendly community group. Membership is free and new faces are welcome either as a member or a volunteer helping to make coffee or offering local car transport.

Why not come along and see for yourself how much you will enjoy meeting others?

Fiona Drinnan
343 6762

Due to an error on my part, the wrong item for the Cameo Club was put in the December edition. As it included their Silver Jubilee, I have included it in this edition so you can see all the interesting thing this very valuable group do. With apologies to the Cameo committee. Ed.

The Cameo Club (Come And Meet Each Other) December 2023

Since the last edition of the Blackhall Bulletin in September, Cameo has enjoyed an outing to North Care Suites for delicious coffee and cakes; a hilarious game of 'Blankety Blank' and 'Higher or Lower'; our 25th Anniversary with pancakes, celebration cakes, chocolates, and of course balloons; also a games morning. All thoroughly enjoyed by our members and fantastic volunteers. Now we are looking forward to our Christmas Lunch to be held on Friday 1st December at The Village Hotel, Crewe Road South. We then have a break for the festive season and resume meeting on Friday 12th January 2024.

KNIT AND NATTER

As well as our usual knitting for Pregnancy Counselling and Care we were asked to knit 200 stars for prizes for those completing the escape room element of Follow the Star. Our initial reaction was NO WAY ! It sounded an impossible task, but once we started on the stars, (we initially said we would do enough for the Primary 7s), we discovered it wasn't going to take nearly as long as we thought and completed them in plenty time. You can see some of them in the photo.



I wonder what our next challenge will be ?

We carry on until the end of June, apart from a short Easter break, so if you would like to join us either as a knitter or learner we'd be very happy to welcome you. We meet every Monday evening at 7.00pm in the Sanctuary knitting, nattering and enjoying a tea or coffee and a biscuit.

If you would like more information please contact me on stcknitnatter@gmail.com

Lilian Cockburn



SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

Our Christmas Party, held on Thursday 7th December 2023, was a great success with lots of fun and laughter as you can see in the photos taken by Muriel Stenhouse, our teacher.



The spring term commenced on 18th January and will continue until 21st March, our Spring Fling. There are about 32 ladies and gentlemen coming along to the large hall of Blackhall St Columba's Church on a Thursday evening. So why not come along between 7.30 and 9.15 and join in the fun? You will receive a warm welcome.

Margaret Brown
332 5957

TUESDAY TOPICS

Writing this in January, in freezing temperatures, I do hope by the time we will be basking Spring warmth !

We have had some very interesting speakers so far and still have a few left to come :

12 th March	Power of Attorney	Susan Malin
26 th March	The Cheyne Gang	Anne Ritchie
9 th April	On the Buses	Shona Cook
23 rd April	AGM and musical entertainment by Jenny Logan and Margaret Donaldson	

Though member numbers have dropped since COVID, we have maintained about 20+ regulars and we thank them for their loyalty over the years. At the time of writing, I don't know whether we can get people to organise and run it next year. As committees go, it is not arduous and is quite a lot of fun, but we do need volunteers to help. Some of us have been on the committee for many years and Tuesday Topics needs new ideas and we need a change ! It would be a pity to lose the group after nearly 40 years. It has been a source of friendship, fellowship, interest and many a laugh and I personally would miss it a lot.

I was a young mother when it started and am now a grandmother and STILL on the committee so *please* get in touch and offer to help so that I can say 'See you in September'.

Lyndy Paton, Secretary
0131 332 7377



Our Art Club continues to be well supported by members. We sadly missed the opportunity to hold an exhibition in Blackhall Library in December. Some members kindly helped out with art posters for the Nativity Story Trail held in the church on 22nd December.

Our members braved the wild winds in January to meet for a members' lunch in Ye Old Inn at Davidsons Mains. This was well attended with a cheerful atmosphere to start off the year.

We are looking forward to our **May Exhibition** which takes place in the small hall of Blackhall St Columba's church on **21st - 26th May**. This is a good opportunity for the artists to display work done during the year and hopefully sell some paintings to support our chosen charity for the year, which this year is '**Midnight and Beyond**', a charity based in North Edinburgh, which aims to engage directly with young people involved in anti social behaviour and youth crime. The charity aims to build trust and work towards a better future for the young people. Much of the work takes place in the small hours, hence the name.

We will also be preparing original gift cards which can be used for events or given as gifts for display on the wall once framed.

We look forward to seeing you all during the exhibition in May and thank you for your support.

Marge Whiteside

NORTH WEST HERITAGE

The remaining talks for this session are :

Wednesday 20th March 2024

Scotland's Hidden Treasure: The remarkable story of the oldest Royal Regalia in Britain, hidden not once, not twice, but three times!

Speaker: Kathy Crawford Hay

Wednesday 17th April 2024

Davidson's Mains Park Celebrates its centenary!

Speaker: Dr Denis Smith Followed by AGM

All talks held in Davidson's Mains Church North Hall at 7.30pm Cost £3.00



Thank you for your generous support during 2023 in donations of household items and food for The Pantry Shop. A special for the donations of Christmas treats (cakes, biscuits and selection boxes) thanks in December which went down well with the Pantry Shoppers in the run up to Christmas. They left with a smile.

2024 has already seen a rise in demand for home starter packs (household items) and The Pantry Shop has experienced a surge in applications to join. The cost-of-living crisis is not going away any time soon. We do hope you can continue to help people make a home for themselves, (FreshStart's slogan).

As the days get lighter and you look to spring clean, if you have plates, bowls, pans, bedding, towels or curtains you do not need sitting in a cupboard but never use, then please bring them on a Friday to the church hall between 10 and 11.30am where our duty volunteer will happily accept them. The FreshStart website provides an up-to-date list of items needed as will our duty volunteer.

FreshStart also maintain a "wish list" on their Amazon account (search for Fresh Start Scotland wish list). So, if you want to help when shopping on-line, please take a look at their list, decide what to order, buy and it will be delivered directly to them. All this from the comfort of your own home.

Lilian & Michael Cockburn
FreshStart Co-ordinators
cockburn_carfrae@yahoo.co.uk

More thanks, this time from Edinburgh Prison Christmas Gift Collection.

Dearest Friends,

Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Every child that visited the visitors centre during the time leading up to Christmas received a gift, whether their parents or guardians requested them or not. This year three hundred and twenty-eight children from one hundred and twenty six families had a Christmas presents to open on Christmas morning due to your kindness and generosity. Many adults also received presents from the gift collection but again we did not take note of the adults, as our focus was on the children. Every child where possible received a toy, an activity gift and book, and of course something nice. More than a thousand gifts were given out.

It is impossible to measure the difference that your kindness and generosity makes to these children. I cannot thank you enough for what you do. I feel proud and privileged to be part of such a special group of people.

The gifts were distributed through five Christmas parties in the visits room of the prison organised through the visitor's centre and family contact officers. Gifts were also given out directly through the visitor's centre.

*Best Wishes
Colin*

Colin O'Flaherty Officer



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WE'D LIKE TO SAY A BIG THANK YOU

The WA✝CH Committee would especially like to thank the following companies and individuals who helped Blackhall St Columba's Church raise money for HOPSCOTCH in 2023

Alexander McCall Smith	Edinburgh Bus Tours	Murrayfield Golf Club
Baillie Signs	Edinburgh Sports Club	Needle & Thread – Telford Road
Ballina Construction Ltd	Empire Hair Design	Nikkis Flowers - Blackhall
BDW Vets – Blackhall	Farmer Autocare	Porteous Funeral Directors
Beautique – Blackhall	Forge and Chatter Restaurant	Porto & Fi Bistro – Newhaven
Blackhall Bowling Club	Gail Stewart Styling	Rangers
Blackhall Cycle Repairs	Gathering Space Café – Cramond	Ravelston Golf Club
Blackhall Framing Gallery	Glenkinchie Distillery	Sainsbury's
Boots Craigeith	Indigo Yard	Scottish Grocers' Federation
Cameo Picture House	James Borthwick – Newsagent	Scottish Rugby Union
Campbell Young – Hair & Beauty	Johnstone's Decorating Centre	Scottish Seabird Centre
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Concrete Rose hair salon	Linlithgow Union Canal Society	Urban Vanity - Blackhall
Conifox Adventure Park	Martin Wishart	Westwoods Health Club
Discover Chiropractic		

Many thanks to the wonderful congregations of Blackhall St Columba's and Drylaw Parish Churches, and the support of friends and business in the community for the amazing help we have received in reaching the grand sum of £10,000 for our charity for 2023 - HOPSCOTCH.

This has been a great team effort from all starting with our coin collection in the summer (although coins becoming very scarce these days), the Coffee Morning and finally, the Christmas Fair.

On behalf of all the WA✝CH team
Lynn Bunney



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BLACKHALL BOWLING CLUB



Blackhall Bowling Club celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 2023. This is a long time to be at the hub of a community, and we are justifiably proud of our success. We had an excellent Anniversary dinner in September to celebrate the event – much fun and laughter was had by all as we danced the night away.

Of course, our main *raison d'être* is Bowls, with this year's bowling season starting with our Opening Day on Saturday 13th April. The club runs "Open Days" – this year on Sundays 28th April & 5th May – if you are interested in seeing what we are all about, please come along to one of these Open Days. Our senior members and coaches will be on hand to show you around and let you try out your Bowling skills. A new initiative this year is a further Open Evening on Saturday 25th May.

During the bowling season we have a multitude of internal and external competitions, however, participation in these is voluntary, so you can enter as few or as many as you like. One of our most popular events is our Monday Hat Night, which runs all through the season. The format here is very relaxed, with players changing position throughout the evening. This gives new members in particular an opportunity to meet other members, as well as trying out "lead" or "skip" etc. in a very informal setting. The Ladies run a similar event each Wednesday afternoon, with tea and biscuits included at the end of proceedings.

Although Bowling is our main activity, in recent seasons we have established various activities out of season to keep our members occupied through the winter months. These include Table Tennis, Bridge, Book Club and a Choir, all of which have been very successful. We also run regular social events all through the year – some Bowls related, and some not, including Fish & Chip nights, Spice nights, Country & Western nights etc. We have a fully licensed bar manned by volunteer members and like to think we are one of the most social clubs in the city.

We currently have over 120 playing members – split fairly evenly between Ladies & Gents, so if you fancy giving Bowls a try, or would just like more information, please get in touch and we will be delighted to make you welcome to our Club. We also have a website at Blackhallbc.com, where more information about our office bearers and history is available.

Douglas J Main

President

Club Phone :- 0131 332 0335

Club E-Mail :- blackhallbc@live.co.uk

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BLACKHALL CHILDREN'S SPORTS COMMITTEE SPORTS AWARDS 2024 ARE ALMOST OPEN

Are you a local community group helping kids get into sport and stay active, or an individual under 18 looking for financial support for sport?

If so, BCSC Sports Awards could be for you.

Please follow us on social media for more details and application window.

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackhallChildrensSC>

<https://www.instagram.com/blackhall.sports.committee>

Awards are made at the discretion of BCSC.

ABOUT BLACKHALL CHILDREN'S SPORTS COMMITTEE

The BCSC was formed in 1909. We have 3 roles:

1. Sports Awards: we make annual donations to individuals, projects, clubs or organisations
2. Sports Day: we organise, fund and run the annual Blackhall Children's Sports Day in Ravelston Park
3. Events: we organise various events throughout the year to raise money in order to fund the Sports Awards and Sports Day.



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Blackhall Nursery News

March 2024



As we head into the final term of the nursery year we have lots to look forward to with safety week, sports day, a class photo and transition to school activities planned, in addition to our usual days full of child-led learning.

At Blackhall Nursery our aim is to inspire curiosity, independence and a life-long love of learning that enables our children to fulfil their potential and be active contributors to our community and the wider world. Our Values of Responsibility, Respect, Inclusion, Kindness, Integrity and Confidence are woven through everything we do.

Blackhall Nursery is a registered Scottish charity working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. We offer full day (8:25am – 2:35pm) funded places for 3-5 year olds during term time. We offer the option of extending the day until 3:35pm for a small fee.

We are a feeder nursery for Blackhall Primary School and **all places are funded by the City of Edinburgh Council**. The Nursery enjoys an excellent reputation within the community but don't take our word for it, please take a look at the parents' comments on our Care Inspectorate report available at www.careinspectorate.com.

You can place your child's name on the Nursery waiting list from their 2nd birthday and we encourage you to do so as early as possible. Application forms can be downloaded at www.blackhallnursery.co.uk or please contact the Nursery on 0131 332 8296. You **must** apply to us direct - adding us to a City of Edinburgh Council application form does not add you to our waiting list as we do not get informed of your application.

NEWS FROM JUNIOR SINGERS

Junior Singers have again enjoyed a busy first half of the year. In October, they performed the musical "Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo" then went straight into preparation for the Christmas season. They then performed their Christmas songs to the residents of Queen's Court and Strachan House and took part in both the Blackhall St Columba's Gift Service and Christingle Service. This happy, enthusiastic group of singers took it all in their stride. By the time you read this, they will have performed yet again – this time in the church Youth Service at the end of February.

Junior Singers is for children in P3 – P7 who enjoy singing. At the moment, all ages are represented in the choir but we are actively seeking new members in each stage – especially in P3 and P4. If your child is interested, please phone Amy on 332 1354 or just come along any Thursday during term time, to the upstairs church hall between 3.45 and 4.30pm. We'd love to see you.



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Girlguiding **Blackhall Guiding**

202A Rainbows have been working on their Have Adventures Theme by being Astronauts, exploring the constellations in the sky and thinking about what essentials they would pack for a sleepover. They had great fun at the fire station learning about what's like to be a firefighter and even had a visit from some Owls. **Barbara Bon – 202A Rainbow Leader**

202 and 202B Brownies had an amazing 4 days away to Disneyland Paris being thrill seekers on different rides and meeting lots of characters even having dinner with them, The girls can't wait for their next International adventure. During the weekly sessions the brownies have been busy working on the Be Well theme learning first aid skills and how to be mindful with a mindfulness session. This term the girls are working on the Have Adventures theme learning skills for camping and 10 girls are looking forward to gaining their Gold Award with a beach party!! **Nicole Harland– 202&202B Brownie Leader**



The Brownies have been learning skills for the future by learning how to sew.



Ceilidh Kids came to teach the brownies some ceilidh dancing



The brownies and rainbows took over Odeon Cinema to watch the movie Wish

157th Rainbows each enjoyed hosting someone special at their meeting in early March and had great fun dancing at their Spring fling! **Claire Slaine- 157 Rainbow Leader**

202C Brownies have enjoyed having adventures exploring the woods and the beach. We have also celebrated 2 girls gaining their gold award. **Helen Abbott – 202C Brownie Leader**

202 Guides & Rangers aimed high at Clip & Climb. On Thinking Day, they particularly thought about their sisters in Palestine & Israel. **Matilda 202 Guide Leader**



202 & 202B Brownies had a silent disco at a JoJo's party room at Ocean terminal

202 Rainbows are looking forward to evenings in the park & a summer trip. Plus completing badges such as Family tree. **Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow**

Volunteer with Girlguiding Edinburgh?

Could you spare some time to volunteer with us? It's an exciting time to be part of Girlguiding as we get to grips with our most exciting (and biggest) programme overhaul in 100 years!

We are looking for enthusiastic adults to help with Rainbow, Brownie & Guide units city-wide,

Full training and support provided. See our website or register online for more information:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>

GGUKBlackhallDistrict@outlook.com



BEAVERS

Beavers held an overnight camp at Fordell Firs in October & showed amazing resilience in very rainy weather. Activity highlights were crate climbing & the zip line, there was also some good singing round the campfire.

We had a very exciting visit to Crewe Toll fire station where we got to go in a fire engine, have a shot using the hose & saw the fire engine get ready to go out to a real emergency. The firefighters were really engaging & lots of fun.



cubs

The Cub Packs have had a varied winter term:

Community badge work has included leaf sweep/clearance on the paths in Ravelston Park and a litter pick at Cramond beach

Practicing scout skills: knot tying, pioneering, fire building, knife safety and wood chopping

Out and about: nature walk along Water of Leith from Roseburn. and a hike on Corstorphine Hill

International: learning about Finland's from the Explorers after their camp (international night with Finnish food etc)

Scouts



Concentrated on camping gas cooking skills , rounded off with ready steady cook , where the teams had to budget , source food and cook a 3 course meal on a small trianga stove.

This was followed up later in the term by learning how to make sushi. Lots of team building , designing and making stop motions videos and a Christmas hike through the windy Pentlands.

Congratulations

Beavers (Bronze Award)

Jacob Webb	Callum Stevenson	Hamish Sangster
Harris Smith	Jack Stather	Jamie Yates
Ethan Yates		

Cubs (Silver Award)

Liam McIntyre	Theo Ramos	Adam Birchmore
James Davidson	Joshua Brown	Elliot Wood
Seth Hull		



You don't have to be
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Can you help?

Leaders

Every week we give over 200 young people the skills they need for school, college, university, the job interview, the important speech, the tricky challenge and the big dreams: resilience and the skills they need for life.

But we have another 60 on our waiting list. Will you help us to give more skills to even more young people?

Trustee – Young Adult

We are looking for a young adult (18 – 25 years) to join our Trustee Board. A background in Scouting is not essential. Training will be provided. This is a great way of practising skills, expanding a CV and fulfilling CPD requirements.

Garage Needed

We recently lost our storage facility for camping and activity equipment, and are looking for a garage in the Blackhall area. If you know of one that would be available for rent or purchase, please get in touch.

If you think you could help, please contact David Duffy: 23rdgsl@gmail.com



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PRIMARY 7 PAPER

Primary 7D pupils at Blackhall Primary School have been learning about the features of a newspaper. They have chosen a day in their life to write about. It had to be a day of significance and there is a wide range of topics included. From new pets to flying first class, P7D have created their own articles. Some of which are featured here. Thanks to Leo, Nina, Guy and Zinah for sharing their work.

8 year old boy gets diabetes

Boy is in hospital

In P4, a boy went to a doctors appointment and they said he had to go to hospital. He had no idea what for. When he got there, he said "Why am I here," (The boys Name was Leo). When the doctor got back, she had 6 needles, Leo was scared. When she said, "you Have diabetes," Leo was confused.

He stayed in hospital for 3 days.

In hospital Leo didn't understand. He asked, "What is diabetes?"

Doctor Bob said, "It's a part of your body that does not work." Leo was worried. In hospital the doctors were very nice to him but the downside was he had to get an injection every 2 hours and a finger prick every 30 minutes.

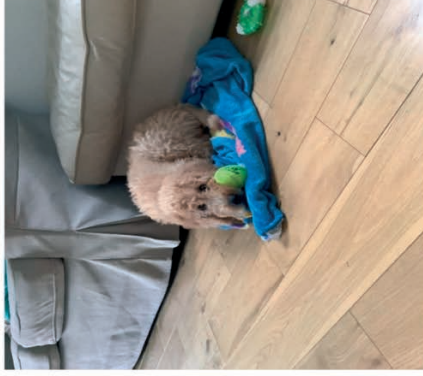
His family had to get trained in How to deal with diabetes.

We interviewed Leo 3 Years later he said "it's been tough to handle it. Sometimes I don't want to do a finger prick or change my t slim (Pump)" He is doing well now.



Boy gets a new furry friend

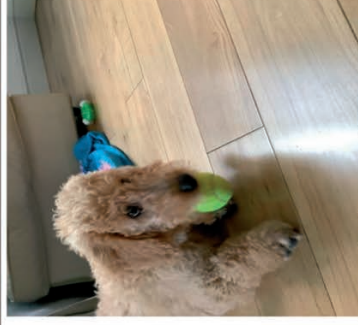
Guy Waterland comes home to a new pet



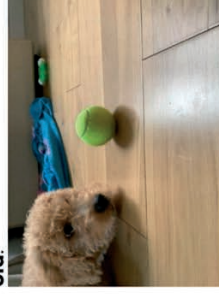
Boy comes home from Aqua Dash to new friend.

Guy waterland a dog lover. Went to Aqua Dash with his friends while his parents went to get Milo who would become Guy's pet dog. After Aqua Dash he got dropped off and saw Milo in the garden. Guy even said, "When I first saw him I Jumped In excitement" and when he stroked Milo Guy said, "his tail was like a helicopter." The next day it was his friend Leo's party so after he and his mum invited some friends to his house so they could see Milo and when they did Milo ran to them and jumped on them.

He was so excited he peed a little and had to go outside.



It seemed Milo was fitting in more. Guy and his friends started liking Milo more every minute but the next day Guys friends Daniel, Roka and Ruarigh met Milo. He got so excited he peed on Daniel, so he got new socks and went to play at Air Drill. Milo the labradoodle is a mix between a poodle and a Labrador and the breed lives about 10-14 years old.



Girl Jamming Out to Live Music!

Nina Seddon, an 11 year old girl, has been to every concert in the land!

P. Lemon

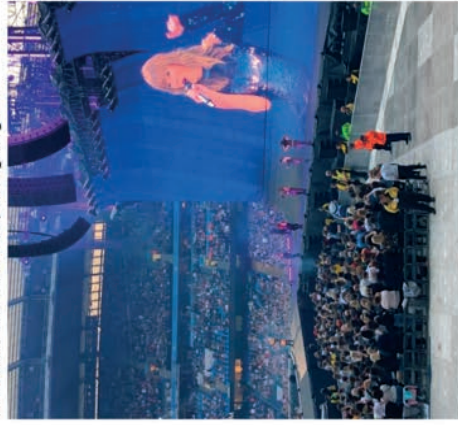
Miss Nina Seddon was loving the music at her 15th, most recent concert. She was immediately captivated by the flashing lights and loud music. She loves music and has loved music since she was little. Her favourite concerts out of all 15 were Taylor Swift, Harry Styles, Take That, Elton John and Westlife.



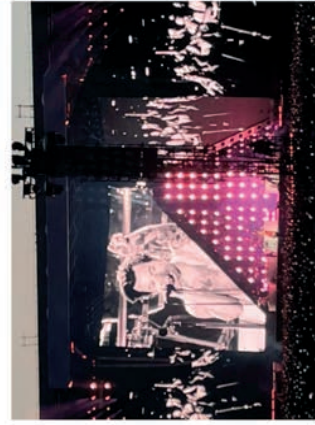
Music is great for children because playing music produces changes in the brain which can release a healthy dose of endorphins (the happiness hormone).

If you want to buy concert tickets, go to: <https://www.ovohydro.com>

Her first concert was Taylor Swift when she was only 6! The concert she went to sold out for over 60,000 people.



Nina said, 'It was so amazing watching all of these pop stars live'. Here is a list of all of the concerts she has been to: Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, Little Mix, Take That, Oly Murs x2, Tom Jones, Harry Styles, Elton John, Gary Barlow, George Ezra, Westlife, Boyslife, ABBA voyage and Rick Astley.



An amazing Antalya!

At the hotel there was a downstairs mini shopping centre including an arcade, free Starbucks and a sofa area to chill. Outside there were 4 giant swimming pools, a hot tub, free ice cream and crisps and seating areas.

Jeremiah Thompson

Family of 15 travel to Turkey. Zinah Agiz and her family travelled from all over the the UK to meet in Antalya this Summer.

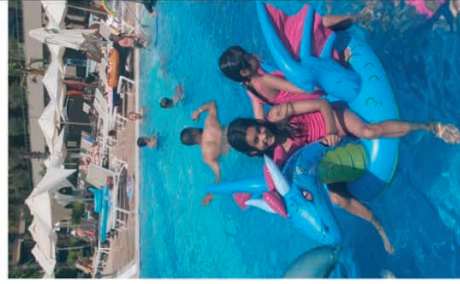
On Saturday 29th July 2023, Zinah, Insha (her mum), Aaliyah, Eesa & Zinah's uncle all went on the same plane to get there from Edinburgh air. The rest of her family came from different airports. Some of them came from Manchester and some from Leicester.

They all met at the hotel where they were going to stay. The people that flew from Edinburgh got their first, then the rest came.



This is all Zinah's family that went to Turkey!

F U N !



Land of legends

Zinah's family all went to the land of legends. It is a water park with lots of slides. My favourite was the rainbow slide! I had an amazing time.

BURNS' NIGHT IN BLACKHALL

Following on last year's highly successful Burns' Supper, this January saw another enjoyable celebration of the Bard, organised by members and friends of Blackhall St. Columba's church, in the church premises. The fact that it was sold out well before the evening itself is testament to its previous success. And we were not disappointed this year-round.



Guests were warmly welcomed by MC for the evening, John Campbell, before the haggis was ceremoniously piped in by Robert Millar and sat quivering on a silver platter awaiting its fate at the hands of Hamish Mair. Hamish respectfully and traditionally addressed the great chieftain o' the puddin' race before plunging his knife into its entrails and disembowelling it ferociously. The Rev. Fergus Cook offered the Selkirk Grace with an addition to reflect modern vegetarian trends before guests settled in to enjoy the traditional fare of Scotch broth, haggis, neeps and tatties, finished off with cranachan, and all served by a cheerful band of willing helpers.

The Immortal Memory was proposed by Bob Kemp, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh. His thought-provoking discourse which dwelt on the many similarities between life's challenges in Burns' Day and those facing society 265 years later was delivered with true passion. The toasts to, and reply on behalf of, the lassies by husband-and-wife team Hugh and Angie Henney produced much laughter from all sexes. The musical entertainment from singers Philippa Wood and Amy Foster, young violinist Adam Wood and pianist Malcolm Wood, was much appreciated by all, as was the raffle for various prizes donated by local businesses. The evening ended with a hearty and emotional rendition of Auld Lang Syne.



The conviviality of the evening was tangible and undoubtedly due in large measure to the careful thought which had obviously gone into all the preparations - the skilful catering management under Lynn Bunny's direction, the splendid dressing of the hall, the beautifully arranged tables and the elegantly attired guests. It was yet another example of how a community can come together in an evening of friendship and enjoyment, proving again that a man's a man for a' that.

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Blackhall Probus Club



CRAIGLEITH MEN'S PROBUS CLUB

The Blackhall Probus Club is part of a UK-wide group which organizes social events for retired gentlemen in the local area. With a membership of around forty, we meet on the first and third Thursday of the month through to 18th April 2024 at the Blackhall Bowling Club on Keith Row at 10:00 to chat over tea/coffee/biscuits before listening to a talk given by experts and enthusiasts across a wide range of subjects. We also organise a number of lunches as well as Quiz, Pie and a Pint sessions after several of the talks. A new activity for this year is a series local walks, led by one of our members, to which partners are encouraged to join in.

Talks planned for the rest of this session include "*The history of the pocket calculator*" and "*The eyes have it – a career in ophthalmology*".

We are always pleased to welcome new members, so if you would like to join us for any, or all, of this session's remaining talks, please contact the Secretary for more details or come along to one of our meetings on either 7th or 21st March or 4th April. We look forward to meeting you.

Our 2024-25 session will begin in the autumn. Further details of dates and planned talks will be available in the September edition of the Blackhall Bulletin.

Keith Gilroy, Secretary, Blackhall Probus Club.
Phone: 0787 327 5854 Email: ksgprobus@icloud.com

BLACKHALL LADIES PROBUS CLUB

The Club has enjoyed a full and varied programme since October 2023, when we welcomed several new members, taking our membership nearly up to full strength. Our first talk on the Stockbridge Market was greatly enjoyed by members. This was followed in November by a talk by our own member, Margaret Balfour, on St John Scotland, and her own involvement with our charity for the session. Margaret gave an absorbing account of the valuable work and activities of the charity. A fundraising sale of goods was held, which was boosted by donations and Club Funds. In December, we had an interesting and amusing talk by Jackie Sangster of SCRAN on Edinburgh Street Style and Fashion, which brought back many memories for members, followed by tea with Christmas treats. In January, Simon Bendle gave a fascinating talk on Dundee-born Mary Slessor and her Adventures in Africa. This was followed a week later by our Post Christmas Lunch at Bruntsfield Links Golf Club, which was enjoyed by all who attended. We look forward to a talk on Therapets in February, with one of the pets in attendance, and in March Eric Melvin will give a talk on the story of Thomas Muir. This will be followed in April by our AGM with refreshments. Membership is open to ladies aged 55 and over, who are retired, and we meet at Blackhall Bowling Club on the second Thursday of the month from October to April, from 10.00 am to 12 noon. Enquiries from ladies who are interested in joining are welcome, and should be made to the Secretary, details below.

Christine Proudfoot, Secretary.
Phone: 0131 343 1761
Email: proudfootchristine2@gmail.com
January 2024

With the ever-changeable weather it is good to have one reliable event twice a month to go to and in the company of like-minded folk. This Spring most of our speakers live in North West Edinburgh which is a good when considering one's carbon footprint but it also shows the wide knowledge within our local community.

At the time of the Bulletin's publication we will be looking forward to, or will have enjoyed, hearing about the training of Guide Dogs for the Blind, with local resident, Eliza, and her trainer, John Jeffrey, who will be supported by Catherine Steyn. Known as Cathy to many, her warm and happy personality lights up any room where she is booked to be a speaker with her talks being enjoyed by adults and children alike, filled with lots of personal experience and amusing stories about the dogs she has looked after and trained. Cathy is also involved with Hearing Dogs for the Deaf People, and our meeting on **6th March**, for which there is always an open door, will be informative, and amusing.

A fortnight later, on **20th March**, our theme is '*Hopetoun House - Worth a Visit?*' Hopetoun re-opens to the public on **29th March** and so this talk by Stuart Smith will be a taster as well as an encouragement to visit this renowned Adam designed country house, the home of the Marquess of Linlithgow.

A further outing has been planned for probably to look at the East Lothian birds. Then, with the summer months beckoning, members will become engrossed in gardening, day trips using our concessionary bus passes throughout Scotland or venturing further afield. When Craigleith Probus meets again on **Wednesday 2nd October** hearing from each other, while supping our coffee or tea and munching on chocolate biscuits, about what we have seen or heard about on our summer travels - be it coal mining, historic garden landscapes, a Dutch community on our doorstep, or hand built motor cars!

The door is always open to any semi-retired gentleman. Why don't you think about joining us at our meetings which take place in Blackhall Bowling Club at 10am, for tea/coffee and biscuits, and the talk at 10.30am which normally lasts to 11.30am The bowling club is a three minute walk from the bus stops in Blackhall village.

Do get in touch with us if you want any more information by emailing us at infocpc21@gmail.com or email me at johnmaclennanuk@gmail.com

John MacLennan : Past President

<https://craigleithprobus.myfreesites.net>.

Breath - Works

Dee at Breath-Works is teaching at
Blackhall Court Yoga

Gentle Vinyasa flow
Ashtanga sequences
Reiki Classes



Chair Yoga
Yin Yoga

Find the timetable on the website www.Breath-works.co.uk

All classes are suitable for everybody.

Contact Dee 07747706053



Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland, Edinburgh
 Scottish Registered Charity No SC008756

Minister
 Rev Fergus Cook
 5 Blinkbonny Crescent
 Edinburgh EH4 3NB
 Telephone 466 7503

Session Clerk
 Eddie Thorn
 Telephone 332 5702

Church Secretary
 Mrs Joy McGonigal-Paget
 in Church Office from
 Tues-Thurs 9-12 noon
 Tel: 332 4431 or email
 secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

DEADLINES

Kirk News (May edition) Friday 19th April

Please send all items to the Editor;
 Judith Mair c/o Church Office
 or by email to: judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk

Blackhall Bulletin (September edition) - Sunday 28th July

Please send all items, including Advertising Enquiries
 to the Editor: Barbara Wilson, c/o Church Office
 or by email to: bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Are you happy with your wardrobe?

How would you describe your style?
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READING THE BULLETIN FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Welcome to the area. We do hope you enjoy living here. To help you find your feet, Blackhall St Columba's Church website gives you all you need to know about activities happening there for young and old. From leisure activities like painting and dancing to our youth groups and junior singers. You can find it all at www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk or contact the office by phone (see above) or e mail secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk or

X @BSICC_EH



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