

BLACKHALL BULLETIN

March 2023

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

No. 171

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT

You helped us to raise £9,200 for P.E.P.

The charity chosen by the WAƆCH Committee for 2022 was **Pilton Equalities Project** which provides essential services for older and other vulnerable adults in North Edinburgh, supporting Mental Health, Community Transport and Lifelong Learning.

We would like to thank all who supported and contributed to the fundraising events during 2022. The Summer Coin collection, the Craft Coffee Morning in October and the Christmas Fair at the start of Advent, along with other donations, raised a total of £9,200 which has now been passed to **P.E.P.** A full list of the companies who helped us to raise funds can be found on page 14.

George Millar
WAƆCH Committee

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Helen Tait, the Manager at P.E.P. was unable to come as planned to St Columba's to receive the cheque, so WaƆch Chairman, George Millar went to the Centre to present it to her there.

Below one of the busses the group use in their work in North Edinburgh.



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'The Expectation Effect'

Happy New Year.

'New Years' are strange times for many people. For some, they are a time of great rejoicing filled with hopes for the future whilst, for others, 'New Years' seem to bring out a maudlin feeling of nostalgia which causes them to lament all the things that have gone before, to dwell on the people they miss and the things that they will not get to do again. Personally, I think that both sides of that emotional coin are valid as long as neither one is taken to extreme. It is important to remember things past, if for no other reason that we should learn from them and try to ensure that we do not repeat our mistakes. However, it is also important not to dwell on the past too much but to look forward positively.



Recently, I have been reading a great book called '*The Expectation Effect*' by David Robson. I was first made aware of the book when listening to a Radio 4 Programme in which the author was discussing his findings. In essence, (and I am vastly oversimplifying this scientifically evidenced book) our expectations have a significant effect on how things in our lives turn out. To illustrate this with a vastly oversimplified example, if we expect to go to an event and enjoy it, we have a far greater chance of doing so than if we went to the same event expecting not to enjoy it. This 'expectation effect' relates to numerous different areas of our lives which it can affect dramatically.

To take one example from the book, the author looked at the effect on ageing of having a positive attitude. He referred to an American study, the 'Ohio Longitudinal Study of Aging and Retirement'. That study selected 1,100 people who had turned 50 by 1st July 1975 and followed their progress over the subsequent decades. Using a psychological test, the participants in the study were categorised into two groups, one having a positive self-perception with regard to ageing and the other a negative self-perception. The bottom line was that those with a positive attitude lived, on average, 7.5 years longer than those with a negative attitude.

Whilst there were several other studies, covered by the author, into different aspects of life, one of the big areas that he looked at was belief. There may be a lot of differing views as to why it should be the case, but it remains a scientifically proven fact, according to the author's studies, that people who believe that they will get better or recover faster from a medical issue do. Of course, those of us who have faith in God have believed this to be the case for centuries. Whilst we may have lacked scientific or empirical evidence that could be presented as a study, we have known that belief in God and praying to Him helps us physically, emotionally and spiritually. If you speak to any congregation, if you speak to any group of people with faith, whilst they may not have access to studies, they will have anecdotal evidence of the great effect that belief and prayer has had for individuals within the group.

In the New Testament James, the brother of Jesus, writes, in a passage entitled "The Prayer of Faith", "Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up," I'm not suggesting for a second that this should take the place of a visit to the doctor or stop anyone from following sound medical advice but I can say with confidence that a positive mindset, which can come with faith and belief, together with the knowledge of being prayed for is a powerful tool in maintaining health, recovering from illness and ultimately enjoying a longer, healthier, more contented life.

God bless all
Fergus

Reverend Fergus Cook visits Blackhall Primary School



We continue to develop links with Blackhall Primary School. Before Christmas Fergus was asked to speak to both the P4 classes about 'Christian Values and where they come from?'. Fergus had a wonderful time speaking with all the children who already had a good grounding in the subject. He said afterwards, "It's always good to be tested by the straight questions that children ask. It also keeps you on your toes theologically. I really had to think hard about the question of using a time machine to go back in time to stop people from killing Jesus!"



Four members of the congregation, Ruth Laidlaw, Isobel Morton, Marjorie Hunter and Frances Tait took part in the annual Lothian Hospitals Choir concert for Young Lives vs Cancer (formerly Clic Sargent) under the leadership of Libby Crabtree and joined by the ESMS Chamber Choir and accompanied by John Kitchen at the organ.



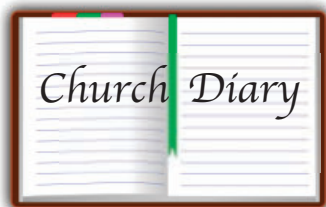
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guy@sup-products.com



MARCH

5 th	10.30am	Morning worship
12 th	10.30am	Morning worship
19 th	10.30am	Morning worship
26 th	10.30am	Morning worship

APRIL

2 nd	10.30am	Palm Sunday
6 th	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday – Joint service with Drylaw at Drylaw Church
7 th	7.00pm	Good Friday – joint Service with Drylaw at Blackhall St Columba's
9 th	8.00am	Easter Sunday Breakfast – joint with Drylaw outside Drylaw church – hot rolls and drinks after.
9 th	10.30am	Easter Sunday service.

Services will continue each Sunday at 10.30am through the summer months with a **Communion service on Sunday 4th June. For full details, please check the Church website.**

**Easter Morning Early Rise Service
Sunday 6th April**

In a change from previous years, our Early Rise Easter Service will take place in the grounds of

Drylaw Parish Church

Still starting at 8 am and followed by bacon rolls and hot drinks afterwards in the church.

We do hope you will come and join us.
Everyone welcome

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. Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at lzbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk or Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk or 0131 466 7503.

Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box on the table in the church vestibule.



Mid-week PEACE Services (People Enjoying a Christian Encounter)

These take place fortnightly on Wednesdays at 12 noon and all are welcome. There is a short act of worship followed by fellowship over a soup lunch. For further info Ruth Laidlaw: ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com or 07513 967974

On the theme of Gifts from God

1 st March	Art - Kathryn Westbrook
15 th March	SOCIAL BITE – Helping others – Cindy Cosgrove
29 th March	Jesus – Eddie Thorn
12 th April	The greatest gift – Eternal Life – Bob Barker
26 th April	WATCH COMMITTEE – helping others – Lynn Bunney
10 th May	Be glad, be grateful – Shona Cook
24 th May	Communion – Fergus Cook



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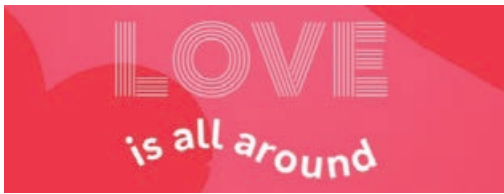
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With Burns Night duly celebrated and 14th February only a fortnight away as I write this, there is no doubt that Valentine’s Day, like every other calendar milestone, has taken on a commercial significance that cannot be ignored. Love, it seems, IS all around.

From chocolatiers to jewellers, from perfumers to florists, everyone is intent on encouraging us to spend money to impress that certain someone by giving one of the traditional tokens of love. But it doesn’t stop there – there’s a heart-themed display in almost every shop window and, in our local superstore, hearts abound on duvets covers, nightwear, mugs and tea towels.....and so much more, side by side with the usual rows of Valentine cards. Then, if it must be “no ordinary” Valentine taste treat, there is a whole range on offer – from pink and white chocolate hearts that burst into flavour, to a heart-shaped “Love Sausage”, wrapped in bacon. Really!??

Of course, Love is clearly not defined by how we celebrate one certain date, nor restricted to those of a romantic nature.

I’m reminded of the opening scenes of my all-time favourite Christmas film, Love Actually. Hugh Grant tells us that, “while general opinion tends to make out that we live in a world of hatred and greed.....love is everywhere”. He illustrates this with joyful scenes of reunion at the Arrivals Gate of Heathrow Airport, where loving embraces abound – “between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, old friends”. He goes on to refer to the horrific attack on the Twin Towers, when messages on board the planes were not of hate or revenge, but of love. The action of the film then begins to unfold with that memorable phrase – Love Actually is All Around.

It’s that same positive, encouraging statement that shines through every part of Charlie Mackesy’s wonderful book, “The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse”. From the opening conversation, where the boy learns from his first new friend that “Success is.....to love”, we come to a scene where the boy, in turn, tells the mole that when he grows up he “wants to be.....kind”. Encountering the fox, then the horse, the mole and the boy continue to develop and extend their friendship, facing various challenging situations together. By the final page, it’s no surprise to learn that all four characters have discovered how much they mean to each other, despite their obvious differences, and the final message echoes that of Love Actually – “Sometimes all you hear about is the hate, but there is more love in this world than you could possibly imagine.”



Released just last month as a short animated film, with well-known voices for the three animals and the perfectly pitched Scottish lilt of a local young lad as The Boy, the pages leap into life on screen. It was a great success with each of my grandchildren, even though they have already shared the book with me in the “story chair” at bedtime. The critics agree, for it has been nominated in the category Best Animated Short Film for this year’s Oscars. (You can still find it on BBC i-player.)

Love may seem to be all around us, as I aim to meet the Bulletin deadline; but, by the time you read this, we’ll be surrounded not by hearts but by fluffy chickens and cute rabbits, signalling that Easter celebrations are now imminent. (The eggs are, of course, already in the shops!) As symbols of new life and of the new season in general, they bring a lot of joy - particularly to young children who anticipate the arrival of the Easter Bunny and the hunt for eggs that he may have hidden around the house and garden. For Christians, however, there is so much more. In fact, the Easter story, with its promise of resurrection, is absolutely central to our faith – even compared with the events of the Nativity.

What more powerful example of love is there, than the death of one man on behalf of others? How much love has God the Father demonstrated in sending his Son into the world, not just to spend three years reaching out to people by healing and teaching, but to be crucified like a criminal on the day we refer to as “Good” Friday. Yet Jesus’ rising again on Easter morning offers us the ultimate reason to celebrate.

Such Love is the greatest gift of all - for all - and for all time.

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THANK YOU FROM



Firstly, on behalf of FreshStart, thank you for all your support in 2022 with your donations of household items and food for the Pantry Shop. These donations have made a big difference to many families and formerly homeless people.

Secondly, FreshStart are seeing the demand for their services continue to increase and the “cost of living crisis” will only escalate this further. We hope that you can continue to support us with your donations in 2023, in what will be a very challenging year for all.

The usual Friday morning (10 to 11.30am) collection of donations in the halls has restarted after the festive season break and there is also a box just inside the front door of sanctuary for donations on a Sunday. Please check the FreshStart notice board in the hall corridor for details of the most needed items and news. If you want to give non perishable food items for the Pantry Shop, there is also a special collection box just inside the main hall door every day of the week.

If you would like to know more about volunteering to work in FreshStart or just want to keep up to date with what they are doing, please check their website (www.freshstartweb.org.uk).

Lilian and Michael Cockburn
FreshStart Co-ordinators.

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Support when you need it most

Friends of Blackhall Library News

To keep up to date on events and activities happening in the library please keep an eye on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BlackhallLibrary> or pop into the library for one of our 'What's On'.

Spring Fair

During the last few months the Friends of Blackhall Library committee has met to plan some exciting projects and events to enhance the use of the library and to improve the look of the entrance to make it more welcoming to all. These include a Bunting Bonanza (in February) and Spring Festival.

What's on Blackhall Library

Mondays
2-4pm Movie Matinee (Adults) Drop-in, No need to book
5-6pm Lego Club (Fortnightly)

Tuesdays
10:00-12:30pm Blackhall St.Columba's Art Club
10:30-11am Bookbug (0-5+y.o.)*
3:30-4:30pm Chatterbooks
6-7:30pm Writers Group (Fortnightly)

Wednesdays
11:30-1:30pm Macmillan Cancer Support
11am-12pm Library Link (Fortnightly)

Thursdays
All day Dog Friendly Day
10-12:30pm Drop-in Gardening (All welcome)
10:30-12:00pm Coffee Morning (All welcome)
1:30-3pm Knit and Natter Group

Fridays
3-4pm Craft (5+y.o.)*
2:30-3:30pm Library Link (Fortnightly)

Saturdays
11-11:30am Bookbug & Storytime (0-5+y.o.)*
3-4pm Family Craft (Fortnightly)
2-4pm Cinema Club for kids* (Fortnightly)

***Please note - booking is essential via Eventbrite for kids' activities (updated links every week on Facebook page)**

For more information regarding any of these sessions please contact:
✉ Blackhall.library@edinburgh.gov.uk ☎ 0131 529 5595
📷 @BLACKHALL.LIBRARY 📘 BLACKHALL LIBRARY

Spring Fair at Blackhall Library
Saturday 25th March
11am-2pm

Supported by
The Friends of Blackhall Library

Join us at Blackhall library for our Family friendly spring celebration day!
All Welcome - there will be kids activities, refreshments, book sale and more!

The bunting will be up for our **Spring Fair on Saturday 25th March 11am – 2pm**. To celebrate Spring at the library on that day there will be children's activities including face painting, refreshments, book sale and more. Bulbs will be in full bloom in the garden. The Spring Fair Day is for everyone whatever your age, so put this date in your diary, come along and have some fun. **Knit and Natter**

The FoBL Knit and Natter group meet every Thursday from 1.30pm – 3pm. New members are always welcome, just come along any Thursday. Bring your own knitting or crocheting projects or join in whatever we are making. Wool and needles are available and there's always someone who can help out with any knitting/crocheting problems.

Be a Friend of Blackhall Library

To become a Friend all you need to do is complete a short form and pay £1. Forms can be found in the library or can be emailed to you. For more information please contact Tess Storr on Tess.storr@edinburgh.gov.uk Please also let us know your ideas for the library.

Blackhall Community Trust



The Board of Blackhall Community Trust (BCT) is very much hoping to see local residents at community events during 2023.

We hope the community and those passing through Blackhall in December enjoyed the Christmas tree in ‘the dip’ which was organised by BCT. Many thanks to Cloudberry for the electricity supply, Craigeith Blackhall Community Council for sponsoring the tree and Catalyst Event Production Services for providing and installing the lights.

Blackhall Community Trust is holding its **AGM online** on **30 March at 7.30pm** – Members can email BCT if they would like to attend, and we’ll send out the link.

It seems likely that the Community Asset Transfer of Ravelston Park Pavilion and adjacent land from the City of Edinburgh Council to Blackhall Community Trust, on behalf of residents, will take place later this spring. There is an ongoing urgent need for a new building to accommodate Blackhall Nursery so that local families can access their free 1140 hours early learning and childcare entitlement, funded by the Scottish Government, in Blackhall. The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) has been delayed by a local resident’s complaint against the Council for not following the correct procedure for certain aspects of the Community Asset Transfer. The most recent Council-run consultation has been on the designation of Orchard Park as Fields in Trust in lieu of the small piece of ground in front of and under the existing Ravelston Park Pavilion. The consultation report and officer recommendations are to go back to a City of Edinburgh Council Committee for the final decision. If this is resolved satisfactorily, the Asset Transfer can finally proceed.

If you’d like to support Blackhall Community Trust, you can do so by donating through [BCT’s JustGiving page](https://www.justgiving.com/blackhallcommunitytrust) <https://www.justgiving.com/blackhallcommunitytrust>, or by texting **BCT**, followed by the amount you would like to donate (max £20) to **70085** eg BCT10 to donate £10. Texts cost the donation amount plus your network’s standard charge.

Please consider becoming a member of BCT (free) or better still, share your skills by becoming a volunteer member of the Board! Blackhall is defined by the Blackhall Primary School boundary. Email blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com for more information about membership/becoming a director. Also email us and let us know if you would like to sign up for our e-newsletter.

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KNIT AND NATTER

Between returning in September and our Christmas break we enjoyed our Monday evening natters and kept up with our knitting too.

We made two sets of poppies for Remembrance which represent different aspects some of which are perhaps less known. The red one we are all familiar with, white for peace, purple for the animals which served and were lost and black for the wider Commonwealth.



For the craft stall at the Christmas Fair we knitted a selection of tree decorations similar to those we made for our trees in the Christmas tree festivals.



The Knitivity figures were wonderfully used by Fergus for a very visual telling of the Nativity, both in church and for younger groups.

We also were able to donate baby clothes, toys and blankets to Pregnancy Counselling and Care. If you no longer have use for any baby equipment you still have, they are a charity which would be pleased to hear from you. Their details can found online.

If you would like to join us on Monday evenings, we meet in the Sanctuary at 7.30pm entering by the hall door. New members always welcome, whatever your ability or if you would like to learn.

Lilian Cockburn stcknitnatter@gmail.com

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TUESDAY TOPICS

We started our New Year with our usual late Christmas Lunch at Howies. It was well attended, and I think we all had a jolly time! This was followed the 24th by a most interesting talk by John Barrett, our former MP, explaining how he has and is spending his time After Westminster.

By the time you are reading this we will have learned about Giraffes from a speaker from Edinburgh Zoo and Helen Watson from Silverknowes Podiatry told us how to deal with our foot problems and keep our feet healthy.

Brian Duffin, well known to many folks in the Church, is going to give us his '*Irish Perspective*' on the 7th of March and another kent face will be with us on the 21st March when Alison Hewat demonstrates Flowers at Home.

On the 4th April, Professor Roy Watling, mycologist, will talk to us about *Beatrix Potter*. This should be a fascinating talk.

The 18th of April is our AGM and instead of a speaker we are going to have a Beetle Drive. We've done this before, and it is always good fun. There might even be prizes! We still hope to arrange a visit out on the 2nd of May, our last meeting of the year, but this is still to be finalised.

I do hope as many folks as possible can come to any or all of our meetings. Don't worry if you're not a member, you are still very welcome to an occasional evening, and you'll see how friendly we are. We meet at 7.30 in the small hall on alternate Tuesdays and are always delighted to see new faces.

Lyndy Paton, secretary 07460212174 or 0131 332 7377



EDINBURGH FLORAL ART CLUB

From March to June we have booked Demonstrators to show their skills in Flower Arranging and teach us things along the way.

We have a full programme and meet at 2pm on the second Friday of the month from February to June. We provide a Newsletter every month with up-to-date details of what is happening in Edinburgh Floral Art Club, the Scottish Flower Arranging scene and beyond.

If you are not a member but are interested in coming, do come as a Guest. You would be most welcome.

Spring has definitely arrived, with the days lengthening and Spring flowers giving us some welcome colour. Christmas now seems a rather distant memory, however it would be remiss not to update you on the Art Club exhibition at Blackhall Library. Art Club members exhibited almost 30 paintings of which there were 8 sales. Thank you to all those who took the opportunity to come along and view our work. I hope you agree that there was a great selection to choose from and that the group contains some very talented amateur artists.

The Art Club will continue to meet on Monday mornings, with a short break at Easter, until our final meeting this session on the 1st May. We are busy preparing for our **Annual Exhibition** which will run from **Wednesday 10th to Sunday 14th May**, with a preview opening evening on 9th. A donation from the proceeds of the exhibition will as usual go to a local charity.

This year the Club has chosen to support **Project Esperanza** which is a small local charity based in Muirhouse with the aim of reducing the health inequalities that have been exposed in the North of Edinburgh, especially prevalent in ethnically diverse individuals. It aspires to enhance inclusivity, health and wellbeing, and to bring racial harmony as well as acceptance, particularly with newly arrived families.

The organisation supports women mainly of African origin and those from culturally different backgrounds who struggle to vocalise and access their needs. Charity volunteers understand that speaking English and being understood in simple tasks such as, catching a bus, shopping, communicating with your doctor or your child's teacher, can all be daunting tasks as a migrant. The charity acts as a go between to navigate and help interpret the system for its attendees; saving time and being helpful to all parties concerned.

Project Esperanza aims to help empower and build self-esteem and improve the mental health of this group of women, giving them practical skills, advice and support. Many of the ladies have found vital companionship and support from others within their group. It is envisaged that the support provided by the charity will be an asset not only for the NHS, schools and local community but potentially for our workforce as well.

We hope you will find the time to visit our exhibition in running from 10th May. Even if you haven't any spare wall space for a painting, there will also be a wide selection of unique hand painted cards available which are a lovely to receive for a birthday greeting or as a thank you card.

We wish you a happy Easter from all those in the Blackhall Art Club.

Joyce Whytock

CAMEO CLUB

Cameo Club is a social group for the community. This year we celebrate twenty-five years since starting.

There is no charge for joining. We meet in Blackhall St. Columba's church halls every second Friday throughout the year between 10.30 – 12md. Coffee/tea, pancakes and other delights are served until 11.00 when there is entertainment till 12.00. Local car lifts can be provided.

On the 10th of this month Alan, a singer and keyboard player, will be performing. On 24th March, Rose, another vocalist, will be entertaining us with her playlist. Both performers are excellent. Meetings follow every two weeks after that.

We hope to have our Summer Outing in May, when members can pay for a coach and lunch if they wish. The weather is pleasant then and our trips are greatly enjoyed.

New members and volunteers are welcome. We do have a few gentlemen who are regulars. Volunteers serve, use the dishwasher, and provide lifts. Drivers can choose whether they stay for meetings or simply drop off and collect members.

Everyone is valued – all are welcome to come along and meet other people. Contact names below if more information is required.

Margaret Brown 332 5957

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762

NORTH WEST HERITAGE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Thursday 23rd March 2023

Edinburgh : The Venice of the North? (Discover similarities in the architecture of the two cities)Speaker: Gordon McFarlane

~

Wednesday 19th April 2023

William Speirs Bruce : Scotland's Polar ExplorerSpeaker: Simon Bendle

Followed by AGM

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

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SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING



We had a lovely Christmas Party to finish last session.

The country dancing class at Blackhall St Columba's has been active since our new term started on Thursday 19th January 2023. We have an average of 22/24 ladies and gentlemen enjoying the programme put together by our teacher, Muriel Stenhouse. Some new dances and some 'old and familiar' ones!

We would be delighted to welcome any new members (ladies and gentlemen). We meet every Thursday from 7.30 - 9.15 in the large hall of St Columba's. The fees are £16 per term, with a welcome cuppa and biscuit. Good value, with lots of fun!!

For more information contact

Margaret Brown Tel. 332 5957

The WA+CH Committee would especially like to thank the following companies who helped to raise money for P.E.P. in 2022

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BLACKHALL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (The 'Horti')

Welcome to January, a quiet month after the hustle and bustle of the festive period. The frosty winter garden is quiet and still, while holding a little bit of magic that reminds me of Namia. It's always a delight to watch the birds braving the chilly weather and the even chillier bird bath! My winter crops of leeks and turnip are being put to good use in some hearty bowls of broth. January is a good time to plan, oh the anticipation of what to grow as I look through the seed catalogues. I am now the proud owner of a greenhouse, installed in November last year, so many growing opportunities have opened up to me and this year I look forward to trying my hand at growing peppers and aubergines, along with a few more flowers after my success with calendulas and sunflowers last year.

Colin Wren from the NTS kicked off our 2023 season with a very enlightening talk about the NTS Gardens in Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland. That was followed by a talk on gardening in our changing climate by David Knott from Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Our programme of events for the rest of this season:

13th March 2023 **Container Planting Demonstrations** by Andrew Cathcart and Tom Sneddon
10th April 2023 **Scotland's Showiest Alpines** by Stan de Prato
8th May 2023 **Annual General Meeting**

Do any of these events pique your interest? Why not come along, we are always delighted to welcome visitors and new members to the club, no experience necessary.

The Horti meets at 7.45 pm on the second Monday of the month from September to May in the small hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church. Look out for each month's poster displayed locally in the Blackhall area or check out our facebook book which can be found www.facebook.com/groups/211472892232483

If you would like more information please email Sheena, Horti President, at blackhall.horti@hotmail.com

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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 will be meeting for the remainder of this session on the first and third Thursday of the month until April.

All meetings will be 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.

Following the ever-popular Christmas Lunch, in 2023/24 we hope to organise further lunches and a summer outing to which partners are invited. On 16th February, the popular quiz, pie and a pint returned following a presentation on “*American Railways*”. Other talks in the current session include “*Experiences as a police firearms officer*”, “*Davidson Mains*” and “*Old Scottish Hydros*”.

We are always pleased to welcome new members, so if you would like to join us, please contact the Secretary for more details.

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

BLACKHALL LADIES' PROBUS

The Club has enjoyed a return to a full in-person programme at Blackhall Bowling Clubhouse since October 2022, when we welcomed many new members, taking our membership back up to full strength again.

Our first talk by Ruth Boreham on the Usher Hall was greatly enjoyed by members both for the interesting information and the lively, entertaining style of the speaker. This was followed in November by a talk from our charity for the session, North Edinburgh Dementia Care, when Susan Cull gave an absorbing account of the valuable work and activities of the Centre. A fundraising sale of goods was held, and a raffle took place. Members contributed towards a donation to the Charity, which was boosted from Club funds. In December, we had an enlightening talk from Eric Melvin on the well-known Edinburgh herbalist Duncan Napier, and tea with Christmas treats.

In January, Fiona Gilbert delivered a talk on the local issue of Blackhall Community Trust's proposed Community Asset Transfer of Ravelston Park Pavilion, on which members are now well-informed. This was followed a week later by our Post Christmas Lunch at Bruntsfield Links Golf Club, which was enjoyed by all, this being the first time we had been able to hold this normally annual event since 2020, due to the pandemic. We enjoyed a talk on the History of the Georgian House in Edinburgh by Dr Sheonagh Martin in February, and in March Dr Jane George will speak on “The 3 Isobels”. 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 on the second Thursday of the month from October to April, from 10.00 am to 12 noon. Enquiries should be made to the Secretary, details below.

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

CRAIGLEITH MEN'S PROBUS CLUB

Looking out the window I see numerous signs of spring but also the awareness that our winter session of talks is coming to a close. James Clerk Maxwell's input into science as well as his early life in Edinburgh will form part of the talk on 1st March.

Our meeting on 15th March will be a charity day with the work of “North West Carers” being outlined by Rosie Moorhead, Adults Services Coordinator. Now known as Capital Carers they have, for over 25 years, delivered a first class person-centred service responding to individuals' needs respecting their beliefs, and providing a listening ear.

We hope to have a summer outing, possibly to Lauriston Castle, with its award-winning Kyoto Garden. Over the summer there will be numerous events at Lauriston including a focus on Japanese culture, the Environment, and, over the special weekend, celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III

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

THE NIGHT RABBIE CAME TO BLACKHALL

With a lack of function places in either Blackhall or its environs, a decision was taken to ask to use the halls (large and small) at St Columba's Church for a Burns Supper on 28th January. What a good idea that turned out to be!

Organised by church members and last held in 2019 the Supper is for the entire community. This year we were delighted to have guests from Ukraine who brought the total in attendance to 86.



Piper Mark Miller welcomed guests and piped in the Top Table. Sandy Weir as MC told everybody to enjoy themselves or he was going home! Everyone certainly did with The Address to a Haggis delivered – by John Campbell. Excellent fare of scotch broth, haggis & cranachan from c-e-c- Ltd our caterers was all plated and served by our cheerful volunteers.



Then it was time for tea or coffee with a bit shortbread and hear *the Toast to the Immortal Memory* proposed by Angus Mathieson. This left the everyone contemplating how each one of us has shared the same good and not so good times in life. You don't need to be Scottish to know exactly what or who he meant and how we've each shared an experience or viewpoint he wrote about. Hence his enduring worldwide fame as a man who could eloquently write of life which was and is commonly familiar to both prince and pauper.

Angus was followed by the *Toast to the Lassies* by Angus McKinnon and the *Reply for the Lassies* by Muriel Stenhouse. Both performed with grace, skill, interest and wit although, for those attending with partners, some differences in perspective that were mentioned might subsequently have led to interesting domestic conversations.

There was certainly plenty of time to enjoy the conversation around and between tables, but conversation was hushed while we enjoyed excellent performances on fiddle, accordion and guitar from members of Dunfermline Strathspey & Reel Society whom space denies us naming. Just believe us, they were brilliant and invited us to join in singing from a song sheet provided. The final song of course was Auld Lang Syne ending a most enjoyable night in memory of our National Bard with most looking forward to next year's Supper which is earmarked for **27th January 2024**.



Like this year much depends on teams who help prepare the hall so magnificently, set and decorate tables, including flowers, plate and serve dishes as well as clean and clear up the whole thing after. Thanks also, to local concerns, Cloudberry, Olde Inn, Cove restaurant and Ravelston Golf Club for their kind support given. And of course, to those who came along to enjoy this special Scottish Evening.

Blackhall St Columba's Junior Singers

The Christmas period has been a very busy but enjoyable time for Junior Singers. They sang with the Blackhall St Columba's Senior Choir in the Edinburgh Nativity Service in Princes Street Gardens then quickly followed this up by singing in the church Gift Service. Now that Covid restrictions have been lifted, the children were able to take part in the short carol service held in Strachan House, the first time most of the children had visited the home to sing and then they entertained the residents of Queen's Court with a short carol concert. They finally finished the year by taking part in the church Christingle Service. Yes, a busy time, but the children enjoyed all their outings – and thoroughly enjoyed the juice, crisps and sweets which were handed out to them at the end of their performances.

Junior Singers is open to all children who enjoy singing and are in P3 - P7. We meet during term time in the Upper Hall of Blackhall St Columba's on Thursdays between 3.45pm and 4.30pm. New members are always welcome.

For more info, please phone Amy on 0131 332 1354



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Blackhall Nursery

News Spring 2023



As we head into the final term of the 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 full timetable.

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 (6 hours) places for 3-5 year olds during term time.

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 by downloading an application form at www.blackhallnursery.co.uk or by contacting the Nursery for an application form 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.



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BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Join us on our Rights Respecting School journey!



The pupils and teachers at Blackhall Primary School are actively working towards recognition as a Rights Respecting School.

This is an award which is given to schools on behalf of UNICEF.

Because of all the work they have put in so far, they have already achieved their BRONZE Award and are hoping to achieve the SILVER award by the end of February 2023.

By exploring the 'Rights Respecting School' award (RRSA), the school hope to help the pupils grow into confident, caring, and responsible young citizens both in school and within the wider community. Through learning about what their rights are, and joining various Pupil Voice groups, the children will also learn how to respect those rights. Children's rights are incorporated throughout the school in lessons, school assemblies, and through focus weeks such as Anti-Bullying Week.

If you would like more information about the work of UNICEF or a Rights Respecting School, then please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa



Blackhall Guiding



202 and 202B Brownies enjoyed a silent disco at JoJo's Parties in Ocean Terminal to end the term

157 Rainbows enjoyed a trip to Blackhall library in January where we worked on our Storyteller badge. **Caroline Murray-157 Rainbow Leader**

202 Rainbows have enjoyed having more help with our new young leaders and so we welcomed 6 new Rainbows this term. We have enjoyed making Puppet pals and will be creating Exciting experiments as part of the Express Myself theme badge. **Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow Leader**

It was lovely to see the return of our thinking day service in February. 202C Brownies have been busy working on working on the express yourself theme lots of artists trying out tape to create and learning new styles of dancing thanks to the tap dance ladies. **Helen Abbott – 202C Brownie Leader**



Some of the older girls in 202B Brownies enjoyed spending a few weeks using 2 socks to create different sock animals by sewing each piece together

202 Guides have been busy doing a Wildlife Challenge Badge, making bird boxes, fat ball bird feeders and learning how to look after wildlife in the winter. We have also been to Stanemuir for the weekend for our "Abba" camp and to PGL at Dalguise for an outdoor adventure weekend.

Guides are still looking for new leaders to allow them to continue after the summer - please come and join us if you can! We have a huge waiting list and so many more girls could enjoy Guides if we had more leaders.

Lorna Kelly – 202 Guide Leader

Rangers have recently welcomed another 3 members this term. Our Rangers are looking forward to attending the annual district Thinking Day service to join with the rest of the units in Blackhall. We also have an exciting trip to Ocean Terminal to try out Rollerskating coming up. **Mhairi Ferrier – Ranger Leader**

202 and 202B Brownies this term had a fantastic sleepover at Jump In trampoline centre and are looking forward to going to Ford Castle in Northumberland for camp and 5 girls are extremely excited for their first international trip to Dublin in April. This term the girls have been working on a mix of themes so lots of girls can gain their Gold Award **Nicole Harland – 202&202B Brownie Leader**

We've just started on the Take Action theme at 202A. Determined to get some of the older girls their Bronze award before deserting me for Brownies. **Barbara Bon – 202a Rainbow Leader**

Important Message from the Blackhall Guide leaders:

The Guide Unit is looking for help.

202 Guides need one or more people to come forward and take over the Unit from summer 2023 as Unit leader(s). Volunteer positions may be filled on an individual or job-share basis. Full training will be provided, including safeguarding and first aid training. This is a great opportunity for someone to get involved in Guiding, either with their daughter, or if you know a young person (aged 18+) whose future career it might benefit.

If volunteers cannot be found for these positions, there is a risk that the Unit will not be able to run.

If your Brownie is on a Guide waiting list, priority will be given to them for a place in any Unit in which a family member volunteers.

Please contact Lorna if you would like more information or to discuss - blackhall.districtcomm@gmail.com



New Group Scout Leader

We welcome Dave Duffy as our new Group Scout Leader. Dave is uniquely experienced as he has worked in the Beaver, Cub and Scout sections and we wish him well in his new role.



BEAVERS

The Beavers started the term by reminding themselves of the Beaver Promise and making the salute by drawing round their hands. They also enjoyed a giant game of Mousetrap. They have been learning about the Chinese New Year and practicing their chopsticks skills. A campfire with songs and marshmallows is also another favourite activity for all the Beavers.



cubs

Cubs had a busy Autumn term with activities including bike maintenance and a bike ride, a hike at Cammo estate and a skills night that included ironing. We held our camp in November at Fordell Firs Scout centre (near Dunfermline), with 35 Cubs joining in the fun. They showed great team-working and a spirit of adventure as they enjoyed activities that included crate stacking, caving and Jacob's ladder climbing. Of course, we had our Scout campfire, songs and marshmallows too.

Cubs are now enjoying a fun Spring term. Among other things we've been having fun in Ravelston woods and working on badges including Scientist and Astronomy!



Scouts

Plans are afoot for our Scouts and Explorers to visit the Kandersteg International Scout Centre in the summer Of 2024. The centre is in the Swiss Bernese Oberland and is celebrating its centenary this year.



All Sections of the Group were represented at the Remembrance Service in November, and the Scouts laid crosses in the Remembrance Garden.

The Group is now looking forward to our Group Camp in April where members of all Sections – Beavers, Cubs and Scouts - will be in camp together. This will be our first Group Camp for many years.



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BLACKHALL BOWLING CLUB

Blackhall Bowling Club is tucked away behind the old Colony houses in Keith Row. People say, "I didn't know there was a Bowling Club there", but we have been here since 1898 and are continuing to thrive. We have a healthy membership of both Ladies and Gents who enjoy the Bowling and the social events which the Club organise.

Bowls is a very enjoyable sport, providing exercise and fresh air in good company. During the Bowling Season we have a busy schedule. There is a 'Hat Night' on a Monday night which is a mixed friendly game (all members welcome), and our Ladies meet on a Wednesday afternoon for a friendly game of bowls, a cuppa and a chat. There is also an opportunity to play in internal competitions organised by the Club, and both Ladies and Gents play in a number of external Competitions and Leagues. We also have coaching most Saturday mornings. Several social events are also held (usually one per month) and we also run a number of activities during the close season (most recently a book club, bridge club and table tennis club).

The Club is now preparing for the coming season which will kick-off with our annual Cheese and Wine on the Wednesday prior to Opening Day (which will be on Saturday 15th April). New members can be assured of a warm welcome. So why not give bowls a try?

We are holding Open Days on Sunday 7th May and Sunday 14th May. Anyone interested in giving the game a go please just come along between 2pm and 4pm on either of these days. We have all the equipment you will require. Alternatively, you will be welcome to attend one of our Coaching Sessions on a Saturday morning between 10.00am and 12noon. These start on Saturday 29th April.

If you are interested in joining the Club or if you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or by emailing the Club as detailed below. Further information about the Club is also available on the Club Website at blackhallbc.com

Bill Batten – President Phone : 0131 332 3527 Email: blackhallbc@live.co.uk



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

Minister
 Rev Fergus Cook
 5 Blinkbonny Crescent
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Session Clerk
 Eddie Thorn
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 Edinburgh EH4 2EQ
 Telephone 332 5702

Church Secretary
 Mrs Joy McGonigal-Paget
 in Church Office from
 Tues-Thurs 9-12 noon
 Tel: 332 4431 or email
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DEADLINES

Kirk News (May edition) **Friday 14th April**

Please send all items to the Editor;
 c/o Church Office or by email to
kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Blackhall Bulletin (September Edition) - **Sunday 30th July**

Please send all items, including **Advertising Enquiries**
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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

follow us on  @BSICC_EH





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