

BLACKHALL BULLETIN

December 2022

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

No. 170



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'Taken for Granted'

This year, Christmas will be different in a number of ways some of which will involve small changes and others of which will involve larger changes. Anticipating those changes has made me think about some of the other things we take for granted in our lives, things that can suddenly change and possibly throw us off track.

The war in Ukraine has highlighted the fact that the peace and stability we have taken for granted for years seems to have been shattered. Although we are not directly involved in the war, Ukraine's proximity, its place in Europe and the effects of the war - actual and potential - have resulted in real consequences for us together with much worry, anxiety and, for some, existential dread. However, our feeling of peaceful security has always been a bit of an illusion. Up until recently, 1968 was the only year this century when Britain was not involved directly in a conflict with another nation.

The loss of Her Majesty the Queen is another event that has shaken many people's sense of stability. There are innumerable small ways in which Queen Elizabeth's death has had, and will have, an impact on the country and, certainly, many of the things we have taken for granted over our lifetimes will be affected such as the face on our stamps and currency, the singing of our national anthem, the Queen's speech becoming the King's speech and much, much more.

Nationally, we have been getting gradually more and more complacent about the very comfortable lives we lead here in the West. Our complacency has taken a bit of a knock over the past couple of Christmases. The festive seasons have been dominated by the Coronavirus and the worldwide pandemic that ensued. Our entire lives have been disrupted throughout lockdown and, for many, the effects of the pandemic and the disruption caused by it have continued with many businesses and charities still going into receivership as a result.

Here in Edinburgh, the Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) and two of Scotland's leading independent cinemas have ceased trading suddenly after the charity behind them went into administration. Now that the independent, Filmhouse Cinema has closed, I wonder how many people will think, 'if only I had supported it a little, if only I had gone a few more times, if only I had contributed to its upkeep, then perhaps we would still have it with us.'

There are many other things people look back on with nostalgia and sometimes only really realise the true value of once they are gone. Taking things for granted and then regretting their demise is not uncommon. It is something that we, in the Church, know well.

For many people, the Church is something that they just take for granted. They assume that it will always be there when they need it for baptisms, weddings and funerals. I have been a member of the Church of Scotland all my life. The Church building in which I was baptised was shut in the 1970s due to falling numbers and that church went into union with a neighbouring Church. The building in which I went to Sunday School lay derelict before a fire destroyed it and the site was turned into flats.

I have been present when other Churches have discussed their closure. On one occasion, there was a public meeting about the closure at which there was an outcry - 'The Church has always been here. You can't shut it!' and 'I was married here as was my father and my grandfather. You can't close'. The vociferous outpourings I heard were all from people whom I had never seen attend the Church. They were all from people who didn't contribute in any way to the upkeep or, more importantly, the life of the Church.

Here, in the newly formed Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, we are working hard to come up with a Presbytery Plan. The same process is going on in presbyteries throughout Scotland. The plans involve looking at both how we are going to reduce the number of ministry posts and the number of Church buildings. It is estimated that we will reduce the number of buildings by 30%!

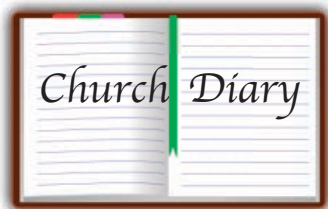
I have written before about the unchangeable nature of God, about His immutability and about the fact that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. That has not changed but I would like to also say that, whilst God is a constant, we, His servants, are not. The Presbytery Plan is written in the language of mission, but it is based in the reality of consolidation. It recognises the fact that fewer people are entering into a life of service for God and fewer people are making a commitment to support the Church. If you are someone who takes the Church for granted, who assumes that there will always be a minister and a building there for when you need it, you might have to think again. The reality is that many people, who do not cross the threshold of a church all year long, will turn up to a Church Service around Christmas time and, if they don't come back, if they don't start making some form of contribution (and I don't just mean financial), then, next year, when they want to go back for their Christmas service, they won't be able to do so at their usual church. For some church communities it is already too late and their buildings have been earmarked already for closure.

Here, in the north west of Edinburgh, we are more fortunate than many. That does not mean, though, that we should take anything for granted.

EXCEPT, and this is why I believe that making a commitment to God is so worthwhile, GOD WILL ALWAYS BE THERE. Jesus said, in the Gospel according to Matthew, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matt 18:20) I believe that there will always be a worshipping community here. The question is whether that worshipping community will have a building and an organisation left to support it. Throughout history, there have been numerous examples of people coming together to make a difference when places have been at risk of closing. All it takes is for one or two people to stop taking something for granted. If they realise the importance of something and share their passion with others, then, instead of potentially losing what they value, that thing can begin to thrive once again. As Christians, we can be especially grateful because, as Jesus said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” (Matt 19:26)

Merry Christmas and God bless all,
Fergus





DECEMBER

4 th	10.30am	Morning worship
11 th	10.30am	Morning worship
		Family Gift Service
11 th	4.00pm	Blue Christmas Service
18 th	10.30am	Morning worship
24 th	6.00pm	Family Christingle
24 th	11.30pm	Watchnight service- Mince pies etc from 11pm
25 th	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service

JANUARY

1 st	10.30am	Carol Service
8 th	10.30am	Morning worship
15 th	10.30am	Morning worship
22 nd	10.30am	Morning worship
29 th	10.30am	Morning worship

FEBRUARY

5 th	10.30am	Service of Holy Communion
12 th	10.30am	Morning worship
19 th	10.30am	Morning worship
26 th	10.30am	Morning worship

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

7 th Dec	God's World – Fay Stirling
21 st Dec	It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas Christmas Party – Shona Cook
18 th Jan	Dancing – Muriel Stenhouse
1 st Feb	Health – Isobel Morton
15 th Feb	Friendships – Doreen Barker
1 st Mar	Art – Kathryn Westbrook

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.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday 11th December 4pm

A time to remember and celebrate lives past and to offer solace to those who have experienced the loss of a loved one and are grieving or have mixed emotions about the festive season.

For further details see church website at <https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk> or call the church office 0131 332 4431



*Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas
and a very Happy New Year
From the Minister and congregation of
Blackhall St Columba's*

90 years of broadcasting the Royal Christmas Messages



Since the last Bulletin we have seen the end of the longest reign in our history and the beginning of a new reign.



As Christmas approaches we think of the traditions of the time, one of which for many is the Royal Christmas broadcast. Like so many things over the last 70 years, it has always been there, with HM the Queen was always there to speak to us, her presence as reassuring as always. Part of keeping the promise she made to us all on her 21st birthday, that her whole life “whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong. This year will be different. We shall have our first Royal Christmas broadcast from King Charles III. He follows in a tradition that spans three generations.

It was 90 years ago, on 25th December 1932, that the first Royal Christmas Message was broadcast on radio. King George V addressed the nation live from Sandringham. A quarter of a century later, on 25th December 1957, the Christmas message by Queen Elizabeth II was televised for the first time.

King George V had been asked to broadcast a Christmas message in 1922, but at the time he felt that radio was for entertainment, and therefore not suitable. Ten years later, after a visit to the BBC, he was persuaded otherwise, and agreed to do it as part of the inauguration of the new Empire Service (now the World Service).

The time chosen was 3pm because it was the best time for reaching most countries in the Empire. In fact the first message started five minutes late and lasted only two and a half minutes, but it made a massive impact and established itself as a regular Christmas Day event.

Edward VIII never delivered a Christmas broadcast, but King George VI continued the tradition, using it to encourage people during the second world war. Queen Elizabeth II broadcast her first Christmas message in 1952, again from a room at Sandringham, and five years later agreed that her Christmas message could be televised – live. She proved to be a natural broadcaster.

But times changed, and in 1960 the message was pre-recorded from Buckingham Palace, which meant that it could be sent to Commonwealth countries for broadcast at a convenient time. However, the 3pm UK broadcast continued every year – except 1969, when the Queen wrote a message instead, believing that the Royal Family had received enough exposure with the TV documentary *Royal Family*, which had aired in the summer.

But the tradition was resumed the following year. The Christmas message is now also available each year as a podcast and can be seen through Facebook and YouTube and, for those who would like to read them, Amazon has *The Queen. Christmas Speeches for 1952-2010* at no charge. King Charles III is expected to give his first Christmas message this year.

When King George VI was to make his first broadcast Princess Elizabeth was 13. She handed him a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins that she thought might be helpful. This was that poem. As helpful now as it was then.

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year
“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”
And he replied, “Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.”

SINGING FOR THE KING

Just three days after the peaceful passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, many of us came together outside the church on Queensferry Road to pay our respects as her cortège drove towards Holyrood Palace. Earlier that morning we had sung the unfamiliar, and strangely moving, words - “God save our King” - during the morning worship service and now we were privileged to see King Charles himself in Blackhall, accompanying his mother on this part of her final journey.



As the conversations inevitably turned to personal experiences of meeting the royal family, I had a vivid memory of the time when I not only met HRH Prince Charles, but actually sang for him! It was 1988, the 40th anniversary of Glenrothes, and our royal visitor was to unveil a statue of The Good Samaritan. My Girls’ Brigade company, like all the local youth groups, was invited to attend, and there was great excitement and anticipation as the girls took their places near the royal dais.

Even the steady downpour couldn’t dampen their high spirits, but then the message was passed along the lines that the royal convoy had been delayed.....and we would have another fifteen minutes to wait. To keep the spirits up and try to stay warm, we did what we always enjoyed - we sang! And as we did, we were joined by the Boys’ Brigade, the Guides and Brownies, Scouts and Cubs, and even some of the elderly guests in their rain-shielded wheelchairs. In fact, we were so caught up with the enthusiasm of the moment that we were unaware that the black limousine had drawn up behind us and Prince Charles himself had stepped out under his umbrella!



After the formal ceremony and unveiling, with the skies now clear, our royal visitor took time to come each of the groups and speak to some of the participants.

“How splendid to hear you all singing!” He gave a regal nod as he turned to my smiling girls and added, “Singing in the rain! Well done!”

Of course, what was one special moment for me, captured on this black and white photo, will have been long forgotten by His Majesty.....but certainly not by those young people who had the unexpected opportunity to sing for the (future) king.

While my Girls’ Brigade days are long over, music is still very much part of my life and, once again, I am looking forward to “singing for the king” as Advent offers opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the “newborn King”. There is something wonderful about sharing the well-known words of those carols that speak to us of so many Christmas seasons. Regularly voted as a favourite, “Joy to the World” reminds us “Let Earth receive her King”. Other familiar carols, too, remind that this king entered the world as a baby born in a stable and yet became the “King of Kings” of Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus”.



With concerts and special services planned in Blackhall and beyond, we have plenty of opportunities to sing together this Christmas. All the details will be found elsewhere in the Bulletin, from a lively service led by a local brass band to a quieter, reflective service for those who find Christmas a challenging time, when serious illness or the loss of loved ones make it hard to share the communal joy. Whatever your situation, why not find an opportunity to make this Christmas memorable by joining with others from Blackhall to “sing for the King”.

MS

KNIT AND NATTER

We are back in business after a Summer break and the needles are busy with a variety of projects. Several items were donated to the craft coffee morning in October and there will be a selection of knitted Christmas tree decorations available at the Christmas Fair. We were asked if our decorations were for sale at the tree festivals so hopefully people will still want to purchase some.

Blankets have been passed on to FreshStart and baby ones will go to Pregnancy Counselling and Care along with other items. We hope these will help with keeping warm this winter.

If you would like to join us on a Monday evening, we meet in the Sanctuary at 7.30pm. We are a very informal group and the tea, coffee and biscuits and nattering are just as important as the knitting. All abilities and those who would like to learn welcome.

For more details please contact Lilian Cockburn on stcknitnatter@gmail.com



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Cookers for Christmas

This year, as in the past, FreshStart are asking our help so that no-one moves into a new flat/house from being homeless with nothing to cook on, especially at Christmas. We appreciate everyone is feeling the impact of the “cost of living crisis”, but if you can please donate (any amount) by the following ways;

- 1/ Sending a cheque (payable to “FreshStartScotland”) and send to the treasurer FreshStart at 22-24 Ferry Road Drive Edinburgh EH4 4BR.
- 2/ Bank Transfer to FreshStart Scotland’s account at Sort Code 80 11 05 and account number 00191316. Use your surname and “CFC” as the reference in the payment.
- 3/ Go online www.freshstartweb.org.uk/donate

Your donation can be increased by signing up for Gift Aid if appropriate-see Michael & Lilian Cockburn for a form.

A big thank you for showing your support over the year by your donations of household and food (both Pantry and Home Starter Packs) items. As you will guess demand for these services is growing daily and therefore we hope you can continue to support FreshStart in their work.

Lilian & Michael
07536 019488

FreshStart
helping people make a home for themselves

2022 COOKERS FOR CHRISTMAS

Imagine the excitement of moving into a new property then the harsh reality hitting of realising you have nothing to cook on, wash your clothes in or safely store your food. Or on the run up to Christmas, one of your major appliances breaking down, already on a tight budget, this is now seen as a luxury that cannot be replaced.

This is the reality facing too many people this year as they move on from homelessness and go into their new tenancy, or as they as they live day to day, trying to make ends meet, a broken appliance may be the last straw. This is where YOU and Fresh Start can help. By donating to our Cookers for Christmas appeal, we can continue to provide white goods to people moving on from homelessness, or to those who are living in abject poverty.

Let's not allow someone's Christmas or life in the new year to feel this bleak. Let's give a little light and hope with this vital service. Thank you, as always, for your generous support.

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#cookersforchristmas

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Support when you need it most

Blackhall Community Trust



The Board of Blackhall Community Trust would like to wish everyone a peaceful and happy festive season. It's been a quiet year for Blackhall Community Trust in terms of activities in the community, but we are hoping that will change in 2023! However, the board of directors have been quietly working away behind the scenes to secure the community asset transfer of Ravelston Park Pavilion. Stage 2 of the process had to be rerun due to a technicality, but was successfully completed in early September, which leaves just one more hurdle before ownership of the pavilion transfers to BCT, hopefully in early 2023.

We are delighted to be organising the Christmas tree once again in the Blackhall dip and are very grateful to Craigleith and Blackhall Community Council for funding for the tree, Julie at Cloudberry Gifts for the electricity supply and Ronnie at Catalyst Events for decorating the tree.

As part of the Trust's fundraising, we're inviting residents to 'sponsor a sparkle' – please donate if you can by texting **BCT to 70085**, followed by the amount you would like to donate (max £20) e.g. BCT10 to donate £10. Texts cost the donation amount plus your network's standard charge.

If you are doing your Christmas shopping online, please consider shopping with your favourite retailers through the **Easyfundraising** website – register with www.easyfundraising.org.uk, select Blackhall Community Trust as your preferred cause and raise funds for BCT at no extra cost to you.

All Blackhall residents are warmly invited to show their interest and support by joining Blackhall Community Trust (free). (Our membership area is defined by the Blackhall Primary School catchment.) Please visit our website www.blackhallcommunitytrust.org.uk for more information or email blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com for membership details or to sign up for our enewsletter.

I would like to thank the hardworking Board of directors/trustees of Blackhall Community Trust (a company limited by guarantee and a charity) and our loyal Trust members for their ongoing support.

Tina Woolnough, Chair, Blackhall Community Trust Winter 2022

Website: www.blackhallcommunitytrust.org.uk

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Autumn has definitely arrived with the trees giving us a spectacular burst of colour, and the days drawing shorter. With the winter months approaching it has been lovely to resume the art group and get our paint and brushes ready for a new session.

There have been a few changes to the art group, since my last update to the Bulletin. We have agreed to bring the Monday and Tuesday groups together into one larger group which now meets in the big hall on a Monday morning from 9.30 to 12.30. The advantage of this is that it gives us a longer time both to paint and socialise over a coffee. It seems to work well with enough room in the hall for everyone and a real buzz of industry and artistic energy. Unfortunately, not everyone from the Tuesday group was able to swap days and we were sorry to lose a handful of members. However, we have extended a warm invitation for them to join us for a couple of mornings this session when practical and keep in touch should their circumstances change. We have also welcomed several new members to the group and now have a waiting list of people we hope will be able to join us in future.

In the run up to Christmas we will be holding an Exhibition of our work in Blackhall library, running from Saturday 10th December until 7th January. An opportunity to showcase our work which covers different mediums and styles is always welcome. Please do take the chance to pop in and have a look if you can; an original painting might even make a unique and thoughtful Christmas present for a friend or relative!

Following the Christmas break the Art Group will recommence on Monday 9th January 2023.

In the meantime, I'd like to wish you a happy Christmas from everyone in the Art Group; and hope that 2023 brings some much-needed peace and good cheer.

Joyce Whytock

North West Heritage – Local history group

**All talks take place in Davidson's Mains Parish Church
North Hall at 7.30pm**

Thursday 19th January 2023 History of the Astoria Cinema
Organ Speaker: Ian Anderson

Thursday 23rd February 2023 The Slave Compensation
Scheme – A Midlothian Connection Speaker: James Waugh

For further information please contact Charlotte Cowe,
secretary on 336 2494 or by e mail :
charlotte@dmaines.co.uk

EDINBURGH FLORAL ART CLUB



We have a full programme for the year and meet at 2pm on the second Friday of the month from September to December and February to June in Blackhall St Columba's church on the Queensferry Road.

Our Christmas Demonstration is on Friday 9th December in the large Hall at 2pm and is titled 'Countdown to Christmas'. Our Demonstrator is Jane Gordon from Elderslie.

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

TUESDAY TOPICS

Tuesday Topics got off to a grand start and we've had two very good meetings. Roy Johnstone gave us a super talk on the role of women in WWI, and Carol Barrett gave us an excellent talk about her wildlife painting. The attendance is growing, and we hope that many more of you will join us at our fortnightly meetings.

The next meeting is on Tuesday November 1st when Zoltan Erdei will talk to us about Cabinetmaking. On the 15th we have new Member, Debbie Pearce, demonstrate her Textile Crafts.

29th of November is our Charity Night with our Minister, Rev Fergus Cook, telling us of his work with "Scottish Love in Action"

Our Christmas meeting is on December 13th with a quiz, drinks and nibbles. After Christmas we are having our meal out at Howies.

Can I also remind everyone that Tuesday Topics run the Sweet Stall at the Christmas Fair on 26th November? Those with sweet making skills, please contribute!!

Can I encourage you to come and join us on alternate Tuesday evenings at 7.45 in the small hall? Perhaps you are new to the area and would like to meet new friends? Our speakers are always interesting, sometimes funny and there is time after the talk to ask questions or just chat over a tea or coffee.

On behalf of the committee I look forward to seeing you there. Any queries please phone Lyndy Paton, secretary on

07460212174 or 0131 332 7377



SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING



By the time you receive your December 2022 Blackhall Bulletin, we will be looking forward to our Christmas Party on 8th December. The class is continuing to grow with an average of 20 ladies and gentlemen each week enjoying an evening of fun and laughter.

The class will resume on Thursday 12th January 2023 for 12 weeks, our Spring Party being held on 30th March.

We will be pleased to welcome any new members (ladies and gentlemen) to join us in the large hall of Blackhall St Columba's Church from 7.30 - 9.30 pm. We have a welcome cuppa and a biscuit at half time! Muriel Stenhouse, our teacher, walks us through the dances and is very patient and encouraging.

Hope to see you in the New Year.

Margaret Brown
332 5957

Blackhall St Columba's Church



CHRISTMAS FAIR



The WA✠CH Committee of Blackhall St Columba's Church would like to sincerely thank all the businesses, members of the congregation and friends for their donations, help and support for the Christmas Fair on 26th November.

The proceeds from this year's Christmas Fair and our previous events are being donated to the local charity **Pilton Equalities Project**, who support elderly people and vulnerable groups.

A full list of the business donations and the total sum raised by all the events this year will be in the March Bulletin.

George Millar
WA✠CH Committee
Blackhall St Columba's Church

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BLACKHALL LIBRARY NEWS

We have had a lot going on in the past couple of months at Blackhall Library. The friends of Blackhall Library have done an amazing job with the garden, and we are very happy to announce that Helen Forrester will become the first Chairperson of The Friends of Blackhall Library. Helen has already done an incredible job, including single-handedly created a path to our new shed, maintaining the garden and is currently working on formalising our constitution. If you are interested in joining the group or would like to know more, please contact Helen at chairfobl@gmail.com.

The Knit and Natter group have done a fabulous job of putting together a display for Halloween and are also in the process of creating a 300+ poppy display for Remembrance Day. We have had an incredibly successful Macmillan coffee morning and planted over 100 crocuses with support from the 35th Brownies Unit and Edinburgh Rotary Club.

WARM & WELCOMING SPACES

With the rising costs of living and the colder weather kicking in we would like to warmly invite anyone who may be feeling the cold to join us at Blackhall Library. Over the next few months, we will be running weekly Movie Matinees for adults at 2pm on Mondays, we have drop-in Knit and Natter sessions every Thursday and Adult Writers and a Painting Group that you are welcome to join. As well as all our regular activities for children and an intergenerational craft group running every second Saturday.

Alternatively, just come, have a seat, connect to our Wi-Fi or read a book, the library space is open to anyone who wishes to use it.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for any upcoming events: <https://www.facebook.com/BlackhallLibrary> or pop into the library to pick up one of our 'What's On' we hope to see you soon!

Edinburgh Libraries Join us at one of your community libraries for our weekly film showings in Nov & Dec for a selection of great movies to enjoy on the big screen.



MOVIE MATINEE

742126 742126

SCREENINGS BEGIN ON 31 OCTOBER

MONDAYS - BLACKHALL LIBRARY @ 2PM
31 OCT, 7 NOV, 14 NOV, 21 NOV, 28 NOV, 5 DEC, 12 DEC, 19 DEC.

TUESDAYS - CRAIGMILLAR LIBRARY @ 2PM
1 NOV, 8 NOV, 15 NOV, 22 NOV, 29 NOV, 6 DEC, 13 DEC, 20 DEC

WEDNESDAYS - MCDONALD ROAD LIBRARY @ 2PM
2 NOV, 9 NOV, 16 NOV, 23 NOV, 30 NOV, 7 DEC, 14 DEC, 21 DEC

THURSDAYS - STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY @ 2PM
3 NOV, 10 NOV, 17 NOV, 24 NOV, 1 DEC, 8 DEC, 15 DEC, 22 DEC

FRIDAYS - WESTER HAILES LIBRARY @ 2PM
4 NOV, 11 NOV, 18 NOV, 25 NOV, 2 DEC, 9 DEC, 16 DEC, 23 DEC

Free Entry + free teas, coffees and refreshments provided

For information on films being screened or to book seats please contact your local library

35th Brownies Unit & Edinburgh Rotary Club
planting session at Blackhall library
Tuesday 4th Oct 2022



A collage of six photographs showing a group of people, including children and adults, engaged in a planting session. The photos show them working in a garden, planting purple crocuses, and standing together in front of a building.



Murder Mystery @ St Columba's solved!

On the 8th October in the church hall 60 would be detectives worked on the case and pleased to say two of the youngest collected the evidence and caught the killer. For legal reasons we cannot give their names until the court case is concluded.

What we can reveal is the **Corbie Cafe Davidson's Mains** produced 60 piping hot Fish & Chip suppers which all the detectives enjoyed. Well done Corbie Cafe.

A great evening of drama and fellowship was enjoyed by all and we have had numerous requests from attendees and those who could not get tickets to run another event. We are looking at a similar event in 2023.

We thank all who attended this very social event and all praise to the Corbie Cafe for the glorious food delivered on time and piping hot.

Michael G Cockburn
Outreach Team Leader



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BLACKHALL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (The 'Horti')

Christmas trees and outdoor lights illuminate our homes and gardens in preparation for the Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations. It's a beautiful uplifting sight and then I take a peek out my back window and well, to be honest, my garden is looking a wee bit drab. The garden has been tidied, bulbs have been planted and the birds are loving the unruly honeysuckle bush. I find December is a great time to reflect on your gardening year, what's surprised you and what's not! My sunflowers were amazing, in full bloom well into November and I finally managed to grow a Hallowe'en pumpkin for carving. My courgettes and tomatoes however, were a major disappointment, that's the joy of gardening - there's always next year to try again.



Our 2022/23 season kicked off with 3 amazing short talks from members and the local community. Next up, we had the pleasure of hosting Calum from Beechgrove, who gave a great talk about his horticultural journey and life on Beechgrove. November was all about Edinburgh Garden Partners, a community organisation active across Edinburgh which strengthens communities by creating relationships between people who want a space to grow and those who have garden space that they are no longer able to make the most of. It's definitely worth checking out if you find your garden is getting too much for you.

Our programme of events for the next few months:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 2 th December 2022 | Wreath Making Workshop by Louise Wood |
| 9 th January 2023 | NTS Gardens in Edinburgh and the Surrounding Area by Colin Wren,
National Trust for Scotland |
| 3 th February 2023 | Gardening in Our Changing Climate by David Knott, Curator of Living
Collection, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh |
| 3 th March 2023 | Container Planting Demonstrations by Andrew Cathcart and Tom Sneddon |

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.

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

Wishing you all a very happy festive season.

Louise Wood



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PROBUS NEWS



Blackhall 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 fifty, we will be meeting this session on the first Thursday of the month from October through to December and then increasing to twice monthly meetings in the new year. 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. We also hope to organise one or two lunches and a summer outing year to which partners are invited.

Due to Covid-19, our programme for the past two years was curtailed somewhat but we still held regular meetings via Zoom which were well received by our members. Talks this session include “*Experiences as a police firearms officer*”, “*American railways*” 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

CRAIGLEITH MEN’S PROBUS CLUB

As we look forward into 2023, may I be one of the first to wish you a prosperous 2023. Keeping those brain cells active in the winter cool is one suggestion and Craigleith Probus certainly provides that !

On 7th December we will learn about the work of Hopscotch This locally based Children’s Charity began in 1998 with a vision to provide respite breaks for some of Scotland’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. It all started with the purchase and conversion of Ardvullin, a former ghillie’s lodge, into a comfortable and well-equipped holiday centre. Today Ardvullin remains at the heart of what HopScotch does!

Just prior to Christmas, on 21st December, we welcome back Sir Geoff Palmer, whose talks are always enthralling. On this occasion his theme is *Scotland’s Links to the Caribbean*. He was brought up by his aunts in Jamaica, when his mother moved to inner London in the late 1940s, but in 1955 joined her in Highbury where at school he excelled at cricket before undertaking his Botany degree.

Among the themes planned for the late winter are *Travels in Peru* with a botanical slant in the talk and *James Clerk Maxwell*, the Victorian physicist. Did you know he developed the first durable colour photograph? Perhaps finding out about these gems is why coming to Craigleith Probus is so enjoyable!

Over the summer I was asked what Probus is like to which I replied it is a bit like the University of the Third Age, an opportunity to share knowledge, chat, and get to know other local people - something we all welcome in our retirement. 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 around 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>.

Blackhall Nursery

News Winter 2022



Blackhall Nursery is situated within the wonderful nature resource of Ravelston Park and Woods. At Blackhall Nursery, we put the children at the heart of everything we do. We provide a safe, healthy and happy environment where children grow and develop through play and active learning.

The Nursery year began in August with 28 new children joining us and 2 returning for their second year. The transition in to Nursery has been smooth with the children excited to be able to spend time exploring their environment and making new friends. Time has been spent getting to know each other, learning through play and enjoying time outdoors. We were very excited to have a visit from 'Cool Creatures' who introduced us to a meercat, tortoises, a blue tongued skink and a royal python. We are now heading in to one of our busiest and most exciting times of year. We have plans to visit St Columba's Church to hear a nativity story and we will be exploring Blackhall Woods as we head out on our woodland walks where we build dens and enjoy activities, stories and snack outdoors.

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 free and 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. **Please note that adding Blackhall Nursery as a choice on your City of Edinburgh Council application form does not add you to our waiting list and you must apply to us directly.**

CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)

Cameo has had a successful year with good numbers attending and a variety of first class entertainers.

We meet in the large hall of St Columba's Church every fortnight from 1.30 to 12 noon. Tea/coffee and pancakes/traybakes are served by our volunteers. Cameo is free to join and new members are welcome.

We are also happy to have any new volunteers to help in the kitchen or to assist with driving.

Our programme for 2022 will end with our Christmas lunch on 2nd December. We start up again on Friday 13th January 2023 and fortnightly thereafter.

If you would like to come along, or wish further information, please contact either of the names below.

Meantime, we wish all our members and our fantastic volunteers a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS !!!

Margaret Brown 332 5557
Fiona Drinnan 343 6762



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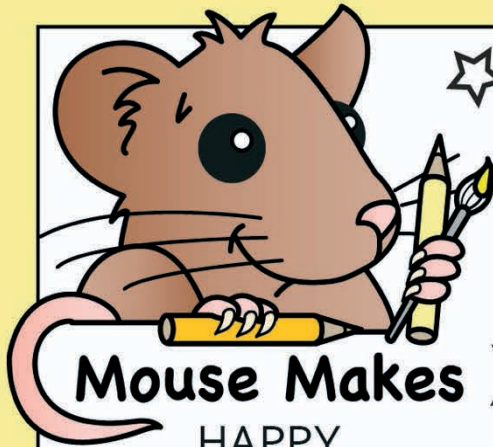


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Mouse Makes

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Read the Christmas story in **Luke 2:1-21**.

Answer the questions, colour the picture and colour one star each day until Christmas.

Where was Mary's baby born?
Why were Joseph and Mary there?

What did Mary dress her baby in?

Where did Mary lay her baby and why?

Why were the shepherds afraid?

What good news did the angel tell?



What did the shepherds do after they had seen the baby?

Who appeared praising God, what did they say?



G L O N G
J O Y
M R C
S A Y G P
O N V O J
G B A B Y N G O O D A B L F
V O S H E P H E R D S A V I O U R
D A Y T M A R Y N E N F R R O
S C H R I S T E P G L T D
A L A I D R W H E O H
E P R A I S E L C
H E I V A L L S K
E E A N I G H T O L D
S M C N D E C R E E B
E A E I S I G N
E T D E

ALL • DECREE • JOSEPH • DAVID • BETHLEHEM • MARY • BIRTH • SON • LAID • MANGER
 INN • SHEPHERDS • FLOCK • NIGHT • LORD • GLORY • GOOD NEWS • JOY • DAY
 SAVIOUR • CHRIST • SIGN • BABY • GOD • PEACE • ANGELS • GO • SEE • TOLD • PRAISE

JUNIOR SINGERS and SUNDAY CLUB

At the end of September and beginning of October, Junior Singers and Sunday Club joined forces to produce nearly 40 mobiles with a harvest theme. They were then hung from various places in the church to help decorate the sanctuary for the Harvest Service on 9th October. There were autumn leaves (real and paper varieties), cut-outs of fruit and vegetables used in the children's creations and the end result was a cheerful display much appreciated by the congregation. The attached photos show some of the children working(?) on their mobiles and the areas in the church where they were hung.

If you would like any information about Sunday Club or Junior Singers, please contact Amy Donaldson 332 1354



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Blackhall Guiding

202 Rainbows enjoyed a visit from Ted bears hospital while completing their First Aid badge. They also enjoyed a spooky visit to the Zoo. They are looking forward to expressing themselves and looking at the Storytelling or Drawing interest badges.
Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow Leader

A huge well done to all our young members who took part in this years Edinburgh Gang Show at the Festival Theatre. You were all amazing!!

202A Rainbows have enjoyed working on the skills for my future theme finding out all about money and using this in the 'rainbow fruit shop' then creating kebabs and fruit salads with what they purchased. They have used problem solving skills to create marble runs. **Barbara Bon – 202a Rainbow Leader**

Lots of girls from rainbows, brownies and guides went to Blair Drummond Safari park for Girlguiding Scotland's Wander the World event

Our Ranger unit has grown significantly and started the term looking at the Guide Law and what it means to them. They are looking forward to planning their program and undertaking different activities from the Girlguiding program.
Claire Slaine – Ranger Leader



We had representatives from each section at this years remembrance service. Thankyou to all who attended.

202 Guides have been paddleboarding and canoeing, and have just had a scary trip round Edinburgh on the Ghost Bus after a week of Halloween crafting. They enjoyed going to the Gang Show in November to support siblings and friends. **Lorna Kelly – 202 Guide Leader**

157th Rainbows has welcomed new members who are excited about their badge books and looking forward to making their promise. **Claire Slaine- 157 Rainbow Leader**

202&202B Brownies went flying on broomsticks during their visit to Alwnick Castle



202 and 202B Brownies have been working on the know myself theme. They have created family tree frames and had a tour of the Scottish Parliament with Alex Cole-Hamilton to celebrate UK Parliament week. We thoroughly enjoyed going to watch many of our girls in this years Gang Show Back in November. We are looking forward to ending the year with a trip to the cinema to watch Matilda the Musical and having a silent disco. **Harland – 202&202B Brownie Leader**

Important Message from the Blackhall Guide leaders:

Both Guide Units are 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

As the Group continues to catch up with the opportunities missed by our young people during the Covid pandemic, all sections have been to camp this term. Thanks are due to our leader team for all of the additional work involved.
We were delighted that Diane Ross received the Bar to the Silver Acorn at the District AGM.



BEAVERS



After a busy start to the year, the Beavers went to camp at Dalguise in early October. 27 Beavers and 1 Cub took part in Orienteering, Climbing, Fencing, Challenge Course and 3G Swing.

Thanks to all the Leaders and parent helpers who made the camp a great success.



cubs

Both Cub packs have been busy learning outdoor skills at Ravelston Park and completing badgework. They are going off to camp in November at Dalguise where they will experience a range of adventurous activities. Friday Cubs welcomed Martin Bowden as their new Leader.



Scouts

On a mostly dry October weekend the Scouts went to camp at Fordell Firs in Fife. Friday night was a learning curve of getting tents and shelters up in the dark. The Scouts cooked every meal on an open fire, including designing a menu and independently shopping for their 3 course Mexican themed meal. (With "mixed" results). Activities included a mixture of traditional Scout skills and adventurous activities. They also took part in zip lines, caving, 3G swing, pioneering and an assault course. Some very weary young people by Sunday afternoon.



Vacancies

Beaver Leaders Secretary
Cub Leaders
Scout Leaders



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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.

Will you help us to give more skills to even more young people?

We are looking for Leaders, helpers, admin, sharing a specialist skill. If you're not keen on working directly with young people that's OK too. Trustees do lots of things out of the spotlight, and there's lots you can do from home

If you think you could help, please contact:

23rdgsl@gmail.com



Explorer Expedition to Finland Jamboree



International adventures are an amazing part of being a Scout with endless possibilities to meet Scouts in other countries, explore new cultures and plan exciting expeditions. This summer the Pink Panthers Explorers took 40 young people and 8 adults to Finland for two weeks to participate in the Finnish Jamboree. They started the trip by investing 2 new Explorers on the plane to Helsinki, 35 000 feet in the air!

The Pink Panthers had 3 full days in Helsinki before the Jamboree. On their first day they explored some of the city's history with a guided tour. That evening, once back at the campsite, they finished the day with their first sauna of the trip.

On the second day in Helsinki, they visited the Serena water park, a highlight of the trip. The Pink Panthers went through all the flumes and lazy rivers before heading into the city centre to meet up with some of their Jamboree Finnish hosts!

On the final full day in Helsinki, they visited Suomenlinna, the Sea Fortress, located on a separate island to the city. Here, they had a guns and tunnel tour, exploring all the hidden areas of the huge fortress inaccessible to the public.

Then the Pink Panthers were off to spend a week with 13,000 Scouts at the Finnish Jamboree! The Jamboree was at Evo campsite, in the middle of the forest. There were so many people it was like a pop-up town! Every day the Explorers went to a different activity zone to participate in a variety of challenges. These zones included: action valley, battle valley and future valley. In the evening the Explorers were free to meet new people, exchange scout badges and participate in the competitive necker trade, where the Pink Panther necker was in high demand! After some free time, and a trip to one of the 15 saunas on site, there were usually big events held at the main stage; these were a highlight of the trip for most of the Explorers. In all the pictures, you can spot the Saltire in the centre of the action! Yes, the Explorers got so involved that some of them managed to get on the stage!

Both the Explorers and leaders made friends from all over the world, there were lots of tears when they had to leave, but the Pink Panthers hope to meet up with our Finnish hosts again soon.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

N S Q N W M H P S N U N D R T Q U W W S
 W I H O R R P W A O O Q Z B N R E A T P
 L R O I D I E E A P J B K F E H L V L Y
 N W P E N W B A Y I F Y B H N D D Q W G
 H P T N A Y K B T X D N D I F L N I W V
 H M K O L X O S S H E M M I R G A B C K
 M U V C R B R E K C A R C T U N C K Z I
 U L A E A O W W J I G T X J B E L L S O
 N J D N G O M N T N E M A N R O N N U E
 H R K I B K C C I R Q I O R Y Y Q T K F
 C C L P E K A L F W O N S J N J T S H J
 A P I X W W K A N N Z E K K K D E L B I
 N S W H X N K L N A T I V I T Y F E G F
 D T G N I K C O T S C A O T H V R S R K
 Y H T W I E F G Q F A X G F O W T N U T
 B G T K J F M D F I R E P L A C E I I H
 M I M R L R Z D C X D F D J T I H T N O
 T L W E W G F G E W S E O T E L T S I M
 R J R E N I R U G I F N P C R E P A P P
 S X U Q E E S Z L H D I N M M H N G T A



TREE
 STOCKING
 WREATH
 GARLAND
 CANDLE
 FIGURINE
 ORNAMENT
 TINSEL
 RIBBON
 TWINKLING
 LIGHTS
 BELLS



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Church Secretary
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 Tues-Thurs 9-12 noon
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secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

DEADLINES

Kirk News (February edition)

Sunday 16th January

Please send all items to the Editor;
 Fay Stirling, c/o Church Office
 Mob: 07518 293976 or e-mail:
fay@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Blackhall Bulletin (March edition) -

Sunday 29th January

Please send all items, including **Advertising Enquiries**
 to the Editor: Barbara Wilson, c/o Church Office
 Home tel: 312 6035
bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

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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



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